

Attendance Policy

Cotham School recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and effective learning. Students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

To ensure that all students and parents share this recognition, the school is committed to

1. Promoting the value and importance of Attendance
2. Reducing unauthorised absences, especially Persistent Absence (below 85%)

Promoting Regular Attendance

The School's Responsibility:

- Report to the parent - Your child's attendance percentage and their punctuality
- Celebrate and reward good attendance
- Respond to difficulties and issues which prevent a child from attending school
- Accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness
- Advise parents if an absence is unauthorised (it is the decision of the Head teacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised.
- Submit Termly Absence returns and targets to the Local Authority
- Make provision for first day of absence contact by text/phone
- Have in place an action plan for all students whose attendance is below 80%
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The Parents/Carer's Responsibility:

- Are responsible in law for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered
- Notify the school on the Attendance Line 0117 919 8019 of any absence or lateness
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance (in accordance with the relevant religious calendar) 1 day is authorised for the celebration of Eid
- Ensure that the school has the correct contact details.

Authorised /Unauthorised Absence

All absence is authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher

Illness – the school may ask a parent to provide evidence from a Doctor/ Hospital for any absence of more than 5 days. If the school has concerns about a child's absence, this period may be reduced to 2 days. The school will inform the parent of this in writing.

Medical Appointments – Dentist/Orthodontist/Hospital Appointments when possible should be made out of school time. However if this is not possible, a student may sign out for the appointment and return to school afterwards. The school will not authorise a whole day's absence for a standard appointment.

Holidays in Term Time – It is no longer at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise school holidays in any circumstances

Exceptional Leave – In very exceptional circumstances parents may request leave. They must present evidence to the head teacher who will convene a meeting to discuss.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classified as unauthorised and attract such sanctions as Penalty Notices.

Children Missing Education

After 10 continuous days of absence and with no contact from parent/carer, the school will report the child as missing education and has adopted the Bristol City Council Protocol and Procedures

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/education-welfare-service-1>

Punctuality/ Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable; students arriving late disrupt the learning of others and significantly damage their own learning.

The school day starts at **8.40am** and we expect all students to be sat in class at that time for the start of the register. If a student arrives during the register they are marked as late (L).

The registers close at 9.30am. In accordance with the regulations governing absence, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U).

If your child has a persistent late record and the normal sanctions (detentions/letter) have failed to resolve the problem, you will be informed of this in writing. In these circumstances and from the date of the letter, the school will mark your child as unauthorised if they do not arrive at registration time (8.40am). Please note that each school day is made up of 2 sessions AM & PM

Penalty Notices

Parents/Carers commit an offence if a child does not attend school. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice is £60 if payment is made within 21 days, £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. If full payment is not received within this time the Local Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence by your child. If proven, this can result in fines of up to £1000. If found guilty the parent will have a criminal record.

Penalty Notices may be used where absence is unauthorised for example

- Term time holiday without authorisation

- Students are regularly late to registration (see lateness)

- A student has 8 or more unauthorised absences (Sessions) within the previous 10 week period

T Reed

February 2010

Amended Jan 2015