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**Attendance Policy**

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**Written by:** Director

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**Date of next review: 05/09/2025**

**Version:** 4

**This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures**

**Key Contacts**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
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# Introduction

1. This attendance policy is written to reflect the laws and guidance produced by the Department for Education and Cumbria County Council. This attendance policy is also consistent with the following Cairn Education policies:

* Admissions
* Anti-bullying
* Safeguarding
* Special Educational Needs
* Curriculum
* Positive Behaviour Support

1. The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our students is included in Cairn Educations Student Agreement, which students (and parents where under the age of 16) should sign following admission to Cairn Education.
2. It is very important, therefore, that you make sure learners attend regularly. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and students via www.cairneducation.co.uk
3. For a young person to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential.
4. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our provision successful. Every young person has a right to access the education which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.
5. Cairn education recognises that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive.
6. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
7. For students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that students at Cairn Education are on time every day the provision is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.
8. Good attendance is important because:

* Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
* Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
* Regular attenders find education routines, work and friendships easier to cope with
* Regular attenders are more successful in transitions into higher education, employment or training

## Promoting Good Attendance

1. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the young person. The Student Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their young person achieves good attendance.
2. This policy is informed by government guidance ‘working together to improve school attendance’ (2024) [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance).
3. To help us all focus on this we will:

* Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular/ weekly parent/ carer/ student report.
* Report to parents (with the young persons consent if over the age of 16) on how their young person is performing, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this related to their attainments.
* Celebrate good attendance.
* Run events when parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels for example ‘Sleep workshops’ ‘Managing anxiety workshops’ etc.
* Early intervention and support will be provided to address any drops in attendance.
* Outreach work where necessary to support young people with transitions from home to education environments.

# Roles and responsibilities

## Director

1. The director will oversee, direct and co-ordinate Cairn Educations work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the service.
2. They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed.
3. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
4. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/ carers the need and reasons for their young person’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a students home does not mean an absence becomes authorized. The decision whether or not to authorize an absence will always rest with the school.
5. Support strategies for learners who receive less than 90% attendance will be considered in governance meetings.

## Responsibilities of education staff

1. Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
2. Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
3. Liaise with the attendance leader (Natasha Colahan) on matters of attendance and punctuality.
4. Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student’s absence.
5. Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

## Responsibilities of students

1. Attend every day of their programme unless they are ill or have an authorized absence.
2. Arrive on time.
3. Start sessions after breaks on time.
4. Take responsibility for informing staff if they are late or are leaving school site during school hours.

## Responsibilities of parents/ carers

1. Inform Cairn Education before 8:30am if your young person is going to be absent that day.
2. Support Cairn Education with aiming for their young person to achieve 100% attendance each year.
3. Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, text or email on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
4. Avoid taking their young person out of education for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
5. Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

# Recording Attendance

1. Natasha Colahan is responsible for ensuring that attendance at Cairn Education is recorded accurately.
2. Cairn’s school day is Monday-Friday 9.30-3.30pm. All full-time students are expected to be in attendance to Cairn Education during these times unless otherwise agreed.
3. The register must be marked twice daily. Morning registration opens at 9.30am and closes at 10am. Afternoon registration opens at 1pm and closes at 1.30pm.
4. Natasha Colahan will record whether each registered pupil is present in their session (either physically, online or receiving outreach support) or, if not, the reason they are not absent in by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (see attendance codes section).
5. Cairn Education shares monthly attendance data with the local authority.
6. Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

# Lateness and Punctuality

1. It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The start of sessions is used to plan the day. If you/ your young person is late they can miss work time with their class teacher and cause disruption to the sessions for others. It can also increase a young persons anxiety if they feel they are late for sessions.

