

Attendance Policy 2021-22



Carnforth
High School

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| Governors' Committee: | Student Welfare Committee |
| Next Review Date: | September 2022 |



Confidence

Purpose

Respect

Aims of Policy

At Carnforth High School we recognise that for students to achieve their full potential regular school attendance is vital. The key to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance is a consistently applied whole school policy where everyone accepts and plays their part.

Carnforth High School is committed to provide all its students with a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each individual to realise his/her true potential. Carnforth High School will also provide a welcoming, caring environment in which every member of the school community feels valued and safe and wishes to attend to learn. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students.

Carnforth High School will use a system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping. We are continuing to promote, encourage and support all students to achieve 100% attendance, and in an aim to reach the current school target of 96% attendance it is felt that rewarding good attendance is as important as dealing with low attendance. We will, however, challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Guiding Principles

- The school has targeted each student to achieve **at least 96%** attendance over the course of this school year.
- We will continue to raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, students, parents/carers and the Governing Body.
- We will ensure the provision of appropriate and timely guidance and support for parents/carers, students and staff.
- We will develop and monitor clear procedures for maintaining accurate registers. This is a priority following the purchase of SIMS Lesson Monitor.
- We will build on our systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance related issues.
- We will develop a systems within which all staff can work to provide a consistent approach to raising levels of attendance using relevant agencies as appropriate.
- We recognise that students need to know Carnforth High School is a safe and caring environment where they wish to engage in all opportunities offered.
MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT
- We recognise that families and home play a large role in good attendance and punctuality.
- We recognise the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the consideration of reasonable adjustments to be made for young people.

Creating a culture of 'good attendance' at Carnforth High School

- We continue to push our attendance message of 'MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT'. This message is about students and families seeing Carnforth High School as a place they want to be for the opportunities the school gives to its students.
- We have a solution focused approach to overcoming barriers and improving attendance.
- Each term, an attendance report card is sent home with information about student attendance in comparison to students in their year group and form. These celebrate successes in attendance and offer solutions to improving attendance where required.
- Each week, form tutors look at attendance with their form as part of the week ahead presentation. There are form of the week with an attendance trophy and form of the half term with form prizes.
- Each week, an attendance plan is produced which identifies students who may need support to improve their attendance. Attendance reports are used to celebrate daily attendance and provide a point of contact for students. Attendance contests are also developed in this plan to encourage and improve the attendance of key groups of students.
- Every two weeks, there will be an attendance message in the school newsletter. This will focus on solutions to common attendance barriers and celebrating the positives of good attendance.
- Each term, the celebration assembly will have an attendance section to celebrate success. All students over 96% target will be given a certificate and entered into a prize draw. All students with 100% attendance will be given an attendance badge to wear in school.
- The school website will be updated to include a clear link to the policy, attendance procedures and expectations as well as tools to use to improve/support good attendance.
- Posters promoting good attendance and our MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT message will be displayed around school.

Expectations of parents/carers

- To ensure their child attends Carnforth High School in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To avoid keeping their child away from Carnforth High School for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation.
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- To immediately contact Carnforth High School by phone (01524 732424) on the first day of any absence giving clear reasons.
- To contact Carnforth High School each subsequent day of absence to confirm their child's non-attendance and reasons.
- To send a note with the child on return to school and provide, where appropriate/required, medical evidence of illness.
- Parents/carers are ultimately responsible for their child attending Carnforth High School regularly. (Education Act 1996)
- Attend meetings at Carnforth High School, or allow a home visit, arrange by the school attendance team to discuss concerns regarding attendance.
- To inform the appropriate year leader without delay if they have concerns about any aspects of their children's education they feel are hampering their attendance.

Expectations of staff

Attendance Officer

Daily

- Check and chase registers during form time/period 1.
- Respond to and accurately record calls/messages around student absence.
- Text parents/carers of students who are on first day of absence but who haven't contacted the school. CLA or vulnerable children will be phoned on first day of absence without explanation.
- Phone parents/carers of students who are on second day of absence but who haven't contacted the school.
- Plan home visits. Home visits to students who are on third day of absence but who haven't contacted the school. Home visits to students who are below 90% attendance to support and work towards re-attendance as soon as possible. Home visits to CLA or vulnerable children who didn't answer phone call on first day of absence.
- Record attendance information on CPOMS for students with attendance concerns where appropriate.
- Check and chase registers for period 4.

