

Connaught School for Girls



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Ratification by the Governing Body: **June 2024**

Date of Review: **June 2025**

Glossary

HOY	Head of Year
HOD/HOC	Head of Department/Curriculum
AHT	Assistant Headteacher
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer - professional who support student's attendance when it falls below 90%
BACME	Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education service - Local Authority services that supports school attendance
TAF	Team Around the Family - a meeting involving parents/carers and different professionals
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
PA	Persistent Absence - term used to describe a student's absence when it falls below 90%
SA	Severe Absence - term used to describe a student's absence when it falls below 50%
SAP	School Attendance Panel - SAPs are school based meetings with family members and other involved agencies which are held in circumstances of very irregular school attendance
NPR	Notification of Parental Responsibility - an NPR is a legal document that notifies parents and carers of their legal obligations with regards to regular school attendance
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance - umbrella term used to describe absence that related to school-based anxiety and other mental health conditions that act as a barrier to regular attendance for some children and young people

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1. Introduction

This policy is in accordance with statutory Guidance from the Department of Education:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance - September 2022

From 19th August 2024 [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

This policy is also in accordance with **London Borough of Waltham Forest Youth and Family Resilience Service (YFRS) School Attendance Protocol September 2023**

NB This protocol is currently being updated

High levels of attendance and punctuality matter at Connaught School for Girls; both impact upon learning and the ability of every student to fulfil their potential. We are committed to providing education of the highest quality and, in doing so, offer our full support to parents and students in promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

2. Aims

To provide clear guidelines about how the School promotes and attains high levels of student attendance and punctuality.

To ensure that all stakeholders understand the School's expectations of themselves and each other and to strive to attain them.

To support the vision and values of the School.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between underachievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routine, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful when transferring between primary school, secondary school and further education, employment or training.

The link between attendance, attainment, wellbeing and safety

The research into attendance and attainment has shown that students with the highest attainment at the end of KS2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS4, students not achieving grades 9-4 in English and Maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared with 5.2% among those achieving grades 4-1. The overall absence rate of students not achieving grades 9-4 was over twice as high as those achieving grades 9-5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

See Appendix A - 'Everyday Counts' for infographic outlining attendance by days

attended

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between school, parents and the student and to help us focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our school newsletters and on our website
- report how children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- celebrate good attendance through congratulations postcards and trophies at school assemblies, presenting individual awards to those students who achieve 98% attendance over each term and those who have significantly improved their attendance/punctuality
- set targets for the school and for classes and display these around the school building
- report on a student's attendance and punctuality at each parents' / carers' evening and in progress reports to parents/carers
- be sympathetic to the needs of all students when there are concerns or significant life changes that could affect attendance
- send letters to the parents/carers of all students whose attendance falls below 95% in order to alert them of this downward attendance trend
- hold workshops with our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- hold meetings with parents/carers and the EWO to support improved attendance and any return to school following extended periods of absence.

3. Links to other policies

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

[Children with Social Workers Policy](#)

[Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy](#)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed.

The AHT who has responsibility for attendance at Connaught School for Girls is:

Ms Rachel Hickee - rachel.hickee@connaught.waltham.sch.uk

The AHT will work alongside Form Tutors, Heads of Year and the Attendance Team to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

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 child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised, The decision whether or not to authorise absence will always rest with the school.

Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence● Arrive to school on time● Go to tutor time and lessons on time● Take responsibility for registering on Inventory at school office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours● Provide evidence following absence or appointments
Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Inform the school on the first day of absence and all subsequent days, unless the school has indicated otherwise● Discuss with the Attendance Officer or HOY any planned absences well in advance● Support the school in aiming for 97-100% attendance each year for their child● Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for calling 0208 539 3029 (by letter/email if telephone is unavailable attendance@connaught.waltham.sch.uk)● Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments*. Only request leave of absence if it is exceptional● Request for authorised absence must be made in writing and sent to the Headteacher and should be made only for exceptional circumstances or other educational activities● Ensure that all holidays are taken during school holiday periods and not in term time● Ensure that two contact details, of both parents where possible, are provided and are kept up to date in case of emergency

