

# Connaught School for Girls



## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Ratification by the Governing Body: **June 2023**

Date of Review: **June 2024**



## Introduction

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

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.

## 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.

## Links to other policies

Safeguarding Policy

Children with Social Workers Policy

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 certificates and trophies at school assemblies, presenting individual awards to those pupils who achieve 100% attendance over each term and those who have greatly 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.

## **Roles, Responsibilities for Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Key Staff Involved in attendance at Connaught School for Girls**

- The Assistant Headteacher who has overall responsibility for attendance at Connaught School for Girls is Ms Rachel Hickes ([rachel.hickes@connaught.waltham.sch.uk](mailto:rachel.hickes@connaught.waltham.sch.uk))
- The school has a dedicated administration staff member who maintains all records
- Each year group has a Head of Year who analyses the attendance data on a weekly basis and who meets with the EWO every two weeks.
- The EWO deals with all attendance referrals, meets with students and parents/carers, carries out home visits, delivers workshops when needed, holds formal and informal meetings with parents and escalates to court when necessary

### **Responsibilities of the school and attendance leader**

The school has a responsibility to:

Notify parents relation to any unexplained absences

- maintain clear records of attendance and punctuality and investigate any unexplained absence
- encourage, support and reward high standards of attendance and punctuality throughout the school



- work closely with parents/carers to support them with any difficulties they may have, relating to attendance or punctuality
- refer any issues relating to attendance and punctuality that give cause for concern to the Education Welfare Officer
- refer any unauthorised term time holidays/leave to the EWO.

An Assistant Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the School's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Assistant Headteacher will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will 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 reason 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 an absence will always rest with the School, provided medical evidence is given.

### **Responsibilities of tutors**

- Ensure that all students are accurately registered by being ready to take an electronic (SIMS) register at 8.30am and at 2.00pm
- Promote and reward good attendance with students
- Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher and Heads of Year on matters of attendance
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student's absence to Head of Year/Assistant Headteacher
- Support students with a poor attendance record to engage with their learning once they are back in school

### **Responsibility of classroom staff**

- Complete an electronic (SIMS) register within 5 minutes of the lesson starting, using the correct codes (see appendix)
- Record if a student is late to the lesson and enter the number of minutes
- Inform the school office with any concerns about absent students as soon as possible

### **Responsibilities of students - Morning and Afternoon Registration**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive to all registrations on time
- Sign in on the Inventory system at the school office if they are late for morning registration or leaving the school site during school hours.

### **Lessons**

- Attend all lessons unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive to all lessons on time



## Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence by 8am
- send in a written note the day the child returns even if a telephone call was made on the first day
- discuss with the Head of Year/Assistant Headteacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or email ([attendance@connaught.waltham.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@connaught.waltham.sch.uk)) on the first instance and any subsequent days of absence, or by letter/email if phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments (parents are encouraged to bring their child in after any appointment)\*
- 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.

\*As a school we are aware that from time to time it can be difficult to re-arrange pre-appointed medical/dental times but we do ask parents to take this into consideration.

## Rights of Parents/Carers

- Parents have the right to be kept fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- Parents can expect support from the school if they are experiencing difficulty getting their child to attend regularly or be punctual

## Punctuality

It is important for all students to be on time for morning registration and for all subsequent lessons and afternoon registration. A student who is late to lessons is recorded as so on SIMS with the number of minutes late entered. The expectation is that the classroom teacher deals with the lateness on the first instance and any further concerns are brought up with the Head of Department in department meetings. This information is then passed on to the SLT Line Manager and Head of Year and is discussed in SLT meetings to identify cross subject patterns.

## Morning and Afternoon Registration and Recording Attendance

Registers are a legal document that are required to be taken twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.30am, and again in the afternoon at 2pm.

Registers are also important for health and safety reasons. If the school has to evacuate the



building, the attendance register enables school staff to account for everyone present that day.

Registers also enable the school to safeguard the well-being of students, particularly if they travel to and from school independently.

## The Registration Process

- The school has a Breakfast Club that starts at 7.40am
- Morning registration starts at 8:30am and ends at 8.40am
- The register is taken again after the lunchtime break at 2:00pm
- Students arriving at school later than 8.30am must sign in on the inventory system at the school office. Students who have unauthorised lateness have a same day detention. Year 7-9 have a lunchtime detention with their HoY and Years 10-11 have an after school detention
- Students arriving after 8.40am MUST sign in at the school office.

## Recording Attendance for Registration

- Code 'L' is used for any student who is late (after 8.30am) – up to 9.10am
  - Code 'U' is used for any student who arrives after 9.10am.
- Please refer to the appendix for all attendance codes

ALL students MUST sign in at the school office if arriving after 8.40am. Students may be referred to the EWO officer if no valid reason is given or if lateness becomes frequent.

## Reporting Absences and Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

### Reporting an Absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent a parent must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us
- Provide medical evidence where applicable

In order to safeguard all students, we will:

- Notify parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from the parent/carer by 9.40am – this is because we have a duty to ensure every child's safety as well as their regular attendance at school
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with our EWO /Head of Year/ Assistant Headteacher if absences persist

This practice enables us to ensure that all children are safe and that the register can be coded



correctly. This safeguarding practice can only be effective if the school has up-to-date contact details for those with parental responsibility for each child. Therefore, it is essential that parents/carers ensure the school has the information it needs to carry out its role effectively.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

In every instance when a student is absent from school, the school makes a decision as to whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

A letter from home explaining an absence does not necessarily mean that it is authorised by the school. The school may require medical evidence for any absence directly before or after a school holiday; evidence can include a hospital letter, appointment card or prescribed medication.

