



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Caldew School

## Policy Information

Reviewed under SW&G Committee

On school website

Reviewed biannually

Adopted: January 2025

Next review: January 2026

NOTE: Caldew School is an Academy and where reference is made to school(s) this should be taken to refer to 'academy' in so far as the reference specifically applies to Caldew School.

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Rationale – Why Attendance Matters**

Why is consistent attendance at school crucial? Research indicates that maintaining excellent attendance at school plays a pivotal role in securing positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing school leaves pupils susceptible to falling behind, resulting in gaps in their learning and a decline in self-confidence.

According to findings by Universities UK, children with poor attendance are five times less likely to achieve five strong passes at GCSE, hindering their prospects for higher education or employment.

Additionally, poor attendance at school is linked to adverse emotional health and well-being. Regularly absent children and young people may experience social isolation, lack confidence, and suffer from low self-esteem.

School is not solely about academic success and attainment; it encompasses learning about the world, building relationships, and discovering oneself. To miss school is to miss the experiences that shape our choices, opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Evidence strongly suggests that children with regular school attendance achieve better outcomes, leading to healthier, wealthier, and more enriched lives.

### **Our Approach To Improving Attendance**

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

<b>Expect</b>  Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
<b>Monitor</b>  Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
<b>Listen and understand</b>  When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
<b>Facilitate support</b>  Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
<b>Formalise support</b>  Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.
<b>Enforce</b>  Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Promoting and Rewarding Good Attendance**

At Caldew School we recognise the importance of celebrating good and improving attendance by:

- Congratulating students each week when they achieve excellent or good attendance or when their attendance improves.
- Weekly “Be in to spin to win” prize draws for every student who achieved 100% the previous week
- 10 Achievement points for 100% attendance each month
- Termly certificates for good (96-99.9%) and excellent (100%) attendance
- Special events to promote and celebrate good attendance
- Regular assemblies promoting good attendance
- Weekly news messages, informing students of whole school and year group totals
- Inter-form attendance competitions
- Social media posts, newsletters and attendance leaflets to promote the message that moments count, attendance matters.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Attendance and Pastoral Team at Caldew School**

Deputy Headteacher for Student Welfare and Guidance	Paul Hammond
Senior Attendance Lead	Emma Brownlee
Attendance Officer	Kim Wallace
Year 7 Team	Jo Atkinson (Head of Year) Carrig Suleman (Pastoral manager)
Year 8 Team	Helen Clark-Hewitt (Head of Year) Lorraine Graham (Pastoral Manager)
Year 9 Team	Lorna Fraser (Head of Year) Lorraine Graham (Pastoral Manager)
Year 10 Team	Brendan McArdle (Head of Year) Sheila Taylor (Pastoral Manager)
Year 11 Team	Carrie Wallace (Head of Year) Carrig Suleman (Pastoral Manager)

Parental responsibilities for attendance include:

- Making sure their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child’s age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have (under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996).
- Ensuring their child attends school every day once enrolled unless there is a genuine reason for absence.
- Ensuring their child is on time for school (see punctuality procedures)
- Contacting school by telephone, in person, by text, email or written note before 9.00am on the first day of absence and regularly if it is ongoing (see reporting absence procedures)
- Providing us with accurate and up to date contact details (including a minimum of 2 emergency contacts) and updating us as soon as possible if those details change.
- As far as possible making health, doctor, dentist, hospital etc. appointments outside of school hours or at the very beginning or end of the school day to minimise the amount of learning missed. Students should be absent from school only for as long as it takes to attend their appointment, and they should not be absent for entire whole or half days unnecessarily.
- Speaking to a member of school staff about something that may affect their child’s school attendance.
- Avoiding taking their child out of school for non-urgent matters.

All Students (including 6<sup>th</sup> Form) are responsible for:

- Attending school regularly and punctually. Aiming for 100% Attendance
- Review attendance regularly in form time or with other pastoral staff.
- Students will be required to discreetly discuss reasons for absence and encouraged to speak with a trusted adult if there are problems which are affecting their attendance, enabling school to offer appropriate support.

Governors responsibilities include:

- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across our school's ethos, policies, and procedures ensuring that they also help us meet our Equality Objectives and do not discriminate.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- The Student Welfare and Guidance Committee will work alongside the Headteacher on attendance issues including evaluating our effectiveness on attendance by regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) who need it most.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- An attendance summary will be made available and appropriate sections will be included in the Schools' action plan for the following year.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual student, group, and whole school attendance and punctuality patterns.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the school Attendance Policy and procedures.
- Having effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance.
- Ensuring that all staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, understand their responsibilities for following the Attendance Policy, modelling good attendance behaviour, and ensuring students follow the Policy as well and that it is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Making parents and carers aware of the school Attendance Policy and procedures by making them available on the school website, on request from the school office, or through an attendance leaflet for parents.