	<p>* As a school we are aware that from time to time it can be difficult to arrange hospital and orthodontist appointments out of school time but we do ask parents to take this into consideration</p>
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an awareness and understanding of the benefits of good attendance and promote these in discussion with students • Have an awareness and understanding of absence being a possible safeguarding risk factor
Subject Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take registers promptly within the first 5 minutes of the lesson • Promptly report any missing students, by sending missing student slip to school office, who are not marked absent at am reg/previous lessons • If students are late to lessons, mark them present with an L code and input number of minutes late • Notify parents when levels of absence are impacting on the progress of a student within their class, particularly exam groups • Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school
Form Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all students are registered accurately each morning and afternoon - registers taken at 8:30am and 2:00pm • Promote and recognise commendable attendance of students at all appropriate opportunities • Liaise with the HOY and attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality • Meet with tutees who fall into the 'at risk' threshold of 93-95% attendance • Identify and communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student's absence • Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school • Monitor tutor group overall attendance
Heads of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the Year Group overall attendance • Promotion of good attendance and punctuality through year assemblies and pastoral curriculum • Meet fortnightly with Attendance Officer and EWO to identify at risk students, review improvements, update Attendance tracker and next steps for those moving

	<p>into new thresholds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification and referral of students to school-based attendance interventions ● Initial student meetings and attendance success planning - 90-94% ● Meet with parent/carer - Attendance Support Plan - 85-89% ● Support students and parent/carers to overcome barriers to attendance, arrange meetings and signpost appropriate support
<p>Attendance Administration Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily absence processes ● Keep all school register codes up to date ● Follow up unexplained absences and keep register codes updates - the correct absence code must be recorded with 5 working days of the session ● Collate all leave of absence request forms and inform parents of the school's decision to authorise or unauthorise absence via letter ● Collate interventions on absence, keeping a record of letters sent and penalty notices issued ● Producing and sharing absence and punctuality reports to be shared with form tutors/HOY/EWO/AHT ● Send out and log attendance and punctuality concern letters ● Fortnightly attendance meetings with HOY/EWO ● Weekly attendance monitoring and Persistent Absence tracking ● Attendance Support telephone call to parents - 85-89% ● Attending and supporting student meetings ● Organise and facilitate parent meetings ● Home visits with EWO ● Support EWO with SAP meetings
<p>Data Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce comparative internal reports on attendance - weekly, half-termly, termly by key groups
<p>Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance - Senior Attendance Champion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance ● Develop, implement, review and update of overall attendance strategy, policy and systems ● Discuss any specific concerns relating to attendance patterns/messages with staff at weekly staff briefing ● Parent attendance meetings ● Referral to external interventions and agencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making with EWO/Attendance Officer re BACME interventions and legal proceedings • Reporting of attendance data to school governors • Regularly monitor and evaluate progress
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall responsibility for school attendance • Approves/declines requests for leave of absence

5. Recording Attendance and Punctuality

- Registers are a legal document and must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at **8.30am** and again for the afternoon session at **2.00pm**
- Registers are important for health and safety reasons, If the school has to evacuate the buildings, the attendance register enables school staff to account for everyone present that day
- Registers also enable the school to safeguard the wellbeing of students, particularly if they travel to and from school independently
- It is important that all students arrive on time at the beginning of the school day and enter via the playground gates between 8.10 - 8.30am. The school day begins at 8.30am, students are expected to be in their form rooms, seated, by 8.25am
- In the morning, at **8.30am**, form tutors are responsible for am registration and in the afternoon at **2.00pm**, for afternoon registration. It is the responsibility of subject teachers to formally register students at the start of each lesson. At any time during the school day, staff should only mark students as present if they have physically see them
- If a student arrives between **8.40** and **9.10am** the attendance will be registered as **L (before register closes)**. Form tutors must also record the minutes late. This is also expected at pm registration (**2.00pm**)
- If a student registers after **9.10am** they will be registered as **U (Late after register closes)**. This counts as half a day absence and can significantly impact a student's attendance record
- On-going and repeated lateness is considered as an unauthorised absence. The school may request a meeting to tackle persistent lateness. Parents/carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved
- If lateness persists, parents/carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem and offer support. If support is ineffective, or is declined and a child has **10 or more sessions marked at U code in 6 consecutive weeks (10 rolling weeks from 19.08.24)**, parents/carers will be subject to legal action and will be issued with a fine
- Parents/Carers are urged to communicate any known medical appointments in advance and inform us of any exceptional leave that might lead to their child arriving in school after the school am register has closed. If a student is late due to a medical appointment, she will receive an authorised absence coded **M**

- Parents/carers are asked, where possible, to arrange doctors' and dentists' appointments outside of school hours or during school holidays
- At Connaught School for Girls students have a full tutor time programme which forms part of our pastoral curriculum. This programme includes assembly, which is used for collective celebration and learning, as well as careers guidance, literacy and reading enrichment and structured discussion and student voice on issues related to students' personal and social development. This is a time when students are also given important notices and it is therefore vital this time is not missed due to lateness
- Students must also be punctual and arrive on time to all lessons across the school day
- Punctuality to lessons will be monitored. Form tutors and HOY will meet with students who are persistently late to lessons to understand the reasons why. Where students do not have a justifiable reason and lateness persists, they will receive a detention and parents will be invited in to discuss this concern
- If students are late to school (and enter the school via the Dyers Hall Road entrance), they will be required to complete a same day detention. For students in Years 7 - 9 this is completed at a lunchtime HOY isolation. For students in Years 10-11 (Year 9 after summer half-term) this is a 15 minute after school detention. Parents/carers are notified by text of lateness to school and of the associated same day after school detention.
- If students are late up to **3 times or more in 5 school days** (Friday - Thursday or Monday - Thursday) they will be required to attend a **60 minute SLT detention** at the end of the school day on Friday (2.20 - 3.20pm). Parents/carers will be informed by text message.
- Students found to have tranted a lesson will be required to complete a 60 minute SLT detention (Friday) and persistent truancy will result in further meetings and discussions to identify the underlying reason and ensure appropriate consequences and support are in place to prevent further incidents.

6. School Absence Procedures

First Day Absence - A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, our intention is not to interrogate parents and carers but they should be aware that this information will be requested until suitable information is provided.

If a student is absent, parents and carers must:

- Contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence by 8am. Information received via telephone/email is used to update the registers to ensure we have a clear picture of known absences
- In the case of illness and other absences, parents/carers are asked to call on the morning of each day of absence, unless they have provided medical note/evidence which states the number of days which the student will need for recovery

If a student is absent and we have not been notified by parents/carers, then we will:

First Day of Absence

- N code the register - illustrating that a student is absent with no reason provided
- Send a text message, informing you that your child is not present in school according to the registers.
- Follow up with a telephone call to parents/carers; this is because we have a duty to ensure a student's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- Continue to contact parents/carers so that the absence is explained and the N code can be replaced with a suitable code.
- Alert social worker/youth offending team worker, if applicable

Third Day Absence

- If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school will start a Child Missing in Education enquiries and we will contact emergency contacts, known friends and wider family to see if they are able to help us locate you and explain the ongoing absence, and lack of communication.

Fifth Day Absence

- If contact has not been established then as a school, we may carry out a home visit and welfare check, this will involve two staff members which may include the attendance officer, the school EWO, HOY or our School Safety Officer.

Tenth Day Absence - Child Missing in Education referral will be completed and sent

- The school has a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. CME referral
- If the child has not been seen and/or contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing' her education. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure their contact details are up to date.

Twentieth Day Absence

- If a student has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days and this absence is unauthorised by school, the student may be removed from the school roll. Parents/Carers wishing to readmit their child would be required to do so through the Local Authority school admissions process.

6. Children Missing in Education

- As described above in our absence procedures, where a student is absent and there has been no contact with the school the EWO will be notified and a home visit may be undertaken. If a parent/carer cannot be contacted they will be reported as missing to

the home Local Authority where they live

- All absences of 10 days or more without contact will deem the student missing and an alert will go to the BACME team at the Local Authority
- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- In line with Government attendance and safeguarding guidance, the school has policies, procedures and responses to identify and protect any child who may go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.
- Through training, staff are taught to stay alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of non-attendance and potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage. Further information about children at risk of missing education can be found in the Children Missing Education guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

School Admissions

- The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All students must be placed on both registers. Schools must place students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school.
- If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.
- The school understands that it is important that the admission register is accurate and kept up to date. We will regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur. This can assist the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies a school that a student will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live; this will need to be verified with the local authority
- the new address
- the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.

Where a parent of a student notifies the school that the student is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school
- the date on which the students first attended or is due to start attending that school
- Schools are required to notify the local authority within five days when a student's name is added to the admission register. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the student. This duty does not apply to students who are registered at the start of the school's youngest year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.
- Schools must also notify the local authority when a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the student's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply where the student has completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.
- A student's name can only be deleted from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the student's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries. Advice on carrying out reasonable enquiries can be found in the Children missing education guidance.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must and will provide the local authority with:

- the full name of the student
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the student lives
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the student lives
- the full name and address of the parent with whom the student is going to live, and the date the student is expected to start living there, if applicable
- the name of student's destination school and the student's expected start date there, if applicable
- the ground in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be deleted from the admission register.
- Schools and local authorities should work together to agree on methods of making returns. When making returns, the school should highlight to the local authority where they have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown. The school will also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

- It is essential that schools comply with these duties, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be at risk of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised.
- The department provides a secure internet system – school2school – to allow schools to transfer student information to another school when the child moves. All local authority-maintained schools are required, when a student ceases to be registered at their school and becomes a registered student at another school in England or Wales, to send a Common Transfer File (CTF) to the new school. Academies (including free schools) are also strongly encouraged to send CTFs when a student leaves to attend another school. Independent schools can be given access to school2school by the department.
- The school2school website also contains a searchable area, commonly referred to as the 'Lost student Database', where schools can upload CTFs of students who have left but their destination or next school is unknown or the child has moved abroad or transferred to a non-maintained school. If a student arrives in a school and the previous school is unknown, the school will contact the local authority who will be able to search the database.

This guidance forms part of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

8. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence describes circumstances where the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. This will only be in cases of exceptional circumstances and special considerations such as:

- when a student is absent as a result of illness and an acceptable explanation has been received. If a student's attendance falls below 90% and absence due to illness is sporadic or follows a pattern the school may refuse to authorise further illness where medical evidence is not provided
- Religious Observance subject to a maximum number of 3 days per academic year with 1 day per period of religious observance - as per the official day of observance as recognised by the parents' religious body. Pilgrimages (for example, Lourdes, Mecca, Rome or Jerusalem) are not considered to be religious observance that require absence during term time
- when a student has been excluded from school
- sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence, up to a maximum of 3

days

- out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport (considered on individual circumstances)
- absence relating to child entertainment performances (considered on individual circumstances)

Medical/dental appointments may be authorised but should be made outside of school hours wherever possible. The school may request to see evidence of appointment cards/texts and may refuse to authorise the absence if appointments are frequently made during the school day and it is impacting a student's overall attendance

It is recognised that parents/carers may need to attend to sick relatives or funerals abroad and children and families need time to grieve. This must be balanced with the knowledge that children with prolonged absences find it harder to return and settle. With this in mind, the Local authority recommends a maximum of 3 days leave is acceptable

In these cases, as with others involving travel abroad, schools can and will request evidence of outbound and return bookings/tickets. In cases when this is refused the school may pursue a fixed penalty fine.

Circumstance not included on the list

- Serious illness of a close relative. Such a circumstance is difficult to define and therefore is open to exploitation. In principle, leave will not be granted unless the Headteacher is convinced that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Prison Visits Most visits can be achieved during weekends and holidays, but there may be exceptions for individual cases for example when distance is a factor
- Leave for attendance at weddings will not generally be granted, however, the Headteacher may consider them on a case-by-case basis and may allow up to one day's leave in exceptional circumstances when convinced that the wedding could not have been held outside of term time or the school day

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence occurs when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained
- sporadic and frequent illness where medical evidence is not provided

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised 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 school there is evidence that he/she has been on holiday.

Please see **Appendix B** for overview of codes used to identify authorised and unauthorised absence on school registers.

