



# *The* COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL *Leftwich*

Achieving Excellence

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## Document Control Sheet

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This document is part of the group which include	Behaviour for Learning, Anti-Bullying, Acceptable Use, Online Safety, Suspensions Policy, Statement Additional & Special Education Needs, Drugs' Education, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Use of Images, Student Illness, Accident & First Aid, Use of Force, Recruitment, Supporting Children with Medical Conditions, Single Equality Scheme, Searching Screening & Confiscation, Transgender and Health & Safety Policies.
Equality Act 2010 fully considered	Yes
EIA Form Completed	Yes

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## School Attendance

### KEY PERSONNEL

Name	Role	Responsibility
R Warburton L Kane	Headteacher Deputy Headteacher	To oversee the work of the School's lead professional for attendance
M Yates	Assistant Headteacher	To monitor and promote attendance throughout the School including the attendance and welfare of vulnerable groups
	Learning Leader (Year)	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children or young people in the Year Group
	Form Tutor	To monitor and promote the attendance of students in their tutor group
Rob Fowler	Governor	To monitor the School's work to promote and maintain good attendance
	Local Authority	To provide legal support as appropriate through its Education Welfare Service

## **Attendance Policy Statement:**

### **1. Statement of intent**

- 1.1. Our aim at The County High School, Leftwich is for every child and young person to enjoy, thrive and achieve. For our students to maximise their academic potential, regardless of but paying cognisance to their background, it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Through attending school every day on time, students will get the best possible start in life. We recognise the extraordinarily strong links between attendance and attainment, raising standards, fulfilling potential and safeguarding.
- 1.2. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, students, parent(s)/carer(s), the local community and the Local Authority can work in partnership. The County High School, Leftwich monitor attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.
- 1.3. All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

### **2. Legislation**

- 2.1. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”
- 2.2. Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence.”
- 2.3. Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Additionally, regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.
- 2.4. Section 576 Education Act 1996 – Meaning of “parent”
  - 2.4.1. For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a “parent” and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:
  - 2.4.2. all biological parents, whether they are married or not
  - 2.4.3. any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
  - 2.4.4. any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

3. **Aims:**
  - 3.1. To create a culture in which good attendance is the norm
  - 3.2. To demonstrate to students, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good ,regular attendance is an achievement in itself
  - 3.3. To have consistent, high expectations for all students
  - 3.4. To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
4. **Objectives:**
  - 4.1. To involve students in promoting good attendance
  - 4.2. To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular attendance
  - 4.3. To expect all school staff to continue to take appropriate responsibility for children or young people's attendance; attendance is everyone's responsibility
  - 4.4. To recognise the important role of Form Tutors in promoting and monitoring good attendance as part of their role as Learning Mentors
  - 4.5. To provide mechanisms within the school to enable these aims and objectives to be met
5. **Expectations:**
  - 5.1. To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
  - 5.2. To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by the Senior Leaders of the school and student-facing staff
  - 5.3. To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the school's attendance plan
  - 5.4. To keep parent(s)/carer(s), students and governors informed of policy and practice
  - 5.5. To ensure that the school actively promotes good attendance and the educational welfare of vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children, SEND and those identified as Pupil Premium students
6. **Procedures:**
  - 6.1 Children or young people are expected to attend the school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. The school has a duty to safeguard all its students. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the first day of absence, and each following day of absence, stating the reason
  - 6.2 There are two types of absence:
    - 6.2.1 Authorised (where the school approves student absence)
    - 6.2.2 Unauthorised (where the school does not approve absence)
  - 6.3 If contact explaining the child or young person's absence isn't made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact home on the initial day. If the absence is not explained it will be 'Unauthorised'. **This contact will be recorded in the register.**
  - 6.4 The Headteacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
  - 6.5 Children or young people with 100% attendance will be recognised by the school at regular intervals throughout the year and across Key Stages

## 7. Identification & Referral

- 7.1. Identification of concerns is the collective responsibility of Form Tutor, Learning Leader (Year), SLT Attendance Lead
- 7.2. Attendance data is compiled by Senior Leaders and analysed in comparison with national statistics
- 7.3. Fortnightly, the Year Leader meets with the SLT Attendance Lead. Students whose attendance is giving cause for concern are discussed and strategies agreed **and implemented to support improvements to attendance**