*Examples of absences that the school **will authorise** include:*

- Sickness (if the student has been referred to the EWO, absence due to sickness will not be authorised without medical evidence e.g. copies of prescriptions or appointment cards)
- **Unavoidable** medical appointments
- Attending a graduation ceremony for a close family member
- Attending a citizenship ceremony
- Days of religious observance - up to a maximum of 3 days per academic year with one day per period of religious observance - as per the parents' religious body
- Interviews or entrance exams for secondary schools
- Exceptional Circumstances – as authorised by the Headteacher.

*Examples of absences that the school **will not authorise** include:*

- Shopping for new school shoes
- Birthday treats
- Holidays/leave taken in term time
- Caring for siblings

If unauthorised leave is taken:

- The absence will count as unauthorised absence
- The unauthorised absence will be on your child's school record
- A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the school of £60 per child within 28 days and rising to £120 if paid after 28 days
- Your child may be removed from the school roll after a period of 20 days

## Leaving the Site During the School Day

- Parents/carers must inform the school in advance if they need to take their child out of school to attend an appointment, interview or educational activity at another venue
- It is expected that appointments other than emergency ones are booked outside of school time where possible
- The school does not permit students to leave the school grounds unless a parent or carer has provided the school with a written note
- Other than in an emergency, a letter or an appointment card must be presented at the office or a phone call made in order for the school to be able to authorise the absence



\* Students are not allowed to leave the school site at break time or lunchtime unless this is for an appointment or an agreed leave of absence.

The school will not authorise early collection for reasons such as:

- Seeing someone off or collecting them from the airport
- Going on holiday early
- Going to birthday parties, weddings and other celebrations

Students returning to the school must report to the office to be signed in before they return to class.

## Taking Children Off the School Roll

Extended periods of absence could result in a child's name being taken off the school roll and the place filled by a child on the school's waiting list.

The school follows the Local Authority Children Missing Education procedure and may remove names from the school roll at the direction of the school's designated EWO.

## Monitoring Attendance

### Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The Heads of Year analyse the attendance data weekly to identify:

- Students falling below 95% attendance
- Students falling below 90% attendance – PA (persistent absenteeism) students
- Emerging patterns of absence or lateness.

Parents/carers are regularly informed of any relevant attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have of their child.

As a result of this monitoring, individual cases will be referred to the EWO. This could result in court action against the parents/carers and fines of up to £2500 per parent.

The Headteacher provides the Governing Body with a termly report on attendance and punctuality.

The school provides the Local Authority with attendance data on a half termly basis and the Department of Education on an annual basis.

## Alternative/Off-site Provision

- Where a student attends a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), college or other off-site education provision, they remain a student of this school and will receive support as if they were attending the school. The school will ensure they receive all school updates/documents via post if needed, for example Newsletters
- The school will assess the possible alternative provision available within the borough and work





closely with the family and student to choose the provision that is right for the student. This is done by making note of the interests of the student, looking at the student's performance data and ensuring they are involved in the whole process

- The school may visit the provision before sending a student to the provision
- Once the provision is selected, the school will support the family to attend a welcome session/ interview with the course provider
- Once the student starts the provision, the school will contact them weekly to check their attendance and progress
- The school may contact the parent and student to review their views on the provision
- The school may attend any meeting which the provision arranged, for example review meetings or SAP meetings to support the student
- The school will request that they receive copies of any letters sent to the parents to ensure they are aware of any issues that could be taking place
- If the student is to return to school after attending an off-site provision, the school will work closely with provision and design a re-integration time table and support package for the student.

## **Educated Offsite 'B' mark**

In some circumstances students who are receiving education at home from a hospital teaching service or from alternative providers will be given a 'B' mark which counts as attending school.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Attendance Codes**

According to the Department of Education (October 2014), the following codes are to be used:

#### **Present at school**

- / Present am registration
- \ Present pm registration
- L Late arrival before the register has closed

#### **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

- B** Off-site educational activity
- D** Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
- J** At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- V** Educational visit or trip
- W** Work experience

#### **Authorised Absence from School**



- C** Leave of absence authorised by the school
- E** Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H** Holiday authorised by the school
- I** Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- M** Medical or dental appointments
- R** Religious observance
- S** Study leave
- T** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

### Unauthorised Absence from School

- G** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
- N** Reason for absence not yet provided
- O** Absent from school without authorisation
- U** Arrived in school after registration closed

### Administrative Codes

- X** Not required to be in school
- Y** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (forced school closure or other emergency)
- Z** Pupil not on admission register
- #** Planned whole or partial school closure

## APPENDIX B



### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE FOR STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL



As parents/carers and teachers we have a common purpose of supporting your child in achieving her very best in school. There is a proven link between excellent attendance and achievement; it is never the same to make up work due to absence.

Please see Attendance and Punctuality Policy for examples of applications for leave that will be approved.

If unauthorised leave is taken:

- The absence will count as unauthorised absence
- The unauthorised absence will be on your child's school record
- A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the school of £60 per child within 28 days and rising to £120 if paid after 28 days
- Your child may be removed from the school roll after a period of 20 days

Student name	Tutor Group
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I would like to apply from leave of absence for my child between the following dates:

First day of absence	
Confirmed return to school	

Reason
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Parent/Carer signature	
Application authorised	Yes / No
Comments	