Weekly

- Meet with assistant principal of attendance to go through weekly attendance plan and review current interventions.
- Administration of attendance letters, panel meetings, PN1 and PN2 request, PDR requests.
- Maintain a register of students with attendance concerns (have met thresholds) to ensure attendance interventions are carried out accurately and timely.
- Prepare detailed and accurate cases for court referrals. Liaise with the Court Officer to initiate proceedings and follow identified protocol.
- Work closely with parents/carers of targeted students, forging positive and constructive relationships in order to engage parents/carers and provide support to get students to return to Carnforth High School at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep in weekly contact with long-term absentees, accurately recording outcomes of communication on CPOMS and liaise with class teacher/year leader/assistant principal to ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying 'catch up' needs and work is provided for study at home during the absence where applicable/legal.
- Contact parents/carers where absences have remained unexplained despite previous intervention seeking and securing relevant evidence to explain the absence.

Assistant Principal for Behaviour and Attendance

- To lead who school attendance and directly line manage attendance officer and year leaders.
- Produce the weekly attendance plan through attendance data scrutiny. Set actions for attendance officer, year leaders to complete.
- Weekly meeting with the attendance officer to review attendance plans and set new weekly/daily actions.

- Meet weekly with Principal, Welfare Manager and SENCO to discuss most vulnerable students, either persistent absent or on verge to coordinate interventions alongside other pastoral issues.
- To have full knowledge and understanding of all complex attendance cases.
- Review/monitor impact of interventions and coordinate strategies.
- Lead and support attendance meetings with parents/carers when requested.
- Present attendance data to SLT and governors when requested.
- Continual review of attendance policy and procedures.

Year Leaders

- Use weekly attendance plan to carry out actions required to support students within the year group to improve their attendance.
- Provide additional information during ECM meetings and weekly pastoral meetings about potential barriers to attendance for students in their year group.
- Develop good relationship with parents/carers of vulnerable students to help support and challenge them in improving their child's attendance.
- Support the attendance officer in making home visits and action outcomes following visits.
- Liaise with external agencies, where appropriate, to remove barriers to attendance for students in their year group.
- Lead form tutors to create a positive culture of promoting and celebrating good attendance.
- Foster a positive attitude to school attendance within year group, focusing on the MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT message, through assemblies, notices boards and constant reinforcement with students.
- Complete end of day phone calls to absent students to check on likelihood of next day attendance. Offer support in school to help encourage re-attendance.
- File absent return notes collected by form tutors and monitor reasons given for absence for patterns or concerns.
- Monitor/mentor students who have been identified as those with deteriorating levels of attendance, using attendance report cards, short terms targets, rewards, home praise and other strategies to improve attendance.
- Effectively manage resources (finances) to overcome identified barriers with improving attendance i.e. alarm clock, toiletries, transport, uniform.
- Lead on complex cases including being lead professional on CAFs and chairing TAFs.
- Implement sanctions, in line with school behavioural policy, where there have been instances of truancy, whether from individual lessons or whole days.

Form Tutor

- Ensure that registers are taken accurately within the first 5 minutes of tutor time and are maintained.
- Mark lates accurately issuing detention and clearly communicating the sanction with the student.

- Chase up absence notes from returning students, communicating requests with parents/carers through email/telephone calls and inform the Year Leaders on a weekly basis if no note is returned.
- Encourage good attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets during the 'Week Ahead' on Mondays. Create a competitive environment where students want to be the best attending form in the year/school.
- Liaise with the year leader and attendance officer as early as possible where they become aware of issues which may be acting as a barrier to attendance.
- Deliver form time materials with enthusiasm and create a safe and welcoming environment for all students. Forge positive and mutually respectful relationships with all students within the form to create a sense of belonging. Form is the first part of the school day so should re-inforce the MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT message.

Class Teacher

- Take accurate register within the first 5 minutes of the lesson, ensuring that previous attendance marks are maintained.
- Mark any student that is late and communicate the sanction in line with the school behaviour policy.
- Where students have been absent, ensure that work that is missing is caught up – class notes are complete through providing handouts to be 'stuck in' or by photocopying another student's work.
- Acknowledge and celebrate a return from absence to further provide a sense of belonging within the class.
- Proactively liaise with the child's form tutor or year leader if there are any concerns.

