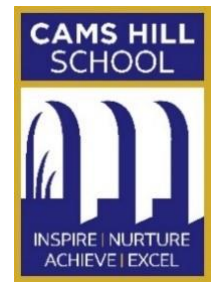


CAMS HILL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Non-Statutory

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Introduction

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents/carers and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

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 pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations, depend on good attendance.

It is very important, therefore, that all children attend regularly and this policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence 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.
- Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Attendance Grade	% attendance	Days attended	This equates to	
			Lessons missed in a year	Lessons missed over 5 years
Outstanding	100	190	zero	zero
Excellent	99	188	10	50
Good	97	184	30	150
Requires improvement	94	179	55	275
Cause for concern	92	175	75	375
Immediate action required	<92	<175	>75	>375

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school's Attendance Policy is written to reflect those laws, and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council.

DfE Guidance School Attendance (2018)

Schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (below 92%).

2. Ensure every child has access to full time education.
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered to a school, attend regularly.

All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

Safeguarding

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all children encompasses:

- attendance;
- behaviour management;
- health and safety;
- access to the curriculum;
- anti-bullying.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis could be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance on our website;
- report to parents/carers on how their child(ren) is/are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- recognise regular attendance through half-yearly assemblies.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee and direct the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance. The school's Inclusion and Intervention Manager will organise and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance, and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also oversee the school's Attendance Home School Link Worker, to ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will work together with tutors and Heads of Year, to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, even if a prolonged period of sickness, we will ask for medical evidence to be provided. The Attendance Home School Link Worker/Head of Year will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

Responsibilities of Tutors

- Ensure that all pupils are registered promptly and accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with their Head of Year on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the First Aid/Attendance Office, if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

It is a parent/carer's legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school is an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone, or email, on the first and subsequent days of absence.
- Discuss with the school any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.

Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 0830 and again for the afternoon session at 1345 (1245 on Tuesdays).

- Pupils are required to be at **their tutor base** promptly, at 0830.
- Pupils arriving after 0830 will be recorded late by their class teacher, or the Attendance Home School Link Worker, unless there is/are very good unavoidable reasons for being late, e.g. accident, late arrival of bus. It is not satisfactory for pupils to say, "I had to see another member of staff," or "I got up late."
- Pupils who arrive late, after 0835, must sign in at the **First Aid/Attendance Office**. Should a pupil sign in with the reason 'woke up late' or 'walked slowly to school' or any avoidable matter without a note, they will be recorded as late if arrival time is before 0900 and, unauthorised lateness, if arrival time is after 0900. If they fail to sign in, they will automatically be recorded as being late, regardless of their reason.

For the safety and security of every pupil we must know where they are at all times.

What Parents/Carers Should Do If Their Child is Absent

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence. Calls should be made to our absence line – 01329 226540, or an email should be sent to office@camshill.com, or parents/carers can call into school and report to Reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- code his/her absence appropriately;
- invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with their Head of Year and/or the Attendance Home School Link Worker, if absence is going to be prolonged;
- communicate with parents/carers regularly if their child's attendance moves below 92%;
- arrange a meeting to discuss an attendance plan if a child's attendance is persistently below 92%;
- refer the matter to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panel if absence is unauthorised and remains below 92%.

Please note: **If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers after three days of absence, the Attendance and Home School Link Worker is required to make a home visit, to ascertain the well-being of the child and the reason for absence.**

Child Missing Education

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 20 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents/carers should help us to help them and their child(ren) by making sure we always have up-to-date contact details. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 8% or more of schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as **persistent absentees (PA)**. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The school will meet with parents/carers and the pupil to discuss reasons for absence and formulate a plan for how to minimise the impact on learning.

Absence disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If a child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 92%, we will initially contact parents/carers by letter, request medical evidence and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will invite them to meet with the Head of Year to draw up a support plan, which will be closely monitored.

Pupil Absences

- When a pupil is unable to come into school through illness or another unavoidable matter, parents/carers are asked to telephone the school absence line on 01329 226540 to notify the Attendance Home School Link Worker, who will annotate the register accordingly. If a child is likely to be away from school for more than a few days, parents/carers should indicate if work should be sent home. Please note that work can only be provided where absence is authorised.
- All pupil absences are followed up the same day and, where there has not been any parental contact at all to the school, the Attendance Home School Link Worker will send a text message asking for a parent/carer to telephone the absence line to provide details of their child's absence. Should the school not receive any response to the text message after the second day, the Attendance and Home School Link Worker will visit the family home on the third day. If there is no answer, the police may be informed.