9. Persistent and ongoing absence

If a student misses 10% (equivalent to 3 weeks in a year) or more schooling across the school year (or if attendance drops below 90% over a number of weeks) for whatever reason they are defined as a persistent absentee.

Whether this absence is authorised or unauthorised the school will put into place a number of measures and supports to encourage a student's attendance to improve. These measures include but are not limited to:

- Daily, Weekly and longer-term monitoring of attendance data to identify individuals and groups where patterns of attendance indicate a cause for concern and further analysis
- Letters of concern and warning. The first being an early intervention letter when a student's attendance falls between 93-91%. This is to ensure that parents are aware that their child is at risk of falling into persistent absenteeism and are aware of the impact this may have on their academic and social development
- Telephone calls and discussions with parents to identify possible barriers and find solutions
- Meetings between students and key pastoral staff to plan out an attendance success action plan
- Attendance interventions and mentoring
- Referral to the Educational Welfare officer and service.

Please see **Appendix C** for the school's attendance thresholds.

10. Severe absence

If a student's attendance falls below 50% their absence is considered to be severe. The school will work closely with parents to support students who may have identified barriers such as poor mental health or a diagnosed chronic health condition.

Where a student has a chronic health condition the school may request updated medical evidence from a health professional at the beginning of each academic year or at appropriate timescales as advised by professionals.

In line with Government guidance the school will consider whether a referral to children's services is necessary and will consider whether the student requires an Educational Health Care Plan.

The school will further support students and parents/carers by:

- hold regular meetings with parents and relevant professionals where appropriate
- following the advice of the school's policy for Supporting students with Medical Conditions
- considering an interim reduced timetable or flexi school arrangement
- consider a referral to the Local Authority for medical home tuition support

11. Support for students not attending school regularly

The school understands that often when students are not attending school regularly, there are complex and varied reasons that are acting as a barrier between that young person and their education.

The school is committed to working with parents/carers and professionals in a child centred way to support those student's and their families, with the overall aim of helping that young person to engage with and access the education that they are entitled to.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make things worse.

Young people are often reluctant to attend if friendships have broken down or if they feel there is an issue with a specific lesson/subject. In both of these scenarios, parents/carers are asked to contact their child's Form Tutor and Head of Year to discuss the issues and find a solution to the matter that supports their child feeling happy and safe to return to school. **It would not be appropriate for a parent to prevent their child attending school or allow their absence whilst the issue is resolved.**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

Anxiety has also been identified as a key feature of EBSA. Although a certain level of anxiety is considered a normal and natural part of growing up, some young people may experience heightened levels of anxiety which impact on their functioning and school experiences.

When the school has identified or been made aware that the reason for a student's absence is linked to their mental health, the school will adopt a graduated approach and implement a **school support plan for attendance and wellbeing:**

- **Assess** - School will work with parents/carers and the young person to assess their needs and identify any specific circumstances that act as a trigger for any school based or related anxiety. This may be done through the use of questionnaires, discussion with a

trusted adult or a more formal assessment with an educational psychologist or appropriate professional

- **Plan** - A trusted adult in school will work with the student and their parents/carers to build a school safety plan or a return to school plan which identifies desired outcomes and the key provisions that will be put into place to support the student within and beyond school. It may be that the school, in agreement with parents/carers, with the input and recommendation from medical professionals, arranges a reduced timetable as a short-term measure
- **Do** - Provisions and support will be put into place as soon as possible. The school asks that parents and carers have made an appointment to see their GP to share the concerns relating to their child's mental health and where necessary school and the GP can make referrals to other relevant professional e.g. BACME
- **Review** - Regular reviews of the support plan, wellbeing and attendance will take place, at least every half term. Where students are finding it very difficult to attend school, we will arrange at regular intervals to complete a supportive home visit or remote meeting to complete check ins. This is to also support the safeguarding of our students where we may not be able to check on their welfare for long periods.