Careers Officer

- Raise aspirations of all students who are referred by year leaders and including in all one to one interviews, referencing each student's attendance record, the importance of good punctuality and good attendance both in school and for all post 16 pathways and workplaces.

SLT

- To provide support to class teachers with cases of truancy whilst on call.
- Ensure students are at timetabled lessons in 'good time' whilst on call.
- Involvement and objective QA of interventions surrounding chronic PA students.

Principal

- To make judgement on holiday/special absence requests.
- To meet weekly with assistant principal for attendance to have robust discussions on whole academy/year group/individual student attendance data and review provision to support 'good' attendance.

Absences

Authorised absence is where Carnforth High School has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence, only the school can do this.

Parents/carers should immediately contact the school by phone (01524 732424) on the first day, by 9:00am, of any absence giving clear reasons. A phone call must be made for each further day of absence. This is a safeguarding practice to ensure students are not marked as absent in advance when parents/carers expect them in school. Upon the student's return to school a note should be sent in the form tutor which will be put into the student's school file.

Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:

- illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- days of religious observance
- study leave
- exclusion
- involvement in a public performance

Absence **will not** be authorised for such reasons as:

- looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
- birthdays
- days out, e.g. The Yorkshire Show
- shopping trips
- family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances)
- Special occasions, where the School does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical Appointments

Where possible we encourage parents/carers to organise appointments outside the working hours of the school (08:55 – 15:25). The aim of this is to minimise the disruption to learning. If this is unavoidable then we recommend that appointments take place at the start or end of the day. Confirmation of all appointments by way of appointment card, letter or appointment slip must be provided for any absence to be authorised. These should be sent in with the student before or after the appointment for attention of the year leader where it will be placed in the student file.

Religious Observance

Authorised absence will be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant leave of absence. Parents should contact the school to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

Term Time Holidays / Leave of Absence

Any requests for leave of absence will be strongly discouraged. Requests for absence will not be authorised unless the parents/carers are able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must apply in advance for permission and the Principal will decide on a case by case basis whether the application meets the exceptional circumstances criteria.

Application forms (which can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website) should be completed and returned at least 8 weeks before the proposed absence. This will allow staff time to plan work related to the absence.

Parents/carers who take their son/daughter on holiday during term time without permission are liable to receive a fine of up to £120, per parent, per student at the school. Parents/carers will be warned of potential consequences when an application for leave of absence is denied.

If a student fails to return from an agreed period of absence, investigations will be made by staff. If the school's investigations fail to make contact with the parents/student the case will be referred to the Children Missing Education Team who may, after further investigation, inform the academy that the student may be removed from roll.

Long Term Absence

Occasionally a student may be absent for an extended period of time due to ill health. Parents must liaise with the Year Leader where the absence period is likely to be greater than one week. The school will aim to minimise the disruption to learning by providing appropriate work to complete. If necessary a phased return or part-time timetable will be considered.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter misses the start of the day, they can miss vital information about their school day during form time as well as the settled start which supports a good learning experience. Students arriving late disrupt lessons which in turn can be embarrassing for the child.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **9.00am** and we expect your son/daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.05am** and your son/daughter will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your son/daughter 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the relevant Year Leader and/or the Assistant Principal to resolve the problem. We encourage you to approach us if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Attendance Interventions and Thresholds

Attendance data of all students is analysed each week by the assistant principal for attendance to identify trends in absence and students who are at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. A student will become a Persistent Absentee when they miss **10%** of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects.

In order to inform parents/carers about the schools concerns for their child's attendance the following system of interventions are put in place:

Less than 96%: After the first two weeks of the academic year, all parents/carers of students who attendance falls below our school minimum target of 96% are sent a letter stating our concerns and that we will be monitoring attendance. Students are set the target to get their attendance back above 96% and pastoral support will be implemented if required.

For all monitored students whose attendance continues to decline, a second letter is sent to parents and carers to re-raise our concerns and offer any support with overcoming attendance barriers. These students may be placed on attendance report, an attendance contest or other pastoral support methods.

