

## Attendance Policy (Part 1)

<b>Approved by:</b>	Cumbria Education Trust Board
<b>Date:</b>	March 2018
<b>Proposed review date:</b>	Annually
<b>Owner:</b>	CET Student and Family Engagement Manager

### REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Version Description</b>	<b>Date of Revision</b>
1		March 2017
2	Specify each School has its own attendance procedures.	March 2018
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## **Introduction**

Cumbria Education Trust is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students/pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all students/pupils feel valued and welcome. The Trust recognises that the relationship between attendance and attainment is inextricably linked. Regular attendance is crucial to maximise progress and enjoyment of learning, every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents, teachers, students/pupils all share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality to ensure that pupils/students are safe and are able to maximise their full educational potential.

### **Aim:**

The aim of this policy is to raise the profile and benefits of good attendance throughout the Trust, encouraging all children to achieve a high level of attendance throughout their time at school.

### **Objectives:**

- To ensure that good attendance and punctuality remain high profile with students/pupils through assemblies and reward systems.
- Ensure that there are effective means of recording attendance and organising data, including those children who are educated off site.
- Each school will have their own attendance procedures, specific to each school, which is known to LAB members, staff, students/pupils and parents/carers.
- Clear communication is maintained both within the school and between school and parents and agencies.

### **Encouraging good attendance:**

The foundation of good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To achieve this we will:

- Promote consistent, clear communication with parents and students/pupils about the importance of regular, prompt attendance.
- Agree and set targets for improved attendance and share these with parents and students/pupils through recorded action plans.
- Aim to contact parents on first day of absence if no reason has been provided.
- Where a pattern of poor attendance is emerging parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons and an action plan with clear targets will be agreed. These meetings will also be an opportunity to discuss any issues and ascertain whether any additional support is needed.

The Trust recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. The Trust endeavours to work with a range of external agencies where available and has links with the Local Authority, the School Health Service, the local police, Children's Centres and Children's Services.

Where intervention attempts have failed and there are no mitigating circumstances, parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and its amendments.

The Trust is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this policy accordingly.

## **Parental Responsibility**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (including the parent choosing to educate their child at home).

Compulsory school age is defined as being the term commencing on or after a child's fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen, providing that they do one of the following until the age of eighteen:

- Stay in full-time education, for example school or college
- Start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- Spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training.

Parents can only allow their children to miss school when they are too ill to attend or they have advanced permission from school. Parents **must** contact school on the morning, stating the reason and the length of absence.

## **Continued or ongoing absence**

If a student/pupil misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil/student by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 96%. As such, the schools in the Trust monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Department for Education.

The schools in the Trust 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 then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*.

## **Authorised Absence**

If a child is ill or unable to attend school for some reason, it is the parent's responsibility to provide an explanation for this non-attendance. The school will determine whether the child's absence will be authorised or not. For repeated or regular periods of illness the school will request that verification is provided, such as a medical certificate from the family doctor prior to authorising any absence.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

An unauthorised absence from school is any absence that is deemed not to be an acceptable reason for missing school. Unauthorised absences from school carry the risk of prosecution under section 444 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

The Headteacher will not authorise any holidays during term time. In extreme or exceptional circumstances, a period of absence may be agreed by the Headteacher.

## **Definition of a Parent**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996: Definition of a Parent – is as follows whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. Throughout this document, references to

'parent' mean each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to 'parent' in the singular.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:**

- Child Protection Policy
- Relationships/Behaviour Policy including procedures for preventing and dealing with Bullying and Racism, Use of Reasonable Force, drug misuse etc.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures
- Single Equality Scheme/Equality Objectives
- SEN Information Report, SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan which includes Intimate Care Procedures
- Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance, Cumbria Children's Services 2016
- School Absence Enforcement Policy, Cumbria Children's Services 2018