

Clifton Hill School

Document	Attendance and Registration Policy
Content	Policy & procedures for registration of students and monitoring attendance
Status	Advisory
Review period	Every two years
Author	Headteacher, Lucy Wijsveld
Sign-off by	Headteacher
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Setting

Clifton Hill is a Surrey County Council funded community school for students aged 11-19 years who have severe or profound multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, challenging behavior and complex health needs.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

This policy includes guidance from the DfE publication Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

Aims

Our pupils need consistency and continuity if they are to reach their potential and generalise knowledge, skills and new learning. It is vital that our pupils attend school regularly, on time and in good health. Accurate marking of the register and identification of the reasons for absence are vital to ensure that potential areas of concern can be identified early on, discussed with parents and carers and solutions sought.

The vast majority of our pupils are all transported to and from school by either LA transport or their parents. This and the nature of their learning disability make it unlikely that they would truant deliberately. Where pupils are walking to and from school independently, this has been agreed in advance between parents and school. We appreciate how stressful and difficult looking after a child with learning difficulties can be for families however if a child is in late on a regular basis or inappropriately absent we may wish to involve the Inclusion Service, Community Nurses or Social Care in order to improve the pupil's attendance record.

Reporting of Absences

Parents and carers are expected to let us know the reasons for a child's absence by completing the Absence Notification form on MySchool App on the first day that their child is away, preferably before 8.30 am, and on each day of subsequent absence. Class teachers will let the school office know of any unexplained absences. A member of the admin team will then follow this up with a telephone call to home.

We discourage parents passing on verbal messages via minibus escorts and these will be followed up by school. Parents and carers are expected to inform us in advance, preferably in writing, of any medical or dental appointments.

Authorised Absences

The following may be authorised absences:

- Illness
- Medical Appointments
- Dental Appointments
- Stays in hospital or respite care when transport to school is not available
- Therapy or tuition approved by the school e.g. physiotherapy, music therapy etc.
- Family holidays in exceptional circumstances
- Bereavements and funerals
- Days of religious observance (of the parents' religion)
- Integration placements at other schools (marked as B or D do not count in the annual totals of authorised absence as pupils are still being educated)
- School journeys or Educational visits (marked B, do not count in the authorised absence figures)

Unauthorised Absences

The following will be deemed unauthorised absences:

- Family holidays unless previously agreed with the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances
- Time off for shopping or birthday trips
- Visiting or meeting relatives or friends unless agreed with the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances
- Missing the school transport (but not if the transport does not run)
- Any absence without valid reason or explanation

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are concerns about the pupil's attendance, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Registration and Lateness

It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The school day begins at 9.10 am when the attendance register will be taken.

If pupils arrive at school after the register has been taken, a late mark will be recorded. The register will close at 9.45 am, and if a child arrives after 9.45 am without a valid explanation it

will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures. We expect that parents will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child is punctual and prepared for the day.
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Contact the school early on the child's first day of absence
- Contact the school on each subsequent day if a timescale for absence has not been identified on the first day.
- Inform the school if they wish to collect their child early or if they will be late arriving due to medical / dental treatment.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

Absence forms for parents to complete are available on request. (App. 2) The staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Procedures

The school will publish attendance data in the School Self Evaluation.

Records

The school will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and follow up non-attendance.
- Record all reasons for absences in the class registers.
- Transfer accurately all class register information to the electronic register.

Responding to Non-Attendance

Day one:

If following registration Clifton Hill School has not been notified of a reason for a pupil's absence a member of the admin team will phone parents/carers to make contact and to establish the reason for the absence.

If parents cannot be contacted, a member of the school leadership team will be informed and the parents/carers will be sent a text message asking them to contact school immediately.

If we do not hear from parents after the text message has been sent, the school office will begin to work through the emergency contact numbers until an explanation for the absence is received. If the pupils has an allocated social worker they will be informed that we have an unexplained absence.

If by **day two** there is no response:

A member of the school leadership will try to contact parents again, they will also try to contact transport and the school office will once again contact the emergency numbers. They will contact the area inclusion officer and if there is no news by the end of day two, will carry out a home visit if there are any additional concerns relating to the pupil i.e. feeding or medical requirements, or they are on a child protection plan.

If by **day three** there is no response:

A home visit will be conducted by two members of staff first thing in the morning and if there is no response the police will be informed.

All parents will be notified of this procedure as a reminder to always contact the school and also so ensure alternative emergency contact numbers are always provided.

REGISTRES – HOW DO WE DO THIS

Reporting to parents/carers

Parents and carers will be informed of their child's attendance at the end of every term. If there is a concern about a pupil's attendance, parent and carers will be contacted as soon as this concern is made apparent. The headteacher will determine the best way to contact parents, taking into account:

- The pre existing medical needs of the pupil
- The reasons for the absences
- The pupil's previous attendance records

If appropriate, the headteacher will contact parents in writing to inform them of their child's attendance, to suggest ways to improve attendance and to encourage good attendance.

If their child's attendance does not improve, the headteacher will contact parents either by phone or with a face to face meeting to determine what are the barriers to good attendance and to offer support to improve attendance.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Process for when attendance becomes a concern

For children and young people that do not have a medical/health issue impacts on their attendance we will follow Surrey CCs suggest process for when attendance becomes a concern:

Universal offer
Schools are expected to regularly monitor attendance of all pupils and have robust daily processes to follow up absence. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone calls home to discuss reasons for absence• Informal conversation with the pupil when they return to school after an absence• Raise attendance concerns with key school staff and any external professionals working with the pupil
Informal support
Phone call with parent to discuss any issues and explore why absences are ongoing
If absences are due to illness. Liaise with health. Consider implementing an Individual Health Care Plan.
Meet with the family and complete an Attendance Assessment document. Ensuring barriers to attendance are explored. It is expected that at this stage schools would: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider alternatives i.e., reduced timetables, changes in classes, ELSA etc.• Implement rewards and recognition for any improvements, regular catch ups with the child• Raise concerns with appropriate staff i.e., SENCO, Senior Leadership, Attendance Lead, SAS can be contacted for guidance if needed.• Signpost parents and/or make referrals for support to other agencies as appropriate.• Issue a letter of expectations regarding attendance to parents.
Formal support (attendance contract/agreement)
Invite parent/carer to a school attendance meeting. Purpose of the meeting is discuss attendance concerns and put in place an Attendance Contract (Attendance Agreement for independent schools). Schools should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite key professionals (health, social care, SEND etc) to the meeting in order to ensure any out of school barriers can be addressed.• Consider alternatives i.e., reduced timetables, change to classes, ELSA, etc• Consider issuing of a Notice to Improve letter• Where parents do not attend initial meeting, they should be given at least 1 further opportunity to meet before issuing a Notice to Improve letter• Raise for discussion at Targeted Support Meeting or seek advice from Surrey Attendance Service.
Monitoring period. If appropriate call a review meeting to review attendance contract/parenting agreement.
If there is no improvement in attendance schools should consider requesting either a Penalty Notice be issued, or SAS consider prosecution

Monitoring attendance

Clifton Hill School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

Clifton Hill School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

Clifton Hill School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Clifton Hill School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance