

CAMS HILL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



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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 they are 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.

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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos which values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending 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.

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 Associate Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for pupil culture 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, Assistant Heads of Year 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 due to a prolonged period of sickness, we will ask for medical evidence to be provided. The Attendance Home School Link Worker and Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year will hold fortnightly review meetings to discuss individual cases, and these pupils will subsequently be discussed at Line Management meetings with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Further conversations/meetings will take place with parents/carers to discuss the need and reasons for their child's absence and to 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 the ethos of 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 school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Attend every lesson on time.
- Talk to their Tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year about any worries or problems preventing them from attending school.
- Take responsibility for registering at Main Reception/the 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/Carers will:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- 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.
- Provide the school with **more than one** emergency contact number for their child.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Discuss any worries or concerns that their child may have that would prevent them from attending school.

Recording Attendance

The school day runs from 0830-1510.

Staggered start times are as follows:

Year 7 – 0830

Year 8 – 0830

Year 9 – 0840

Year 10 – 0840

Year 11 - 0845

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, at their year group start time between 0830 and 0850, and again for the afternoon session at 1450 (1325 on Tuesdays).

- Pupils are required to be at **their tutor base** promptly, at the published time.
- Pupils arriving after their staggered start time will be recorded late by their class teacher, or the Attendance Home School Link Worker, unless there is a very good unavoidable reason for being late, eg accident, late arrival of bus. It is not satisfactory for pupils to say, "I got up late."
- Pupils who arrive late, 5 mins after their start time, must sign in at **Main Reception/the Attendance Office**. Should a pupil sign in with the reason 'woke up late' or 'walked slowly to school', or any other avoidable matter without a note, they will be recorded as late if arrival time is before 0900 and as 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. Further registers will be taken by subject staff at the start of every lesson.

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 the school 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 800901, or an email should be sent to office@camshill.com, or parents/carers can call into school and report to Main Reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- code their absence appropriately;
- invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with their Head of Year and/or the Attendance Home School Link Worker, if absence is going to be prolonged;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil concerns that may cause absence, that are not related to illness or requested absence;
- communicate with parents/carers regularly if their child's attendance moves below 95%;
- arrange a meeting to discuss an attendance plan if a child's attendance is persistently below 95%;
- refer the matter to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panel if absence is unauthorised and remains below 95%.

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 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 10 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; the school requires a minimum of two contact numbers and the names and contact details of more than one person. If contact details change throughout the school year, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of these changes.

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 their 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 Attendance Home School Link Worker and the Assistant Head of Year/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 800901 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 set. 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 and a sanction will be issued in line with the school's Good Behaviour Policy.
- Should a pupil arrive late to school due to any appointment or other valid reason, they must sign in at Main Reception/the 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 Main Reception/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/the 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 their 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.

Holiday Requests

Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. An application for a holiday request **must be made in advance** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

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 (eg 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 their 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 late and will be recorded as late.
- The pupil will be issued with a break-time detention by the Attendance Home School Link Worker through School Synergy, requiring them to attend a designated classroom for 15 minutes at morning break-time. Pupil's required to sit a detention will be reminded by their teacher in Period 2 when they do their lesson

register. Should the pupil fail to attend, this will then be escalated to a 40-minute after school detention. This will all be recorded on School Synergy.

- Should the pupil fail to attend the 40-minute detention, 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 will be set.
- Should there still not be a significant improvement to the pupil's punctuality once the above steps have been exhausted, 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 Safeguarding Culture and Operational Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Attendance Home School Link Worker and/or the Assistant Head of Year/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.
- non-approved leave of absence (holiday).

How a Penalty Notice is issued and amount of the fine

Penalty Notices are either posted to the pupils' home address or delivered by hand. Each Penalty Notice is £60 and payment should be made within 21 days of 'deemed service' (2nd working day after postmark on the envelope and receipt of posting). If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the Penalty is £120.

Written Warning

If your child has an ongoing pattern of unauthorised absence, then you will normally receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This warning will advise you about the extent of your child's absence and warn you that if your child's attendance does not show a significant improvement, and if this improvement is not maintained thereafter, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Further support, advice and guidance is available from [the Department of Education](#) and [the Hampshire County Council guidance leaflet for parents and carers](#).