Students with chronic health needs and medical conditions

Please see the school's policy 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions' for detailed guidance on the steps the school will take in supporting students in this regard. Below is a summary of the key details.:

- Where it is appropriate and possible for a student with health to attend school but their attendance is impacted by their health, the school will adopt a graduated approach and work with that student and their parents and carers to put into place a suitable school support plan for wellbeing and attendance
- However, it may be the case that a young person is unable to attend at all for a period of time, or is absent for long periods due to their health needs and the advice of medical professionals. The Local Authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for students who cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education
- As a school we will notify the LA when it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more due to their health needs, whether that be consecutive or cumulative
- The law does not define full-time education but children with health needs should have provision which is equivalent to the education they would receive in school. If they receive one-to-one tuition, for example, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the provision is more concentrated
- In discussion with students, parents/carers and professionals the school may complete a referral for medical home tuition, for one-to-one support in the home for a period of time. The school will be included in regular updates as to the student's progress and wellbeing. A school reintegration plan is put into place, to support transition back into

school, when the young person is well enough to return.

Reduced Timetables

Reduced timetables may be arranged with parents/carers and the Local Authority in exceptional circumstances, they are an interim support that must be reviewed regularly and the aim is always to support a reintegration to full time education. The school applies to the Local Authority for a reduced timetable provision and must provide medical evidence which evidences the need for this reasonable adjustment.

12. Elective Home Education and Flexi Schooling

Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest accepts the rights of families to home educate their children and believes in developing positive relationships and mutual respect between parties, but in order that the right of every child to receive an effective education is ensured, the London Borough of Waltham Forest expects families to understand the necessity to work in partnership and allow for communication on a regular basis.

If you wish to electively home school your child, although not a legal requirement, we would ask that you arrange a telephone call with the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher to discuss this decision. Once a final decision to electively home educate a child has been made, parents and carers should inform the school in writing of their intention and then also register your intention with the Local Authority using their EHE registration form .

The school would also notify the Local Authority as soon as they are notified in writing on this intention. The school would remove the young person from their roll.

Where the school holds any concerns around the safety and welfare of that student, school would share these concerns with parents/carers and relevant authorities.

Flexi Schooling differs from elective home education. Parents/ carers who request flexi-attendance are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve both attendance at school, as well as times when the child will receive educational provision at home.

Flexi-schooling is also different from temporary part-time/reduced timetable attendance arrangements, which the school/parent/carer may seek to make. Such arrangements are monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child be returned to full time attendance as soon as possible. Flexi-schooling is full time, although the provision may be split.

Arrangements for flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. This is not an arrangement that can be initiated by the school.

Whilst there is a legal right to a school placement and to Elective Home Education there is no legal right to flexi-schooling. Headteachers can refuse to agree to such requests. There is no right of appeal against the decision of a Headteacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request. Upon such a request the Headteacher would make a decision on a case-by-case basis.

13. Request for Leave of absence

The Government published updated attendance guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' in May 2022. Updated guidance will apply from 19th August 2024.

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

The guidance states that 'Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable'.

An application for leave of absence should not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Therefore, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that the Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school to go on holiday.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to write to the Headteacher in advance and before making any travel arrangements. If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and is very likely to incur a penalty notice fine. If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, please complete this absence request form which can be provided by the school office. Each request form is completed on an individual basis by the Headteacher. The Headteacher's decision will be communicated to you in writing.

Important notes for parents/carers requesting absence:

- We are unlikely to authorise absence in normal circumstances
- To ensure consistency across Waltham Forest schools we advise you to inform us of any siblings for whom you are also requesting holiday so that we can discuss our decision

with their school

- It is important that you request absence well in advance so we have time to prepare our decision
- Please take careful note that we must inform Waltham Forest Local Authority if you meet the thresholds for a Penalty Notice Fine
- The school is obliged to investigate any absence and will follow up on any intelligence gained that may contradict the information shared by parents. At this stage we would amend registration codes to reflect what we believe to be an accurate reflection of the reason for school absence.

14. Study Leave

Study leave is not an entitlement for students and as a school we believe that a students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations.

- No study leave will be granted and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way.
- Students who do not attend school in advance of exams without evidence of other exceptional circumstances or illness will have their absence marked as unauthorised and this may lead to further processes.