- Heads of Year will be informed when pupils are suspected of truanting.
- Should a pupil arrive late to school due to any appointment or other valid reason, they must sign in at the First Aid/Attendance Office with a note from a parent/carer confirming their reason as well as showing their appointment card/letter. Unnecessary worry/concern has been caused when pupils have arrived in school late after registration and have **not** signed in at the Attendance Office.

Leave of Absence

Requests for special leave of absence must be made to the Headteacher in writing. Applications should be made **well in advance** and parents/carers are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence **before** they confirm their holiday/other arrangements. A request form is available from Main Reception/Attendance Home School Link Worker and can be downloaded from the school website www.camshill.com under 'Information', 'Downloadable Forms'.

Absence from school is very disruptive to an individual's learning. Non-essential pupil absence also creates an additional burden on teachers when parental expectations are unfairly placed on the teacher to ensure a youngster catches up with his or her work, when the responsibility clearly lies with the pupil and parents/carers. Non-essential absences from school are sending the wrong messages to pupils about the importance of their schooling. It is essential we have parents'/carers' support in this matter. In Key Stage 4, it is imperative that pupils have full attendance; this is essential for their success. The Headteacher is unlikely to authorise any absences during Key Stage 4 other than for essential/unavoidable matters.

Classifying Absences

The Government requires every half-day absence from school to be classified (by the school not by the parents/carers) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about each absence is always required.

With regard to determining authorised/unauthorised absence the school is required to follow strict guidelines laid down by the Government:

Authorised Absences: These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (e.g. illness or other unavoidable cause). The school cannot accept just any explanation as grounds for authorisation; only those where the absence could not, reasonably, have been avoided. An explanation which is offered by a parent/carer does not have to be accepted as grounds for authorisation and some additional assurance that the absence was unavoidable, such as written evidence, may be requested.

Unauthorised Absences: These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave' has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and where medical evidence is requested but not provided.

Lateness: Children must attend on time to be given a mark (in the register) for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.

Consequences and Support for Poor Attendance/Punctuality

Regular, punctual attendance at school is not only important to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and to give every individual the maximum opportunity to do his/her best, it also establishes good habits for the future and the world of work beyond school.

- Where a pupil is late to school without a valid reason, the Attendance Home School Link Worker will send a text message to each designated parent/carer informing them that their child has arrived to tutor time after 0830 and will be recorded as late.

- The pupil will be issued with a break-time detention slip by the tutor or Attendance Home School Link Worker, requiring them to attend a designated classroom for 15 minutes at morning break-time. Should the pupil fail to attend, this will then be escalated to a 45-minute school detention.
- Should the pupil fail to attend the 45-minute imposition, the matter will be escalated to a 90-minute Senior Leadership detention.
- Should a pupil be late on three occasions within one half-term period, a 90-minute Senior Leadership detention shall be set.
- Should there still not be a significant improvement to the pupil's punctuality once the above steps have been exhausted, a meeting with parent(s)/carer(s) shall be arranged with the Attendance Home School Link Worker/Head of Year, at which point no further late marks will be authorised and a Penalty Notice may become relevant.

Persistent lateness and/or sporadic absence can be symptomatic of other problems therefore contact with home is very important.

Home visits may also be made by the Inclusion and Intervention Manager, the Attendance Home School Link Worker and the Head of Year.

Penalty Notices (to address poor attendance and punctuality at school)

Parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. If a child is absent without the school's authorisation, this is subject to legal action through a fine or prosecution. Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct sets out what actions must be taken for any child with 10 or more sessions (5 days plus) of unauthorised absence. All schools are required to work with Hampshire County Council to take legal action if:

- a child has unauthorised absences for 10 or more sessions (5 days);
- a child is continually late to school and this lateness is unauthorised for 10 or more sessions;
- a child has any unauthorised absences during any formal examinations, assessment or testing.

NB A Penalty Notice may also be issued when a parent/carers takes a child on holiday during term-time without the school authorising the absence beforehand.