



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Our Vision

*Nurture – Inspire - Thrive*

### Our Mission

*Valuing and developing the potential in everyone*

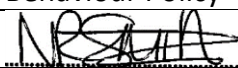
### In support of the Enable Trust

#### Vision

Achieving More Together

#### Mission:

Working together passionately to achieve the best outcomes  
for our SEND children and young people

Reviewed by:	Chris Walker
Reviewed when:	March 2024
Ratified by:	Local Governing Body
Review Frequency: <i>Annual, Bi-Annual</i> (Subject to Academy Trust or national policy change)	Bi-annual
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Related Policies:	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour Policy
Chair of Local Governing Body Signature:	
Equalities Impact Assessment date:	

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### Rationale

Culverhill School believes that consistent high attendance at school enables pupils to maximise their rate of progress and that absence from school hinders development thus preventing pupils from achieving their potential. We therefore have systems set up within to school to monitor attendance carefully and we work with our LA Education Welfare Officer (EWO) via termly meetings and all term access if required for particular cases according to need. We have access to EWO for 2 hours per Term (Based on 6 Terms).

### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

By promoting the need for return to school after medical or other appointments if possible to ensure maximum learning time over the wider curriculum is available for pupils to make progress towards their individual EHCP outcomes

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence supported by termly reports accessed from Arbor

We will appropriately support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons with consideration of their needs, both additional and medical.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. Culverhill School has sought and received advice from South Glos. EWO on amending this policy to meet the latest Government guidelines. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

All of the Government documents can be accessed from the [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-schools - attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-schools-attendance)

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 Local Governors**

The Local Governing Body for the school is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. This will be sourced from the relevant post holder and verified for the Governing Body by the Head Teacher.

It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance Governor: Claire Evans

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

Implementation of this policy at the school

Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The attendance strategic lead:**

Phil Lapham – [phillip.lapham@culverhillschool.org.uk](mailto:phillip.lapham@culverhillschool.org.uk)

The school attendance strategic lead:

Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

Liaises with class teams to ensure daily issues are dealt with and parents contacted according to the school protocol.

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with the EWO to tackle persistent absence and any issues concerning pupils' needs and circumstances including medical needs given the cohort of the school.

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Tracks the progress of ongoing pupil issues to ensure, as a school, we are able to report progress to outside agencies

Co-ordinates the writing of individual attendance plans

Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 3.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They are also responsible for in class attendance incentives.

### 3.5 Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible for:

Making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education and attend that education with the ambition of 100% attendance.

#### **Phoning the school office to report an absence before 8:30am**

Planned Absence (see section 4.3)

Unplanned Absence (see section 4.2)

Reiterating the importance of school attendance to their child

Engaging with school staff to improve school attendance

Celebrating with their children with regard to improved attendance

### 3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. The office manager is also responsible for making 1st and 2nd calls to parents at the recommended time frames as set out below.

**Step 1** - 9:30am text message home to confirm non-attendance. If no response by **10am**, move to step 2.

**Step 2** - 10:00am Phone call home (**preferably from a member of the class team**) to confirm non-attendance if no response phone 2nd and 3rd contacts. If no response by 12:30pm, move to step 3.

**Step 3** – 12:30pm office staff to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy designated safeguarding lead in order to implement a home visit. If the pupil has a designated social worker, they should be informed at this point. If no response, move to step 4.

**Step 4** – Due to the nature and vulnerability of our students, a further attempt will be made to contact parents and carers and if no progress, DSL will be immediately informed who will proceed as per DSL protocols.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:05am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please be aware, according to Government guidelines, that a half day is acceptable without evidence of appointment (please try to organise appointments in the morning or later afternoon and try to return your child for the rest of the day if in the morning). If in doubt or concerned then please contact us as we are aware of the differing needs of our pupils and your circumstances.

#### **REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE**

These should be made:

On the official school form.

Well in advance of the proposed absence, and well before any bookings are made.

By the parent or carer “with whom the pupil normally resides”. This covers the situation of children who are looked after or whose parents are separated or divorced, and who wish to go on holiday with the other parent or other relative.

The parent or carer with day-to-day care (permanent residence) should always make the request on behalf of the other parent or relative, in order to avoid any subsequent misunderstandings or disputes. If a parent or relative has not followed this process and has requested absence this will be declined until agreed with permanent parent or carer as above. The person who is in care of the child during the leave of absence will be the person liable.