16. Fixed Penalty Notices and Legal Proceedings

If attempts by the school and the EWO to work in partnership with parent/carers to improve attendance have been exhausted and no justifiable reason for absence has been identified further action may be taken by the Local Authority BACME Service:

A Penalty Notice can be considered for unauthorised leave of absence, taken without permission after the third day of absence. It will be issued by the Educational Welfare Service at the request of a Headteacher in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct

If issued this will incur a fine of £60.00 (~~£80.00 from 19.08.24~~) per child, per parent/carer, being imposed if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice, rising to £120.00 (~~£160.00~~) per child, per parent thereafter to be paid by day 28. Subsequently, consideration will be given for the matter to be investigated by the Education Welfare Service and possible legal action

A Penalty Notice can also be considered for any unauthorised absence where there is no justifiable cause. In the first instance a school can request a Penalty Notice to be issued if a child is absent for **10 unauthorised absences in 6 consecutive weeks**. (~~10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 school weeks~~)

In the case of lateness after the close of registration, this will be deemed unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice for persistent lateness will be requested by the Headteacher when a threshold of **10 U codes s in a 6 consecutive week period** has been reached

There is no right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Education Supervision Orders (ESO's) will be considered by BACME when it is deemed that legal intervention is needed. The purpose of ESO's is very clear, that of improving school attendance through supporting parents to exercise their parental authority.

An ESO places a child or young person under the supervision of the Local Authority for a prolonged period and empowers the supervising officer to direct parents and children in matters relating to school attendance. These are implemented under the Children Act 1989.

Parenting Contracts (Attendance Contracts from 19th August 2024) are a formal written signed agreement between parents/carers and Local Authority and/or governing body of a school. Parenting contracts are voluntary but non-compliance will be recorded by the Local Authority/School and may be used as evidence in court if legal action is deemed necessary.

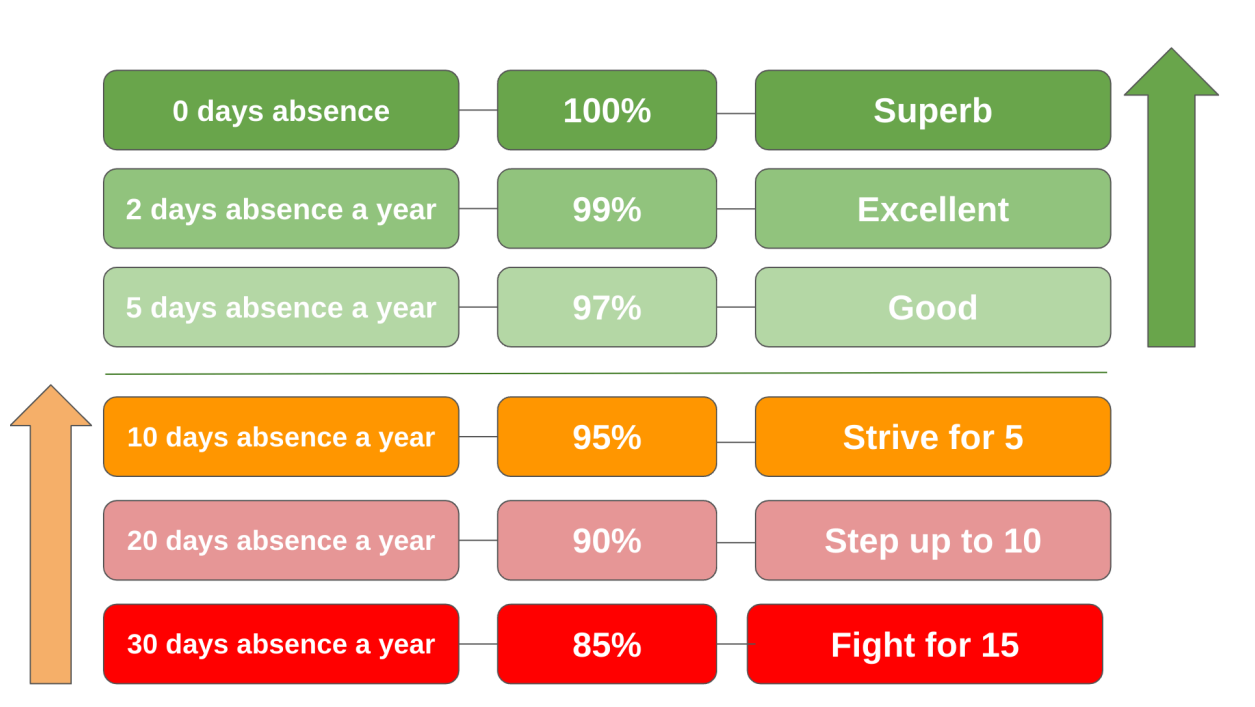
Parenting Orders are imposed by the court and parent's agreement is not required before an order is made. A parenting order instructs parents/carers to attend parenting classes and take any action a court deems necessary in order to improve their child's attendance