If a monitored students attendance continues to fall and reaches below 90% then a third letter is sent to parents and carers. This letter will clearly state that any further absences will be unauthorised unless accompanied with medical evidence. Continued pastoral support will be given and attendance monitored.

If a monitored student's attendance continues to fall following letter 3, then an attendance meeting will be scheduled. This is between Year Leader, Parents/Carers and student. The meeting will look at the potential barriers to attendance and all three parties will look at solutions to reduce these barriers. Following this meeting, an attendance contract will be drawn up which all parties agree to. The contract may include a referral to external support agencies to provide more specialist support. This may be done through completing a process known as 'Common Assessment Framework'.

If at this stage, attendance does not improve then this may result in the school referring the situation to the attendance legal team. The Local Authority request the school to provide information on persistent absence and whole school attendance on a termly/annual basis.

Penalty Notices

Carnforth High School does have the option of requesting the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence, in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. The circumstances under which such requests will be considered will be set out in the procedural framework on attendance. In the spirit of parental partnership this will be used as a last resort.

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer fails to ensure their child's school attendance. These powers came into force on 27 February 2004.

When can a penalty notice be issued?

Parents of a registered pupil whose child fails to attend school regularly are committing an offence under section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

- A pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days (10 sessions) lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 7 school days (14 sessions) in 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered.

- Penalty notices can be issued, where with governing body approval, the school attendance policy contains reference to the school's use of PN's with regards to unauthorised absences and unauthorised holidays.
- Penalty notices can be issued where parents have been given an opportunity to improve their child's attendance but failed to do so.
- Penalty notices can be issued in cases of leave taken in term time without school permission, or delayed return from a period of authorised leave without prior school permission.
- Penalty notices can be issued for persistent lateness.
- **The fine amounts to £120 per parent, per pupil.**

What happens if a penalty notice is unpaid?

If a penalty is unpaid after 28 days and it is not withdrawn on specified grounds (detailed in the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations (England) 2007) then the Local Authority may prosecute the parent. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the fine, but for the original offence of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school. The court can impose a fine, discharge, community sentence or imprisonment.

Elective Home Education

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children, who are of a compulsory school age, receive a full-time education which is suitable to their child's age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs they may have. In England, parents can fulfil this duty either by sending their children to school or by electing to home educate them, taking personal responsibility for the educational arrangements.

Home education enables parents to provide a learning environment which is individualised to their child's needs and interests, without having to follow the National Curriculum; although some parents may choose to do so. The Local Authority can provide parents with information, advice and guidance on approaches to home education at parents' request.

If a parent chooses to remove their child from Carnforth High School to home educate them, we will notify the Local Authority within 48 hours of receipt of a dated and signed letter from parents notifying school of their decision. For further information please see:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/educating-your-child-at-home/>

Children Missing Education

Children missing education receive this classification if they are of compulsory school age and who are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks)
- The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full-time education

As a school we will liaise with the Local Authority and refer any child missing from education to the child Missing Education Team. All concerns about the welfare of a student will be discussed with the

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and referred to Children's Social Care, as stated in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

The school will notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a child leaves or joins the school outside of the normal admissions time. If a child accrues 20 sessions (10 days) of continued absence (authorised or unauthorised) the school will notify the Local Authority. The school will alert the Local Authority through the school's portal and complete their forms. These procedures will be followed by the Attendance Officer, Year Leaders, Welfare Manager and Assistant Principal.

Data Protection and GDPR

Attendance data is recorded on SIMS/CPOMS and only accessed by school staff. Parents are able to view their child's data via Epraise. Students will also be able to access their attendance percentage.

Front office will mark students as late on the register and the signing in and out sheet (for passes) is kept in the office, which is locked.

Medical evidence relating to attendance i.e. a Doctor's note is scanned onto the students file and then disposed of. If it cannot be disposed of and needs to be kept then it will be stored in the students file, which is in a locked storage cabinet.

Aspects of data may need to be shared with supporting organisations for example, Local Authority's Child Missing Education Officer, Medical Education Team, Education Welfare Service (in line with Lancashire's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct) and Government.

In some cases, attendance data will be shared with those supporting the Attendance Panel. This includes members of school staff, a Governor(s) and parents/ guardians.

All data is disposed of as per the Carnforth High School retention policy.

