

The Constance Bridgeman Centre

Knowledge, Understanding, Opportunity

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022

Attendance Policy Review

This policy was reviewed and adopted at the management committee meeting on 29th November 2022

This policy is due for review in September 2024

Signature: *Tony Clayton*

Date 29/11/22

Headteacher

Signature: *Martin Sachs*

Date 29/11/22

Chair of Management Committee

Statement of Intent

The Constance Bridgeman Centre is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students.

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

It is very important therefore, that parents and carers make sure that their child attends regularly.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

High levels of attendance at school significantly impact upon academic and developmental outcomes.

The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 that the parent or carer of every child of compulsory age shall cause them to receive fulltime education suitable:

1. a) to age, ability and aptitude and
2. b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have.

S444 1 & 1A & 2A – Failure to attend may result in the parent or carer being prosecuted or being issued with a penalty notice.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the parent or carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

The habits of regular and punctual attendance are important in their own right: they enable individuals to participate in social organisations and shared arrangements, to take on commitments and to contribute at work as well as at school. These habits do not develop spontaneously: they need to be requested, encouraged and shaped.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents or carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED which is a government requirement. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are time missing from school for a good reason like illness, hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. (Medical evidence and /or appointment cards must be provided to allow the school to authorise the absences.)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. These include;

- Parents or carers keeping children off school frequently, i.e. for minor illness such as a cough, minor cold, hay fever, or similar examples
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained, i.e. not supported by medical evidence
- children who arrive at school after registers have closed
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays or other such celebrations
- inadequate clothing/uniform
- absence if a sibling or a parent is ill
- day trips and holidays in term time

(This list is to exemplify – it is not exhaustive.)

We expect that routine medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the school require *at least 2 days'* notice for all medical appointments, excluding emergency appointments. Where it has been necessary to make an emergency appointment, parents and carers should inform us in the first instance.

When a student must attend an orthodontist or hospital appointment during school hours, we expect that students attend school before and return after their appointment, in order to minimise the loss to learning and get a present mark in school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- attend school every day to meet their target of 100% attendance
- arrive to school on time, arriving by 09:00 each day

Parents

- ensure that their child attends school every day and support them in meeting their target of 100%
- limit their child's absences to cases of genuine illness
- always book holidays outside of term time. No students will be permitted to take a holiday during term time

- always make appointments for routine medical, dentist and optician appointments outside of school hours
- contact the school by telephone or email, by 09:00 on each and every day of absence
- contact the Attendance Officer if they have any concerns about their child's attendance

Administrative Officer

- responsible for maintaining the attendance registers
- liaise with parents and carers regarding a child's absence, checking the validity of the reason
- follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence promptly through first day calling
- produce weekly attendance reports
- monitor the accuracy of registers and use of absence codes
- record details for absence

Carers

- ensure the Data Manager is informed to take students off roll when they leave the school
- liaise with Heads of Year, the Education Welfare Officer and any other relevant agency to support students where attendance is a concern
- ensure that students whose attendance falls below 90% are referred to the Education Welfare Officer, in liaison with the Head of Year

All staff

- act as role models at all times, in modelling high levels of attendance and punctuality
- accurately take registers
- pro-actively identify potential concerns with attendance and punctuality, and refer to Deputy Head
- ensure any information regarding attendance or absence is passed to the Attendance Officer

Head of Year

- monitor attendance patterns across their year group and use the data provided for discussion with tutors,

Deputy Head

- ensure that there is an investigation of the underlying cause of any students with poor attendance
- ensure that there are relevant strategies in place for all students who are a cause for concern
- ensure that there is independent work provided for any student who has an authorised long-term absence
- ensure that students whose attendance falls below 90% are referred to the Education Welfare Officer, in liaison with the Attendance Officer
- responsible for attendance and punctuality across the school
- monitor attendance patterns across the school and provide data for discussion with Heads of Year,

Education Welfare Officer and Deputy Head

- oversee interventions and their impact for students where attendance is a concern
- identify and implement strategic strategies to ensure excellent attendance
- meet with the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer for regular updates

Motivation and Rewards

We believe that it is important to recognise and celebrate good attendance. We do this in a number of ways:

- through weekly Assemblies
- weekly attendance rewards for best attendance
- Regular updates for parents and carers

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents and carers must:

- must contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone, email or text parent or carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them. Parents and carers must ensure contact details are kept up to date. If the school cannot contact a parent or carer with the contact information provided, then emergency contacts will be used.
- Communicate with parent or carers when a child's attendance drops below target figures (eg 90%). Further interventions may be implemented to support improving your child's attendance.
- Where we have continued concerns we will refer a child's attendance to the Education Welfare Service who has the authority to issue Penalty Notices and/or instigate legal proceedings. **A penalty notice may be issued if a child accumulates 12 session (a session is half a school day) absence in a 12 week period.**

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents and carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and are also automatically made known to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS).

Punctuality

One of the aims of The Constance Bridgeman Centre is to prepare children for adult life. To this end we expect students to be punctual at all times.

A student arriving after 09:00 is late and receives a late mark in the register. We expect parental co-operation in ensuring that students leave home early enough to arrive at school before the bell.

Persistent lateness will result in referral to EWS.

If a student arrives later than 09:30 they will be given a U code. This means, that even though they are present, they will be marked as absent without authorisation for the whole morning session.

We are aware that sometimes there are issues with public transport which results in a number of students being late. We will take this into account when issuing sanctions for lateness.

Exceptional Circumstances/Requests for Leave of Absence

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to taking time off during term time.

The Constance Bridgeman Centre has adopted the London Borough of Redbridge Attendance Strategy which recommends that leave of absence is not authorised, unless in the most exceptional of circumstances.

If you request a leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance, you must make this in writing at least one week in advance. We will request evidence, eg flight bookings, etc which will inform our decision. Parents or carers will receive a reply from the school which will state whether the leave will be authorised or unauthorised and if Penalty Notices are to be requested.

Please note; retrospective leave of absence requests will never be authorised.

Religious Observance

The Constance Bridgeman Centre has adopted the London Borough of Redbridge Attendance Strategy which recommends that a maximum of 3 days per academic year **MAY** be authorised for days set aside for religious observance. All requests for absence for religious observance must be made in writing.

PLEASE NOTE – Absence for religious observance **will** affect your child's overall attendance percentage.

Children Missing in Education - CME

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of Centre, and the Local Authority, when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

If a child is absent for 10 consecutive days and we are unable to contact parents or carers, a child will be referred to the Local Authority and reported as missing education and their school place will be withdrawn.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents and carers have a duty, in law, to make sure that their children attend.

Where we have concerns regarding a child's attendance and their welfare, safeguarding procedures may be followed.