The Senior Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, making sure they are followed by all staff, using absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of individual student, group and whole school attendance and punctuality and ensuring useful data is reported to the Headteacher/Head of School weekly at SLT meetings with a half termly review of action.
- Providing the Governor SWG committee members with information to enable them to evaluate the success of this Policy and practice.
- Leading Pastoral Staff and Attendance Officer to ensure that procedures are understood and followed and that contact is made with parents or carers regarding concerns about their child's attendance and where necessary interventions are implemented.
- Attending meetings with parents or carers when appropriate, to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Supporting admin staff in monitoring Late Gate and working with key partners if attendance and/or punctuality becomes an issue.
- Monitoring the processing of all legal documentation regarding attendance monitoring including penalty notices to the LA

- Promoting good attendance through assemblies, reward incentives, form tutor activities, newsletters, parents' evenings, social media posts etc
- Attending Targeted Support Meeting with the Access Inclusion Team from the Local Authority

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Recording students arriving late or leaving early on a daily basis.
- Preparing, managing, and coordinating use of the school management system.
- Monitoring and tracking attendance patterns for all students and preparing relevant attendance reports when necessary, using an electronic attendance register with the correct coding, which includes statutory reporting to the DfE in consultation with the Senior Attendance Lead.
- Along with Pastoral Managers, contacting any parent or carer who has not told us why their child is absent on the first day of their absence.
- Contacting parents or carers of those students on the priority list.
- Using the SMS system to request the reason for an absence from parents.
- Ensuring that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each student by the end of each week.
- Making a judgment together with the Senior Attendance Champion about whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Along with other pastoral staff, carrying out welfare checks on students who haven't been seen in school for a number of days.
- Processing legal documentation regarding attendance monitoring including penalty notices to the LA
- Logging achievement points for 100% attendance

Other School Staff: Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff

- Teaching staff must complete the register at the start of each lesson (within 5 minutes). This should be completed in silence to ensure an accurate record is taken. Staff should report any students who are "missing" attended previous lessons to student services and attendance officer.
- Form tutors will ensure students are aware of their attendance each week and monitor attendance, raising concerns with Heads of Year. Students should be spoken to following any absence about the reasons for absence and to ensure that work will be caught up.
- Pastoral Managers will follow any unexplained absence with phone calls to parents to ascertain reasons. A student's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.
- Heads of Year will monitor attendance regularly alongside the Attendance Officer and Senior Attendance Lead, students and/or parents who experience difficulties with regular attendance will be offered prompt and sympathetic support. Where there is the need for more sustained action, an Attendance Action Plan will be agreed between the school, parent and student, setting targets which will address the attendance concerns, further measures will be implemented if attendance fails to improve (Please see Attendance Interventions)

## **Attendance Procedures**

All students are expected to arrive at school by 8.40am Registration closes at 9.30am,(this will be altered to 9:15 once the significant road closures have finished) after which students will be marked as late after registers have closed (U code), which is an unauthorised absence.

### **Absence Reporting**

- Parents must inform the school of any absence giving the student's name, form and reason for absence, before 9am on each day of absence via:  
Phone call 01228 710044 (option 3)  
Text: 07860 055 816
- If a voicemail is left, the school may arrange a follow up phone call or home visit.
- Absences will only be marked as "authorised" if they fall under valid reasons such as illness (in some circumstances these may not be authorised), medical appointments (with evidence provided), family emergencies or other special consideration as per the government criteria outlined in the Absence Policy. Absences for holidays or non-essential reasons during term time will be unauthorised.
- If a child is absent without notifying school, school staff will contact parents via SMS initially and if there is no response, by phone. If no contact is made, the school will attempt to reach other contacts listed on the child's record or complete a home visit if deemed necessary.
- If the school cannot reach the family or there are concerns about the child's safety, the case will be escalated to the school's safeguarding team, further actions to be taken in line with child protection guidelines and schools first day calling procedures.

### **Punctuality Procedures –**

#### **Students must arrive in school by 8:40am**

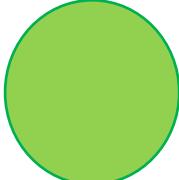
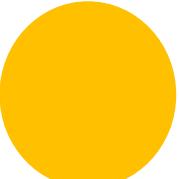
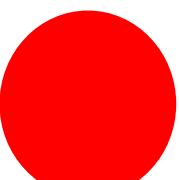
- Any student arriving after 08:40 will receive a Late Code (L)
- School 'Late Gate' operates between 08:40 – 09:00. It is to be expected that very occasionally a student will be late for a genuine reason. We are concerned when late arrivals become often and/or regular (persistent), especially if the reasons given seem repetitive and avoidable. Students who are late more than once will complete a 20 minutes detention at Breaktime
- Students arriving after the register closes (9:30am) will be marked as Unauthorised (U code).
- Lateness to lessons is monitored daily and a lunch time detention is issued to students who are late two or more times in a day. Failure to attend a detention will result in an after-school detention.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and result in further sanctions and parent phone calls or meetings.
- Children missing the register will incur a missed session but are encouraged to come in as soon as possible.
- If appointments cannot be made outside of the school day, it is expected that children will attend both before and after the appointment time.