## 8. Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

- 8.1. For any child / child person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including Form Tutors, attendance, pastoral and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child/young person and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.
- 8.2. Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as an SDQ, SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as a TAF assessment. Assessments will include the views of the child/young person as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).
- 8.3. Assessments undertaken may identify that a child/young person is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. Cheshire West and Chester Council has developed guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools (revised November 2021). This is a whole school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children/young people who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.
- 8.4. Information from assessments will inform a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help and Prevention and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. Attendance Improvement Plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child / young person's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.
- 8.5. Regular reviews of support and Attendance Improvement Plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

## 9. Registers

- 9.1. Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.
- 9.2. 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6) Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).
- 9.3. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:
  - 9.3.1. Present;
  - 9.3.2. Attending an approved educational activity;
  - 9.3.3. Absent;
  - 9.3.4. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 9.4. The school should follow up any absences to:
  - 9.4.1. Ascertain the reason;
  - 9.4.2. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
  - 9.4.3. Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
  - 9.4.4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
  - 9.4.5. Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.
- 9.5. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities).
  - 9.5.1. The school expects staff to ensure that registers are a current and accurate record of the attendance of students under their supervision. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all students; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
  - 9.5.2. The register should be marked using the symbols advised by the DfE and Cheshire West and Chester Council. Each register should be taken, saved and closed within the first ten minutes of Tutor Time/the lesson
  - 9.5.3. The school uses SIMS and the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

## 10. Lateness

- 10.1. The school day starts at 8.45 am when all students are expected to be present for registration
- 10.2. Any child who arrives after this time must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in. If pupils are not in class when the register is taken, they will be coded as 'L'

- 10.3. As the school follows a carefully structured Tutor Time Programme, any lateness is a loss to valuable learning time. Lateness will be shared with parents/carers via the school's electronic communication systems (InTouch) inviting further communication with school. Your child may also be required to remain in school for a short period of time, at the end of the week
  - 10.4. In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists
  - 10.5. Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies
  - 10.6. You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance
11. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice
    - 11.1. An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:
      - 11.1.1. no reason for absence has been given
      - 11.1.2. medical evidence is not received when requested
      - 11.1.3. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
      - 11.1.4. a student arrives at school after registration has closed
    - 11.2. Parents/carers should be aware that school may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.
    - 11.3. **Persistent Absenteeism**
      - 11.3.1. A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason
      - 11.3.2. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and future opportunities. The school asks for the support and co-operation of parents/carers to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly and with regularity, in particular, persistent absentee students. Through careful tracking of absence, combined with academic mentoring our intention is to limit the impact of persistent absence affecting academic attainment
      - 11.3.3. If a student's absence falls below 95%, parents/carers may receive a letter informing them that their child's attendance is below the expected level. We may also request evidence from a health professional to verify the reason for absence.

For example, a Doctor's note, hospital letter, appointment card, copy of prescription or packaging from prescription medication

**12. Family Holidays during term time**

12.1. In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'

12.2. The Headteacher will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available on the school's website or office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

12.3. The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- 12.3.1. Family holiday
- 12.3.2. Availability of less expensive holiday
- 12.3.3. Availability of holiday accommodation
- 12.3.4. Parent/carer's working commitments
- 12.3.5. Holiday pre-booked by another family member

12.4. A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

**13. What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

13.1. As a school we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for children / young people. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement.

13.2. It is pertinent that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child / young person's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

- 13.2.1. Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary and do support the school in promoting the importance of good attendance
- 13.2.2. Let the school know as soon as possible why your child or young person is absent
- 13.2.3. Try to make appointments outside school time



14. **If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**
  - 14.1. Talk to your child
  - 14.2. Talk to the Headteacher and staff at school
  - 14.3. Talk to the Education Welfare Service where guidance may be received to help you resolve this situation
15. In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire West and Chester is a diverse community. The County High School, Leftwich has incorporated practice which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving students is a key priority. This aims to improve the attainment of minority students across the County
16. **Religious Observance**
  - 16.1. We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.
  - 16.2. Where a day of religious observance:
    - 16.2.1. falls during school time and
    - 16.2.2. has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs
  - 16.3. We ask that parents/carers notify the school in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.
17. **Enforced School Closure**
  - 17.1. If The County High School, Leftwich was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.
18. **DfE Guidance: May 2022**
  - 18.1. Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19
    - 18.1.1. In line with the transition to living with COVID-19 and the latest public health advice, schools are no longer advised to record pupils who are not attending school because of COVID-19 using Code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test, absence will be recorded using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate code applies.