

# Clitheroe Royal Grammar School

## Attendance Policy

Staff member responsible: Assistant Headteachers, Main School and Sixth Form

Governors' Committee: Students and Staffing

### Aim

Clitheroe Royal Grammar School is committed to the belief that high levels of attendance and punctuality are vital in order that students may achieve their maximum potential.

We aim to maintain accurate registers in order to:

- report attendance information to parents/carers
- satisfy legal requirements
- monitor student progress
- build strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We also aim to provide guidelines for the application of consistent procedures which are flexible enough to respond to individual exceptional circumstances.

We aim for all students to meet our attendance target of 98%, which is considered to be good attendance.

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

➤ This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold and takes into consideration [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **School Procedures**

### **1. Registers**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register. Registers are important documents and must be taken promptly, accurately and clearly. Registers are to be taken for every lesson electronically using SIMS. This applies on both sites.

Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **2. Lateness**

Where students arrive late and miss the start of registration, at Main School they must report to reception. If a student fails to provide a valid reason for arriving late parents/carers will be contacted. At Sixth Form if a student arrives late, they should go to their first lesson and receive their mark. The individual circumstances of each case will be taken into account and authorised registration codes for genuinely unavoidable circumstances will be used.

### **3. Types of Absence**

Every absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/ carers) as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about the reason for any absence is always required.

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, for example if a student is unwell, as soon as is practically possible. Parents/carers should contact the site on which the student studies.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. This would not be asked for unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Authorised absences are sessions away from school for a good reason: illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Where a medical/dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents/ carers should ensure student's absence is for the minimum time possible. The school acknowledges that some students may have long term medical / health issues, and works to support students and families in minimising the impact of such issues on attendance. This would be recorded as an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.

This type of absence can lead to the school and the Local Authority employing sanctions and/or legal proceedings, i.e. Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecution. This type of absence includes:

- parents / carers keeping or allowing students to stay off school unnecessarily
- truancy at any time during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

#### 4. Requests for Leave of Absence

Continuity of attendance is very important for academic progress and absences can also affect a student's social integration. Parents are asked to exercise restraint when requesting leave and to note that the granting of leave of absence for family holidays is discretionary - schools may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. All requests should be addressed to the Headteacher in writing, and each will be considered individually, but it should not be assumed that approval will automatically be given. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Whilst the school may agree to occasional requests when there are genuine reasons, (e.g. family weddings or funerals) and whilst we realise that some parents/carers may have only limited flexibility over holiday periods available to them, parents/carers should note that leave will **not** normally be granted:

- to students in all year groups (especially those with external examinations, i.e. Years 11 and 13)
- during school examination periods of which parents are notified a year in advance
- for day trips or to take a holiday at home
- for more than 5 school days (10 is the *absolute maximum* in *exceptional* cases)
- where a student's attendance has been poor.

NB Holidays taken without prior agreement will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

#### 5. Exceptional Circumstances

Professional judgement can be exercised in individual cases and exceptional circumstances depending on:

- the nature of the event
- the frequency
- whether advance notification is given (this would normally be the case in exceptional circumstances)
- the overall attendance pattern of the student.

#### 6. Follow-up procedures

Reasons for absence must be provided by the student. The procedures for following up instances of absence are detailed in the Appendices for Main School and Sixth Form.

#### 7. Roles and Responsibilities

##### The Governors

The Governors are responsible for promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos, making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis and making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. This monitoring role would usually be conducted by the Students and Staffing Committee of the Governors.

## **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students.

## **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Assistant Headteachers at Main School and Sixth Form)**

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

Leading attendance across the school

Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

Having an oversight of data analysis

Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

## **The Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer:

- monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- provides regular attendance data and reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher or appropriate member of SLT
- works with outside agencies to address low attendance
- liaises with pastoral staff to support meetings about attendance and absence
- produces absence and punctuality reports for key staff
- contacts home when a student is absent from school and we have not heard from parents/carers

## **Class Teachers and Form Tutors**

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information on SIMS.

## **School [admin/office] staff**

School [admin/office] staff will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

If relevant, transfer calls from parents/carers to an appropriate member of the pastoral team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of school on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Students**

Students are expected to:

Attend every timetabled session on time

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

Student attendance data is closely monitored and compared to national statistics by Form Tutors, Pastoral Leaders and Assistant Heads of Main School and Sixth Form. Appropriate support is put in place if concerns are identified in order to improve school attendance.

Attendance information is included on progress reports to parents/carers and can be viewed on EduLink at any time

Statutory reporting of attendance figures is in compliance with the legal requirements and the Lancashire Local Authority arrangements.

## **9. Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence refers to absence of more than 10% of school sessions, as defined by the Department of Education. Students who are persistently absent from school are statistically less likely to achieve their full potential and we are required to monitor students closely should they become persistent absentees which includes working with parents and carers to improve their young person's attendance.

Parents or carers of students whose absence is unauthorised may be subject to a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority if their young person has more than 10 unauthorised absences (the equivalent of 5 full school days) over a term, or 14 unauthorised absences (the equivalent of 7 full school days) over two consecutive terms. Parents or carers would be given a written warning before a fixed penalty is issued.

Parents and carers need to be aware that it is their legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. Legal proceedings may be deemed appropriate by the Local Authority Court Officer if a student is persistently absent from school and a proportion of that absence is without authorisation. We may in exceptional circumstances need to work with the Local Authority to support prosecution for absence. Staff work closely with parents and carers where attendance is a concern and we hope that these sanctions would only be triggered as a last resort.

Further written guidance on attendance prosecution and penalty notices is available upon request.

## **10. Children Missing Education**

A child missing education is defined as a child of compulsory school age (Years 7-11) who is not on a school roll and not receiving an education via other means – for example, via Elective Home Education or an alternative provider such as a college. A student may still be at risk of missing

education or missing out on education even if they are on a school roll and such cases would be reported to the Local Authority.

This includes but is not limited to situations where:

- A student is on roll but has been excluded and no alternative provision is in place after 6 days
- A student has not been attending school and a home visit reveals that the family may have moved away
- A student has moved into the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A student has moved out of the area (this includes moving outside of the UK) or is about to move out of the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A student who has been offered a school place, but parents have refused the place offered and the authority is not aware of alternative arrangements for the student's education

In each of these cases Clitheroe Royal Grammar School is required to make a referral to the Local Authority. If a student does not attend school for 20 consecutive school days and the school has made reasonable enquiries to determine their whereabouts then the student would be removed from the school roll in liaison with the Children Missing Education Team at Lancashire Local Authority. In these circumstances this policy should be read alongside the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy where further guidance is given.

## **11. Rewards and Celebration**

As a school we acknowledge and celebrate excellent attendance. This is done through assemblies, events, prize draws, certificates and termly letters home (at Main School). The aim is to celebrate students who have sustained excellent attendance during the year and communicate the importance we place on this to all students and their families.

### **Links with other policies and guidance**

This policy is also linked to our Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and our Attendance Procedures.

Date of last review:	January 2024
Date of approval by Governors:	January 2024
Date of next review:	January 2025