

Attendance Policy



2023-24



Attendance Policy

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Approval Level:	SLT
Governing Body Ratified:	N/A
Reviewer:	Ian Creswell Deputy Head, Pastoral Care

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Next Review Date: September 2025

*Cantell – An exceptional school experience:
Academic excellence / Exciting teaching & learning
Life-changing opportunities / A richly diverse community*

Policy Aims

At Cantell School good attendance is a high priority. As a school we are committed to improving the outcomes for all of our students and see good attendance as vitally important in achieving this. Evidence shows us that good school attendance promotes high attainment, which then leads to positive outcomes for all students.

This policy is designed to outline the way the school will work with students, parents and the Local Education Authority to ensure good attendance to school.

This policy is written to reflect the government guidance on school attendance using the "Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities 2024" document which can be found at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Attendance Groups

Attendance group	Percentage	What this means
Green	97-100%	No risk of underachievement Our expectation for attendance, with the vast majority of students meeting this each year.
Yellow	95-96.9%	Risk of underachievement Results for those in this group are not as strong as for the group above. Requires Improvement.
Amber	93-94.9%	Serious risk of underachievement Significantly lower results from this small group of students. Must improve.
Pink	90-92%	Severe risk of underachievement Results for this very small group were half that of the green group. Urgent need to improve.
Red	0-89.9%	Extreme risk of underachievement – Legal Action This level of attendance is unacceptable and seriously damages the life chances for this extremely small group. We will work with the local authority to support these few families.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to

attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

The Role of the School

The school is committed to supporting the attendance of our students and pro-actively dealing with non-attendance.

The school will develop and consistently implement policies and practice to support attendance; all staff will endeavour to raise the profile of attendance in everyday life.

The school will monitor attendance daily using electronic registers on SIMs. Registers will be taken during all periods of the school day to track attendance and guard against internal truancy. An absence call will be made by the Year Leader and a truancy call system will be used daily, to inform parents of student absences that have not been reported.

The school will analyse attendance data to establish any significant patterns that may help to combat poor attendance.

The school will maintain a list of students with less than 90% attendance and monitor these students with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) on a half-termly basis.

The school will work collaboratively with parents, partner schools, and outside agencies in supporting and promoting good attendance.

The Role of the Parent

By law, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children, of compulsory school age, receive an education.

Parents are expected to support the school by ensuring their child's regular attendance. Parents should ensure that students leave for school fully equipped and in correct uniform, in time for registration, no later than 8.30am.

Parents are expected not to take students out of school during term time unless absolutely necessary. This includes ensuring that medical appointments are made outside of school hours, and that no holidays are taken in term-time.

Parents are expected to notify the school of any absence on the first morning by contacting the absence line on **02380 323111 and selecting the year group of their child**. Parents are expected to provide medical evidence for any absence of 3 days or more. Failure to provide this will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Parents are expected to take an active interest in their child's school life and where attendance drops below 95%, are expected to work with the school in addressing any issues.

The Role of the Local Education Authority

The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) meets with the School Attendance Officer regularly to discuss all students with attendance below 90%. The Education Welfare Officer will discuss action plans, undertake home visits, and advise on any attendance matters within school.

The Education Welfare Service will take student referrals when intervention by the school has had no effect. The EWO will work with the family to improve attendance and may instigate legal proceedings if there is no significant improvement.

The Role of the Tutor

It is the responsibility of the Tutor to make attendance a high priority in everyday school life.

The Tutor is expected to embrace attendance initiatives and competitions organised by the Pastoral Team.

The Tutor is responsible for following up any unexplained absences and reporting any information to the Pastoral Team.

The Pastoral Team will issue a Catch-Up for every 5 late marks a student receives.

The Tutor must report any specific concerns regarding attendance to the Year Leader for further investigation.

Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents and the accurate completion of registers is a contractual obligation.

Registers must be completed electronically at the beginning of each lesson by the teacher. If SIMs is unavailable, a paper register must be completed and sent to the Admin Office as soon as possible.

