



Swiss
Cottage
School
Development &
Research Centre

Inclusive
Nurturing
Inspiring

Attendance Policy

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People involved in writing the policy:	Assistant / Vice Principal
Person responsible:	Assistant / Vice Principal
Committee responsible:	Provision & Wellbeing
Display/availability:	Website
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Rationale

At Swiss Cottage we recognise the clear link between consistent attendance and academic achievement and pupil wellbeing. We also believe that all children have the right to have opportunities for play, social interaction and learning, as outlined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. As such, the whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents/carers, pupils, governors and all school staff. Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. As a school we expect the highest level of possible attendance from all students including those with complex needs.

Attendance rates for special schools are generally below those of mainstream schools because of the complex nature of some of our pupils' special needs. Unfortunately, some of our pupils are more prone to illness, hospitalisation and other vulnerabilities. We also recognise that, associated with this, families in our community can experience greater challenges than many other families. We will always work with families to support children to attend school, participate in school life or where appropriate access education at home, in hospital, hospice or specialist settings.

We also recognise the importance of close home-school partnerships in supporting our pupils' optimum attendance. Children who are not accessing education will be discussed at a fortnightly attendance meeting and where appropriate referrals should be made to the Early Help Team or if the child known to social care the Children and Young people with Disabilities Team and Camden SEN.

The class teacher will plan home based learning programs for children who are unable to access school, these are jointly agreed and led by the teacher but supported by the Multi-Agency Support Team (consisting of NHS therapists, Children and Adolescent Mental Health service and the school's Wellbeing Team comprising Family Inclusion Mentors and Positive Behaviour Support Mentors). These programs are planned and reviewed half termly.

Section 1

Duties and responsibilities

Principal

1. To have overall responsibility for whole school attendance.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

1. To liaise with the MAST team, with teachers and business team staff.
2. To monitor the process for pupil absences
3. To identify persistent absences and set individual targets
4. To deploy support from the Wellbeing Team (Family Inclusion mentors and Positive Behaviour Support Mentors)
5. To liaise with families, and where appropriate Camden's School Inclusion Team or social care to develop intervention packages for pupils with persistent absences
6. Publish regular reports for the appropriate committee of the Governing Board.

Teachers

1. To keep accurate attendance registers at the beginning of each morning (any amendments for the afternoon sessions will also be recorded).
2. To indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using the agreed coding system (see Appendix 1)
3. To identify pupils with poor or irregular attendance and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team
4. To maintain contact with families to communicate openly about attendance concerns to promote pupil engagement with learning
5. To provide home/hospital based learning if required

Parents

1. To prioritise the right of your child to access learning, social and therapeutic support and ensure that they engage with school wherever possible
2. To provide an explanation for any absences by phone or letter.
3. To contact the Inclusion Leader or the Head of School if you are experiencing difficulties in ensuring your child attends the school
4. To work in partnership with the school and other professionals to help your child engage with learning, social and therapeutic support.

Section 2

Absences

The school accepts absences for the following reasons:

- Illness
 - Dental/medical appointments
 - Religious observance
 - Family bereavement or illness
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- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances

The school will try to contact families where no information regarding the absence has been shared. This is to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of a child's attendance or punctuality we will contact the family to discuss the best way forward._

Authorised Term Time Absences

In exceptional circumstances, families may need to request permission for their child not to be in school during term time. These requests will be made directly to the Head of School and permission will be given at their discretion following careful consideration of the child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern and the circumstances given._

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been approved. This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

Children at risk of missing out on education

In mitigating circumstances, for example pupils experiencing significant medical concerns, pupils may attend Swiss Cottage on a part time basis; this will be arranged through agreement with the Head of School, SLT and local authority, involvement of key health professionals and reviewed regularly by the senior leadership team, and Family Inclusion Team.

Section 3

Monitoring

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will formally monitor attendance data every fortnight
- Assistant Principals and Safeguarding Leads will monitor the attendance data, using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system and the impact of attendance intervention programmes each term and report any concerns to the SLT on a bi-weekly basis.
- Unauthorised absences will be followed up to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and to signpost to additional multiagency support. This may result in a referral being made to the Early Help Team or CYPDS/ Social Care. Authorised term time absences will be monitored separately.
- A RAG system will highlight the number of requests being made and provide an overview of time taken.
- The protocol for pupils who fall into the lower percentage of attendance is as follows:
 1. Regular meetings and contact with parents/carers.
 2. Co-creation of a plan to identify and address any barriers to attendance with the involvement of the MAST multi-agency team and/or wellbeing team, where appropriate. The plan will be reviewed at regular intervals.
 3. Attendance monitoring from the school leadership team in conjunction with the Early Help Team and Social Care to ensure there is progress towards reengagement with school.
 4. If the above interventions are not successful and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the Camden Lead for Attendance and their service will become activity involved in conjunction with Camden SEN. An Interim or Annual Review may be scheduled to review progress and provision.