* Individual start times will be agreed at the start of a young persons placement.
* All lateness is recorded daily.
* If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorized absence, coded M. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

# What to do if I am/ my young person is absent

1. A child not attending Cairn Education is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

* Contact Cairn Education on 01539822304 or 07434783206 and ask to speak to Rachael Thompson or Natasha Colahan as soon as possible on each day of absence
* Email [info@cairneducation.co.uk](mailto:info@cairneducation.co.uk) or send a note in on the first day of return with an explanation of the absence- you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

1. If your child/ young person is absent we will:

* Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you- this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular attendance.
* Invite you in to discuss the situation with the direction and attendance officer
* Refer the matter to the Local Authority if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

1. Cairn Education will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school’s control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

## Third day absence

1. If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence Cairn Education is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Cumbria County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the young person, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family (if schools have employed staff who would visit the family home to try to establish contact, such as a home school link worker, this should be added as an action here).

## Ten days absence

1. We have a duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children’s Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## Continued or ongoing absence

1. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/ sessions) or more education across the academic year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your young person attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and will provide support and hold regular review meetings in order to improve the young person’s attendance rate.
2. Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the Cairn Education to work in tandem with the local authority to secure good attendance. Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution.
3. Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.
4. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. The decision to prosecute rests solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority. Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

# Request for leave of absence

1. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
2. These circumstances are:

* Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
* Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
* Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
* A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
* Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. Schools are expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

1. Generally, the Department of Education 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. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
2. If students need time off for exceptional circumstances, an application form (available from [info@cairneducation.co.uk](mailto:info@cairneducation.co.uk)) needs to be completed in advance and before making any travel arrangements.
3. If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from Cairn Education, the absence will be unauthorized, and process outlined in the section above will be followed.

# Understanding types of absence

1. Students are expected to attend everyday of their programme for the entire duration of the academic year (or as otherwise specified) unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

* Authorized absence: is when Cairn Education has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorized.
* Unauthorised absence: is when Cairn Education has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a young persons leave of absence from its provision after a parent’s request. This includes:
  + Parents giving their children permission to be absent unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
  + Truancy before or during the young persons scheduled sessions
  + Absences which have not been explained

1. Cairn Education can, if needed, change an authorized absence to an unauthorized absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/ carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to education there is evidence they have been on holiday.

# My child/ young person is trying to avoid coming to Cairn Education. What should I do?

1. Young people are sometimes reluctant to attend education. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between Cairn Education, the young person and their family. If a young person is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to the pressure to excuse them from attending.
2. Contact the Rachael Thompson or Natasha Colahan immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child/ young person could be avoiding education for a number of reasons - difficulties with their programme, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for their reluctance to attend Cairn Education and work together to tackle the problem.

# What can I do to encourage my young person to attend Cairn Education?

1. Make sure your young person gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that your young person leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your young person, by your interest, that you value their education. If sleep, dressing or morning routines are difficult for your young person contact Rachael Thompson at Cairn Education for Occupational Therapy support.

Parent travelling for occupational purposes

1. The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.
2. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

# Pregnant pupils

1. Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Ultimately, it is at the school’s discretion how much leave to grant. Cairn Education will work with the young person on an individual basis and devise a plan on how best to support.

# Attendance codes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Attending the school** |
| **/** | Present morning |
| **\** | Present afternoon |
| **L** | Late arrival before the register has closed |
|  | **Attending a place other than the school** |
| **K** | Attending education provision arranged by local authority |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip |
| **P** | Participating in a sporting activity |
| **W** | Attending work experience |
| **B** | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| **D** | Dual registered at another school |
|  | **Absent – authorised leave of absence** |
| **C1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments |
| **J1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| **S** | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination |
| **X** | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school |
| **C2** | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
|  | **Absent - other authorised reasons** |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious Observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made |
|  | **Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** |
| **Q** | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements |
| **Y1** | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed |
| **Y5** | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| **Y6** | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| **Y7** | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause |
|  | **Absent - unauthorised absence** |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the school |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| **U** | Arrived in school after registration closed |
|  | **Administrative codes** |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole school closure |