



ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Related Policies:

- Behaviour Policy & Discipline Procedure
- Curriculum Policy

Date: 8th June 2011

Review Date: November 2013

General Statement of Policy

The aim of Canterbury Steiner School Attendance Policy is to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. Canterbury Steiner School expects pupils to attend regularly in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance and/or late arrival undermine the educational process and lead to educational disadvantage.

We believe that the goal of regular attendance should be pursued both in relation to individual pupils and the school as a whole. It is a legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive full-time education- 5 days per week during term time. Conversely, it is part of the School's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which might lead to non-attendance.

The school recognises the influence of the curriculum on promoting good attendance and maintains that the school ethos and organisation also have a significant impact on pupil attendance. Research indicates that the greatest deterrents to truancy are parental and teacher disapproval. In order for parents to show such disapproval, systems need to be in place so that they are made aware of known unauthorised absence at the earliest opportunity.

The Canterbury Steiner School will not authorise absence during periods of examination except for illness and revision. We regard any unnecessary absence as educationally detrimental. Our teaching methods make it very difficult for pupils to catch up at home.

Statutory Duty of School

The Education Act 1996 requires parents, carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law requires that the School takes an attendance register twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry should be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age, showing whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

Implementation of the Policy

The School will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.
- The Canterbury Steiner School sets annual attendance targets for both authorised and unauthorised absence, which will be reviewed, at least termly.
- Individual pupils are given individual attendance targets where appropriate and progress towards achieving these targets will be reviewed as part of the initial review system.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unacceptable.
- A first day telephone call system forms an integral part of the Canterbury Steiner School's monitoring of attendance/late arrivals and contact with parents.
- Pupils attendance and lateness is measured and contact made with parents as appropriate. The Education Welfare Service will be involved in absences/lateness that are effecting the pupils education (after **10 days** of unauthorised pupil absence).

School will Undertake the Following:

1. To telephone parents/guardians every morning after registration.
2. To telephone parents/guardians every afternoon after registration.
3. Late registration could be deemed an absence if no notification from the parent/guardian is received. Parents/guardians will be telephoned for late registration.

Parents/Guardians will Undertake the Following:

1. Will inform Canterbury Steiner School on the 1st day of absence.
2. a) Holidays taken during term time will be shown as an unauthorised absence;
b) During periods of lengthy absences regular contact with the school is advised. This will assist the pupil for provision of work.

Monitoring the Record

1. Weekly information is shared at the Business Meeting.
2. The school monitors the attendance and late records termly.
3. The school completes an annual return to the DFES.

Pupil Absence

Canterbury Steiner School distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absences. Leave of Absence may be granted by the College, at the request of the parent/carer that he/she normally resides with.

Request of Absence for Pupil Employment

Leave of Absence may not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours unless it is:

- To engage in work experience (permitted under the Education Act 1996)
- To take part in a performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority
- To be employed abroad for a purpose for which a licence has been granted by a police magistrate.

Holidays

Notwithstanding the above, the regulation provides that a pupil may be given leave of absence, at the request of the parent/guardian with whom he/she normally resides, to go on holiday. Except in exceptional circumstances, such leave of absence may not exceed 10 school days in any school year.

Authorised Absences

Absences must be authorised by the College, not just the parent/guardian. Absences may legally be authorised by the School for the following reasons:

- **Illness**
 - The College/Teacher may reach an agreement with the parent on sending work home to enable pupils to keep up with the class.
- **Medical and Dental Appointments**
 - Parents should always seek to make appointments out of school hours, if possible.
- **Days of religious observance**
 - Parents should give advanced notice

- **Interviews**
 - For interviews for prospective employers, or for a place at another school, including an entrance exam, or for a university place, the parent should give advance notice
- **Holidays in term-time**
 - The majority of term time holidays will be unauthorised absences. However, under exceptional circumstances, the College may authorise a holiday in term time:
 - Where it is judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious illness, bereavement or another traumatic event
 - To allow a pupil to visit a parent who is working abroad for a fixed, medium-term period
 - To allow a pupil to visit their country of origin
- **Exclusion**
 - Days of absence resulting from a fixed term exclusion (suspension), or after a decision to permanently exclude where a review or appeal is taking place are viewed as authorised absences.
- **Responsibilities as a carer**
 - Where pupils are caring for sick or disabled family members, the College can authorise absence for a limited duration. However, the Child's education is the priority. If the College feels the Child is taking undue responsibility as a family carer, the School may consider a referral to children's social care so that support can be given. Illness or disability within the family does not provide a defence for a parent who is prosecuted for failing to ensure their Child's regular attendance at School.
- **Bereavement**
 - Requests for absences for bereavements are left to the discretion of the College to judge. The School will seek to respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events.
- **Special occasions**
 - The College will consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions, such as a family wedding, would warrant an authorised leave of absence.
- **Participation in a public performance**
 - Pupils may only take leave for public performances for fully-licensed events which have been legally authorised by the local authority.

- **Maternity**
 - Pregnant pupils and teenage mothers should be given support to remain in School whenever possible. A pregnant pupil will be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time before and after birth. After that, any absence will be treated as unauthorised.

- **Work Experience**

- **Sporting Activity**
 - Regular authorised absences for training and competition if a pupil is of a national or international standard will be considered on a case by case basis. However, it should be noted that the School would normally attempt to dissuade a pupil from committing to prolonged absence for sporting commitments, especially younger pupils. It goes against the founding educational values of the school, significantly disrupts the flow of the carefully planned Steiner curriculum and can result in an undesirable developmental imbalance.