### **Reporting to parents**

- The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be through messages, emails and termly data reports.
- Every parent can see their child's attendance on a day-to-day basis using SIMS Parent App. Instructions will be given when students first attend Caldew School.

## Attendance Interventions

We monitor attendance closely and have set thresholds where attendance will trigger interventions. The table below sets out some of the interventions and more details regarding procedures for referring to the Local Authority can be found towards the end of this document.

Attendance Level	Interventions	Staff / organisation responsible
Excellent / Good  100%- 96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students reminded of their attendance weekly</li> <li>100% for the week – prize draw – “Be in to win!”</li> <li>Certificates for Good / Excellent at the end of each term</li> <li>Parents informed via letter / email</li> <li>Other rewards given throughout the year</li> </ul>	
Concerns  90% -95.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students reminded of their attendance weekly</li> <li>Students spoken to by form tutors following each absence</li> <li>Student meeting / conversation with pastoral staff to identify barriers / offer support early</li> <li>Parents informed via letter / email</li> </ul>	
Significant Concerns  Persistent Absence (below 90%) Severe Absence (below 50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students reminded of their attendance weekly</li> <li>Students flagged with Head of Year and Attendance Staff</li> <li>Attendance Action Plan implemented</li> </ul> <p>Attendance Action Plan 1 (AAP1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student spoken to by pastoral staff and parents contacted</li> <li>Barriers identified / support offered</li> <li>Monitor 4 weeks</li> <li>Improvement – AAP1 passed (continue to monitor)</li> <li>No improvement AAP2</li> </ul> <p>Attendance Action Plan 2 (AAP2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental meeting in school</li> <li>Barriers reviewed and further support offered (including outside agency support)</li> <li>Monitored 4 weeks</li> <li>Improvement – celebrated and continue to monitor</li> <li>No improvement AAP3 – discuss with Local Authority</li> </ul> <p>Attendance Action Plan 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental meeting with Senior Attendance Lead</li> <li>AAP2 and support reviewed</li> <li>Improvement celebrated and continue to monitor</li> <li>No improvement – referral to the Local Authority Access and Inclusion Team with evidence case file – this could lead to prosecution</li> </ul>	

## **Leaves of absence during term time**

The law does not grant parents or carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time and parents or carers must apply to school for a leave of absence. Parents should not book family holidays during term time as they will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents may request other leave of absence; however, authorisation of this will be at the discretion of the school, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This means that in the majority of cases requests will not be authorised unless there are clear immediate family reasons or educational benefits.

Parents and carers who the child normally lives with must complete a 'Leave of Absence' form ([available from the school office](#)) in advance (At least 2 weeks before date requested) outlining in writing the exceptional circumstances for the request.

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the Headteacher/Head of School, are cumulative (they are added together with all past periods of absence at this school). Parents or carers who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Notice to Improve and/or Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended).

**The table below summarises the changes to the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE**

From 19 August 2024 there is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England **of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence** within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

### **First Offence**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

### **Per Parent\***

Per Child Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent\*, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

### **Second Offence (within 3 years)**

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

### **\*Parent Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:**

All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

### **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

## Attendance Register Codes

Code	Description	Examples
/	Present (AM)	
\	Present (PM)	
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	taster days
C	Other authorised circumstances, <b>leave of absence granted by the school</b>	Family bereavement
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance or employment abroad	
C2	Leave of absence – part time timetable	
D	Dual Registration (attending other school)	Manage Move
E	Suspended or Excluded (no alternative provision)	suspension
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	
I	Illness (not medical / dental apps)	sickness
J1	Leave of absence – interview for employment	Uni, College, Placements,
K	Attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	
L	Late (before reg closed)	
M	Medical/ dental appointments	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	
O	Unauthorised Absences (absent without permission)	Unknown circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity	Swimming/ f/ball
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	
R	Religious Observations	
S	Study Leave (recorded as absence)	
T	Travelling with parent for occupational purposes	
U	Late (after registers closed) not satisfied for the reason for lateness	Arrived 30 mins after reg closed
V	Educational visit/ trip	Duke of Ed/ Uni visit/ open day/ panto
W	Work Experience	
X	Non-compulsory school age/ COVID – 19 related	
Y	Unable to attend – due to exceptional circumstances	
Y1	Unable to attend – normal transport not available	
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel disruption	Public transport issue / strike
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend – public health guidance/ law	
Y7	Unable to attend – unavoidable other than Y1 – Y6	
Z	Not on roll	
-	All should attend/ No mark recorded	
#	Planned/ partial school closure	