



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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RATIFIED:

Ancora House School Attendance Policy

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Context

Ancora House School is a short stay hospital education provision; we provide education and support to young people who are admitted to Ancora House. Ancora House is the North West Tier 4 Psychiatric in-patient service for young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years old.

Access to the school provision is directly as a result of admission to hospital.

The team of teachers, teaching assistants, transition staff and administration staff work closely with home schools and colleges so that young people remain engaged with their learning despite their admission to hospital.

Ancora House School also provides education for children and young people at Key Stage 3 and 4 in the Cheshire West and Chester locality; this element of the school operates from our [Learning Hub](#) in Blacon; the Hub has close working partnerships with our locality schools.

Referral to the learning hub is via the local authority who commission places for children unable to access their home school because of medical needs.

1. Aims

Ancora House School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting positive engagement and good attendance
- Ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time or suitable education in line with their entitlement
- Acting early to identify patterns of absence and potential barriers
- Implementing interventions to reduce persistent absence and improve engagement

Children and young people are expected to engage with education or training up until the age of 18 years old.

Ancora House School meets the needs of pupils who cannot attend their main school due to a physical or mental health condition; as such this group of pupils is highly vulnerable and for the most part have greater needs than their peers.

Our pupils often have a chequered attendance profile with prolonged periods of absence; the primary goal of our school is to re-engage our pupils with learning so that they can ultimately return to fulltime education in their main setting.

Pupils arrive with a range of barriers including:

- Mental ill health
- Physical ill health
- Social isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Gaps in learning
- Learning difficulties

Ancora House School maintains an holistic approach with every pupil; work is undertaken to ensure all barriers are identified and addressed; we work in partnership with agencies, parents, carers and health to secure sustainable recovery and return to their main school setting.

Robust communication between all parties and regular review of progress including attendance, contributes to positive outcomes for pupils.

Attendance is monitored daily and information shared as appropriate with families, originator schools and agencies. Data is collected and RAG rated weekly to inform team meetings; all pupils' attendance is reviewed and according to the rating, interventions are implemented and monitored.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/ carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – as soon as practically possible.

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

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

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. School should be notified in advance of a medical or dental appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence & lateness

Medical Needs Hub Pupils who arrive late will be marked with an L, an explanation from the parent/carer /pupil must be given to confirm why the pupil is late. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact School on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the office answering machine or phoning when the office opens at 8.00am. In any case a parent/carer should contact prior to the pupils start time/taxi collection time. If this contact is not made School will contact the parent/carer by telephone or, if the parent is unobtainable, send a text or email and/or write a letter requesting information.

Ancora House School will continue trying to contact the parent/carer to obtain a reason for the absence. The school's Headteacher may be informed and the parent/carer may be invited to school for a meeting. The meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school.

Ancora House In-Patient Unit is an acute inpatient psychiatric unit with 26 beds available. Ancora House School is a central part of the daily structure for all patients.

All patients follow our daily timetable that takes account of both their current health needs and their educational needs. All patients are expected to attend school, however due to the severity of their mental health needs this can be challenging at times. It is the responsibility of all Ancora staff to encourage attendance at school. If a young person feels unable to attend a lesson the following procedures are in place:

- Identified staff will try to encourage them upstairs; this will often involve an agreed time scale for them coming upstairs, and the staff member will then go back if they have not arrived.
- The subject teacher may go and speak to the young person to ascertain what is preventing them from attending.
- If a young person is still unable to attend the lesson the nursing team will be alerted and asked to encourage or explore what is preventing them from attending.

There are times when a young person is too unwell to attend group or 1-1 sessions in the school area. If at all possible they will be taught in the ward classroom. All decisions about education input for this group of young people is made in consultation with Senior Medical Staff.

3.6 Reporting to parents

School will report pupils' attendance and unauthorised absences to home and to the pupils' home school in accordance with the legal requirement outlined in the latest government circular.

3.7 Missing persons

If a pupil in our Outreach Service does not arrive at their specified teaching location and we are unable to make contact with their parent or other named contact, we may need to report them to the police as a missing person.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

It is acknowledged that due to individual needs of pupils at Ancora House School, the Headteacher may apply special consideration to requests for compassionate leave and

where a parent/carer can demonstrate external funding has been awarded to a family for a holiday. This decision will be made in conjunction with the pupils' home school. It may be necessary for the school to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. medical certificate or a letter from the GP. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

4.2 Legal Sanction

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

1. All weekly attendance should be sent to the school office by the end of the staff members' working week.
2. All absent pupils will be contacted on the first day of their absence if no contact has been made by the parent/carer.
3. Absence is documented on SIMs and the staff member will phone or text the Attendance Officer with this information.
4. If no contact is made with a parent/carer the key teacher must show what action they have taken to contact the family, the same day or the next.
5. A text message from a parent must be followed up by a phone call.
6. If the pupil is absent for 5 consecutive days, a doctor's note must be requested.
7. If staff are concerned about the reasons given for a pupil's absence then the Head teacher and Safeguarding Lead will be informed of any concerns and the home school will be contacted.
8. If a child has three consecutive unauthorised absences then the Access Officer (CW&C Council) will be informed and a review meeting may be convened to discuss if is the most appropriate provision to meet a child's educational needs.
9. The non-attendance form will be kept as an individual record for each pupil in a pupil non-attendance monitoring file.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis; they also hold the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

6.2 The Head Teacher

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the committee. The head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

6.3 The Attendance Officer

The administrator with responsibility for attendance:

- Maintain a record of pupil attendance on the schools computer system.

- Telephone pupils' homes as necessary re attendance
- Pass on information re attendance to the relevant staff.
- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store notes from home in the pupil file

6.4 Tutor Role

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their pupils.
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register.
- Follow up any absences as outlined above (see "pupil absence monitoring system")
- Liaise with the Deputy Head and Hub Lead about attendance.
- Inform office staff if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave part way through the day.
- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- Notify the safeguarding lead of absences of pupils on the Child Protection Register.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head Teacher.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Management Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding Policy and our Positive Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late- before registers closed
U	Late – after registers closed
I	Illness
M	Medical/ Dental appointments
W	Work experience
B	Educated off site (not dual reg)
N	No reason yet provided for absence
P	Approved sporting activity
Z	Pupil not on roll
E	Excluded
R	Religious observance
G	Family Holiday – not agreed
H	Family Holiday - agreed
J	Interview
V	Educational visit or trip
T	Traveller absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
C	Other authorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school age absence and Covid related absence
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

Appendix 2

Attendance recording during the Covid 19 outbreak

Ancora house school will continue to use the statutory attendance codes to update the register, in light of the outbreak additional attendance codes have been introduced from September 2020. In addition to the statutory attendance recording, the attendance officer will continue to complete the DFE educational setting status form by 2pm daily:

<https://form.education.gov.uk/service/educational-setting-status>.

When to use additional attendance code X

- When a student is unable to attend due to displaying symptoms and is awaiting test results – if a positive test is returned for the student then you will mark an 'I' from the date of the test result
- When a student is advised to shield or self- isolate in line with government advice
- When a student is unable to attend the school and is completing remote learning due to Covid 19