



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

In order for the children to fully benefit from our educational provision it is essential that parents & carers ensure that their children arrive at school on time and ready to learn by 08.30 every day of the school year unless there are situations beyond their control.

Attendance at school is a legal requirement but for us the *educational, developmental* and *social* consequences of absence or poor punctuality are even more serious for the individual pupil, the class and the teachers. This is the case for all pupils of all ages throughout the school from Kindergarten up.

Our educational approach which includes learning in thematic blocks (Main Lessons) makes it difficult to catch up for missed time. Our holidays are already longer than in state schools making it essential that pupils have a good attendance record during term time.

At Canterbury Steiner School we therefore:

- Regard any unauthorised absence as educationally detrimental.
- Regard punctuality as essential and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupils' development
- Regard term time holidays as unacceptable

The law requires parents to ensure that:

- Children of compulsory school age must receive "an efficient education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude"
- Children of compulsory school age must attend regular full time schooling

We are required by law to:

Take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present or has an authorised or unauthorised absence.

Registration

The teacher taking the first lesson of the day and the first lesson of the afternoon marks the attendance register with the appropriate mark.

Attendance registers are taken to the office to be checked and recorded.

Attendance records are regularly checked by the Department of Education.

Absence

Parents are required to telephone the school before registration time if their child will be absent, giving reasons for their absence.

If a pupil is absent without prior notice the school will contact the parents to ensure:

- a) that the pupil is safe, and
- b) to establish the reason for their absence

Following this the register will then be completed accordingly. All absence and attendance figures are entered on the

database and are available to the School Inspection Service on behalf of Ofsted and to the Department for Education and the school's or Local Authority's Safeguarding Teams.

Pupils who are persistently late or persistently absent will be referred to the Safeguarding Team.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the School Leader¹, in consultation with the Kindergarten teacher, class teacher or class guardian

- has given the parents of a pupil approval for their absence in advance
- has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence or
- where the absence is authorised as an approved educational activity (educated off site/interviews)

The School Leader authorises absence. All other absences will be regarded as authorised.

Absence may be authorised on compassionate grounds and in exceptional circumstances. See Appendix for further details.

Punctuality

Parents are required to ensure that their children arrive on time before the 08.30 bell.

Avoidable lateness after registration constitutes unauthorised absence.

APPENDIX to CSS Attendance policy

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absences may legally be authorised in some circumstances by the School Leader, with at least 2 weeks' notice unless due to illness or unforeseen emergencies for the following reasons:

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

- **Illness**

- **Medical and Dental Appointments**

If it is unavoidable that they take place during school hours

- **Days of religious observance**

- **Interviews**

¹ Or SMT in the School Leader's absence.

For interviews for prospective employers, or for a place at another school, including an entrance exam, or for a university place.

- **Responsibilities as a carer**

Where pupils are caring for sick or disabled family members, we may authorise absence for a limited duration. However, the pupil's education is the priority. If the school feels the pupil is taking undue responsibility as a family carer, we may consider a referral to the relevant safeguarding authority 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 son or daughter's regular attendance at School.

- **Bereavement of a close relative or friend**

- **Special occasions**

We 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**

Pupils can be granted leave of absence to attend work experience.

Note:

Compulsory School Age

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. However, sixteen year olds are required to continue in education or training, until their 18th birthday.

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