The school will consider each request for absence on its merits, but general principles are:

- a) Headteachers are permitted to grant leave of absence in order that a pupil may take part in a family holiday which cannot take place during school holidays because a parent is unable to arrange leave from work to coincide. The fact that holidays are cheaper during term time is not regarded as a valid reason for missing education.
- b) Where leave is granted, one week of term time per school year shall be regarded as sufficient.
- c) Leave will not normally be granted for pupils to go on holiday with friends or friends’ parents.
- d) No leave will be granted during year 10 or 11 examination period.
- e) Modular exams, coursework requirements and tight teaching schedules mean that any absence during years 10-11 is very disruptive and parents are urged not to request leave during these important periods of their children’s education.
- f) Leave will not be granted to pupils who already have poor attendance records.
- g) In some cases, such as an extended visit to relatives abroad, a trip may bring considerable educational benefit to the child. In such cases we might wish to discuss how the trip could be used as part of an educational programme, perhaps by setting work to be done whilst away, or asking for a project to be completed on return.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil’s parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

After the register has closed at 9:05am pupils will be marked as absent, using the appropriate U code unless they arrive after this time where they will be marked as late using the L code. The reason for this will be sought from parents or carers.

Given the nature of our pupils needs we will always endeavour to support and work with families to resolve lateness.

## 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by

**Step 1** - 9:30am text message home to confirm nonattendance. If no response by 11am, move to step 2

**Step 2** - 10:00am Phone call home to confirm nonattendance if no response phone 2nd and 3rd contacts. If no response by 12:30pm, move to step 3.

**Step 3** – 12:30pm office staff to inform the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead in order to implement a home visit. If no response, move to step 4.

**Step 4** – Due to the nature and vulnerability of our students the school family liaison officer will perform a wellbeing check at the home address of the student. If the student is not at the home, then the local authority access response team will be informed.

As a school we must:

Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

Identify whether the absence should be approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

Culverhill School will report attendance during annual summer term report writing and EHCP annual reviews.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as beyond the control of a person.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision, this list is not exhaustive.

## Year 11 absence

Leave will not normally be granted through the academic year for Year 11 students unless this is due to an emergency or exceptional circumstance. Parents and carers of pupils at Culverhill are encouraged to communicate with the Strategic Attendance Lead and the Head Teacher according to circumstances. All cases will be considered sympathetically to circumstances and need.

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The expected attendance for all pupils at Culverhill is above 93%

Our attendance officer monitors thresholds daily.

Should attendance drop below **95%** we will analyse the data and create an appropriate action plan to support families. Persistent non-attendance will result in:

Open conversation with families in order to improve attendance. Supportive actions.

Discuss to EWO (Education Welfare Officer)

Refer to the EWO to conduct a SAM meeting (School attendance meeting)

See Flow Chart below

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

In cases where parents or carers take their child on holiday during term time, we will follow the Code of Conduct and request that a Penalty Notice is issued by the local authority where applicable. Where all or almost all unauthorised absence marks are U coded (including late after registration) we will first seek to engage with parents/carers and pupil. If U code absences persist, we will request a Penalty Notice in line with the LA Code of Conduct.

They may be issued to one or both parents/carers regarding each of their children if more than 10 sessions (1 session equals either a morning or afternoon) of unauthorised absence are accumulated in a 7-week period (i.e. 70 sessions of possible attendance at school). A session is a morning or an afternoon. Any person with day-to-day care of the child may be issued with a Notice; this could include grandparents, step-parents and partners.

Unauthorised Holidays in term time will automatically result in the school requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice on the 11th missed session (6th day of absence).

Other than for holidays in term time, the decision regarding the issue of a Penalty Notice will be taken as part of the legal process between the school and local authority (i.e., at Attendance Panels and Reviews).

The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each morning class teachers conduct wellbeing check ins with all pupils in their class.

100% attendance certificates.

Whole class attendance certificate (the best attendance in the school).

Pens and key rings for improved attendance.

Bespoke initiatives led by attendance strategic lead.



## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The office manager at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill unless they have made explicit that the child will be off for a longer period of absence. If the child has sickness and diarrhoea, then the child would be marked absent for 48 hours.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this unless medical evidence has been provided.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

Culverhill School tracks attendance through a system called Arbor and data is stored on cloud-based Arbor servers. Using Arbor we will:

Track the attendance of individual pupils

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the school leadership team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. <b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend school due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrives after the register is closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	hole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