Links with Other Swiss Cottage Policies:

- Home School Agreement
- Safeguarding
- Pupils with Medical Needs

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes
- Appendix 2- Guide for parents
- Appendix 3 - Process for Monitoring Pupil Absence
- Appendix 4 - Absence letter
- Appendix 5 - Pupil Missing form Education/Guidance Procedures

APPENDIX 1 – Attendance Codes

/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorized circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveler absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit of trip
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

APPENDIX 2 – Guide for Parents/Carers

1	<p>When does my child need to be in school?</p> <p><i>School opens for pupils at 9.15am. Your child should arrive in school between 9.15am-9.30am</i></p>
2	<p>Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?</p> <p><i>We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This will be followed up with a letter requesting this information if we are unable to contact you.</i></p> <p><i>If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorize the absence.</i></p>
3	<p>What reasons will the school accept for absences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illness</i> • <i>Specialists or emergency medical appointments</i> • <i>Religious observance</i> • <i>Family bereavement</i> • <i>Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances (see question 6)</i> <p><i>Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details.</i></p>
4	<p>What reasons will the school not accept for absences?</p> <p><i>The school will not authorize absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.</i></p>
5	<p>Will the school contact me if my child is absent?</p> <p><i>The school will try to contact you, if we have not heard from you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.</i></p>
6	<p>Can we take term time absences?</p> <p><i>If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to not be in school during term time, you should write a letter to the Head of School, stating the reason why. The Head of School has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to: your child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern of your child and the circumstances given.</i></p>
7	<p>My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?</p> <p><i>Contact the school to discuss any concerns or worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to find best way forward.</i></p>
8	<p>I am concerned about my child coming into school. What should I do?</p> <p><i>As above, contact the school to discuss any concerns or worries and we will work together to find the best way forward.</i></p>

Appendix 3 - Process for Monitoring Pupil Absence

Before school:

Parents to inform school by phone/letter

Registration:

Teachers will complete the school register stating of the absence is authorized or unauthorized. Unauthorized absences will be reported using 'My concern'.

First day phone call home:

Teacher or, where appropriate, Reception Team will call the family to ascertain the reason for the absence. For any family who has been unable to be contacted a letter should go home.

Persistent Absences:

Lead for Safeguarding, in liaison with the Head of School, will contact the family to discuss the reasons for the absence and an action plan will be put in place to support. This will be treated sensitively and may require the involvement of multiagency professionals.

Appendix 4 – Absence letter

Date:

Dear Parent and/or Carer,

Re: Pupil absence

Your child has been absent from school today but we received no message from you regarding this, and we were unsuccessful in trying to contact you today.

We would be grateful if you could please confirm your child's absence by phone or returning the slip below stating the reason for absence.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Assistant Principal



For the attention of the Office

Absence Reply Slip

Child's Name: Date(s) of absence

Reason for absence (please circle):

a) sickness

b) medical appointment (please share evidence)

c) other reason

(Please state other reason)

Signed: Date:

Appendix 5 - Pupils Missing from Education

Child/young person on roll but not attending	Child/young person moving out of country	Family indicate they are moving
School to attempt to make contact with the family within 1-3 days.	Request from the family their new address and details of the new school.	School requests and records details of the new family address and school.
If absence persists – school to make efforts to engage with the family and arrange a home visit	Contact with the new school made (transition plan in place)	If without a placement, child stays on roll until new school is confirmed.
Whereabouts known	If without a placement, child stays on roll until new school is confirmed.	If without a placement, child stays on roll until new school is confirmed.
Whereabouts unknown	Referral made to Children Missing from Education Officer	Referral made to Children Missing from Education Officer
Child and Family meets threshold for referral to Family Services and Social Work (FSSW) and MASH/ Early Help	Child/young person permanently excluded	Child unable to attend for health needs
Referral made to: *Safeguarding Team *Children Missing from Education Officer	LA notified on the day of exclusion	School requests arranges multi agency meeting (TAF CIN)
Child stays on roll.	Parents/carers notified on the day of exclusion	Home based learning programme agreed , shared with LA , CYPDS / SC and joint agreement signed
Child stays on roll.	Parents/carers invited for an exclusion meeting	Six weekly reviews with network and family working towards phased re-integration .
Parents/Carers indicate they wish to Home Educate	Child/young person remains on roll	
Request made in writing to School and LA. Child /YP stays on roll until LA confirmation comes through		