Staff must ensure that the appropriate mark is recorded against each student. No gaps should be left on the register.

If a reason for a student's absence cannot be established, then the member of staff must report the absence via the first response system.

Registers are monitored throughout the day by the Admin Office and anomalies investigated. An electronic reminder is sent for incomplete registers after 10 minutes.

Any member of staff who regularly fails to complete their register will meet with the DHT – Pastoral Care.

The Admin Office will ensure that accurate registers are printed daily and will be available in the event of a fire. These will be passed to the appropriate Fire Officer at the assembly point, to carry out an immediate head count.

Punctuality

The school day starts at 8.30am and students are expected to be outside their tutor base, ready for learning, at this time.

Tutor time is 8.30am – 8.50am and is an important part of the school day. Tutors will complete the register and any student arriving to tutor time after 8.35am will be marked with an 'L' mark.

Any student arriving after 8.50am must sign in with the Admin Office and will be marked 'U' and will not receive a mark for the morning session.

If a student receives 10 'U' codes in an 8 school week period, Cantell School will apply to the Local Education Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued. This is £60 per parent per child.

Leave of Absence

In accordance with the Southampton City Council Attendance Policy 2013, as a school we will not authorise any leave of absence in term-time.

Parents are required to complete a Leave of Absence form to notify the school of their intentions to travel in term-time.

The school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice for any leave of absence that forms all or part of 5 days unauthorised absence in any 8-week period.

The school has the discretion to waive the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice if a child's attendance has been excellent and assurance has been given that it will not be repeated, in matters relating to safeguarding, or for compassionate reasons. In these situations a return to school date will be agreed. If the student fails to attend school by that date then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Authorised Absence (See note)

Only the school can authorise an absence. The school may authorise absence in certain circumstances. This responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Headteacher.

I – Illness will be authorised if the school is notified by the parent on the first day of absence or a signed note is provided upon the student's return to school. Any absence of 3 days or more must be supported with medical evidence. No absence for illness will be authorised if a student's attendance is less than 90%, without sight of medical evidence, such as an appointment card or copy of prescription.

C – Other authorised absences, such as a funeral or family emergency, where time off is essential.

S – Study Leave, as agreed by the school.

R – Leave granted for Religious Observance. Parents should inform the school beforehand. The school will only authorise a maximum of 1 day for religious observance per academic year.

Note: The school will only authorise up to a maximum of 10 days' absence in any school year unless medical evidence has been provided.

Unauthorised Absence

The school will not authorise any absence for the following reasons:

G – Any leave of absence during term time.

U – Late after 8.50am.

O – Unauthorised absence, such as time off for moving house, staying home to help parents, condoned absence by parents or illness where no evidence has been provided.

N – No reason given for absence

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a half-term period may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, by the Local Education Authority.

Tracking and Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and contact parents when there is any cause for concern.

Parents will receive a letter to inform them if their child's attendance is causing a concern. The school will then monitor the child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, then further communication will be required. This may include the Year Leader meeting with the student in school, a home visit or a meeting in school with parents.

Regular intervention days will be held throughout the year targeting specific groups of students.

The Education Welfare Officer will monitor the work of the Pastoral Team and assist in meeting with students and families when necessary.

If, after intervention by the school, there is no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

The EWO will work with the family and instigate legal proceedings if required.

Rewards

Teachers and support staff should praise students whenever possible for good attendance and punctuality. A weekly Attendance tracker will be sent to tutors to discuss with their students.

Attendance Certificates are presented in celebration assemblies throughout the year and students are regularly praised for good attendance in house or year assemblies.

Competition is encouraged between Tutor Groups and the results of the Attendance League are produced by the Year Leaders on a weekly basis. The winning group each half term will be rewarded.

The best attending house will win the Attendance Cup, presented at the end of every term.

Good or significantly improving attendance is a requirement for many reward trips and visits, applications to Prefect and other positions, and in Year 11, attendance to the school Prom. Students with unauthorised absence are at risk of being ineligible for consideration.