BACME initiates legal proceedings on behalf of the London Borough of Waltham Forest, only Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents/carers and must consider the Attorney General's guidelines for Crown Prosecutors in all prosecutions.

17. Monitoring of Attendance Data

The school monitors attendance at a whole school level and by groups using SIMs and also Fisher Family Trust Aspire which compares school and group attendance with other FFT schools nationally and regionally. This monitoring and comparison are used to inform school evaluation, improvement strategy and intervention for key groups and individuals.


Appendix A 'Every Day Counts' - Attendance % by Days Attended, Punctuality by Learning Time Lost



Worried about attendance or punctuality? What's in the way? We are here to listen and help!

If there are any barriers getting in the way of good attendance you can speak to:
Form Tutor, Head of Year, Ms Zulic (Attendance Officer), Ms Hickes (Assistant Headteacher/DSL), Ms Masella (Learning Mentor)

**"Being a few minutes late doesn't matter, does it?"
How much learning could you be losing?**

5 mins a day	3 days of potential learning lost	
10 mins a day	3 days of potential learning lost	
15 mins a day	3 days of potential learning lost	
20 mins a day	3 days of potential learning lost	
30 mins a day	3 days of potential learning lost	

Appendix B DfE Attendance Codes

- Codes to be updated from 19th August 2024

Present in school or an approved off-site educational activity	
/\	Present in School - am and pm registration
L	Late to school - before registers close
U	Late to school - after registers close (present but half a days absence)
B	Off-site educational activity, approved by the school
D	Dual registered - at another educational establishment
J	At an interview with prospective employer, or at another educational establishment
P	Participating in supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Authorised Absence	
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made

H	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma or Traveller absence
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Approved educational visit
Administrative Codes	
X	Not required to be in school, used to record sessions that non-compulsory age children are not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Unauthorised Absence	
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
O	Absent from school without authorisation
N	Reason for absence not yet provided

Appendix C Connaught School for Girls Strategy and Support Thresholds

Universal All students	<p>Promotion of good attendance and punctuality through assemblies and pastoral curriculum</p> <p>Postcards and recognition for those with commendable attendance - 97-100%</p> <p>Parent information and communication</p> <p>Displays</p>	Tier 1 Promotion of good attendance/identification of 'at risk'
Early Intervention 90-95%	<p>Early intervention letters</p> <p>Student discussion with form tutor</p> <p>Identification of barriers</p> <p>Early intervention group sessions with HOY</p> <p>HOY monitoring and check in</p>	
Persistent Absence 1 PA1 85-89%	<p>Student needs and support discussed at fortnightly Attendance and Safeguarding meeting</p> <p>Student attendance success meeting with Attendance Officer/EWO</p> <p>Referral for support internally</p> <p>Absence unauthorised unless evidenced</p> <p>EWO PA concern letter</p>	Tier 2 Targeted Support
Persistent Absence 2 PA2 80-84%	<p>Meeting with parent/carer</p> <p>Explore barriers</p> <p>Early Help referral</p> <p>Referral for support internal and external services</p> <p>Home visit EWO</p>	

<p>Persistent Absence 3 PA3 61-79%</p>	<p>Continued support where evidence of needs and communication present Referral for further support and action from BACME where evidence of needs and communication are not present. This may result in: FPN Parenting Contract Education Supervision Orders</p>	<p>Tier 3 Specialist/Multi Agency support</p>
<p>CSfG Severe Absence 4 PA4 below 60%</p>	<p>Next steps discussed with parent/carer professionals EHCP considered Referral to Children's services considered Medical Home Tuition explored Alternative provision support considered</p>	