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**Attendance Policy**

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**Written by:** Head of Therapy Director, Head of Therapy, Health and Safety Officer

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

**Key Contacts**

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# Introduction

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

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

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our students is included in Cairn Educations Student Agreement, which students (and parents where under the age of 16) should sign following admission to Cairn Education.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure you (your child) attends regularly. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and students via www.cairneducation.co.uk

For a young person to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our provision successful. Every young person has a right to access the education which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your young person is at Cairn Education, on time, everyday the provision is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

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

## Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the young person. The Student Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their young person achieves good attendance.

To help us all focus on this we will:

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

# Roles and responsibilities

## Directors

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

## Responsibilities of education staff

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

## Responsibilities of students

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

## Responsibilities of parents/ carers

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

# Recording Attendance

1. The register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the day at 9:30am and again for the afternoon session at 3:30pm.

# Lateness and Punctuality

1. It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The start of sessions is used to plan the day. If you/ your young person is late they can miss work time with their class teacher and cause disruption to the sessions for others. It can also increase a young persons anxiety if they feel they are late for sessions.
* Individual start times will be agreed at the start of a young persons placement.
* All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be marked as unauthorized absence and coded U in line with Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
* If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorized absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

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

1. A child not attending Cairn Education is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.
* Contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence
* Email info@cairneducation.co.uk or send a note in on the first day of return with an explanation of the absence- you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
1. If your child/ young person is absent we will:
* Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you- this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular attendance.
* Invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer
* Refer the matter to the Local Authority if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

## Third day absence

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

## Ten days absence

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

## Continued or ongoing absence

1. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/ sessions) or more education across the academic year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will provide support and hold regular review meetings in order to improve their attendance rate.

# Request for leave of absence

1. Amendments to attendance regulation were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education Regulations state that Directors may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Directors can determine the length of the authorized absence, as well as whether significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary between provisions and from family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in academic term time to go on holiday and in the absence need to fill in an application form (available from info@cairneducation.co.uk) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.
2. If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from Cairn Education provision, the absence will be unauthorized and process outlined in the section above will be followed.
3. Taking holidays in term time will affect your young persons education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking young people out during term time.

# Understanding types of absence

1. Students are expected to attend everyday of their programme for the entire duration of the academic year (or as otherwise specified) unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
* Authorized absence: is when Cairn Education has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorized.
* Unauthorised absence: is when Cairn Education has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a young persons leave of absence from its provision after a parent’s request. This includes:
	+ Parents giving their children permission to be absent unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
	+ Truancy before or during the young persons scheduled sessions
	+ Absences which have not been explained
1. Cairn Education can, if needed, change an authorized absence to an unauthorized absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/ carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to education there is evidence they have been on holiday.
2. Cairn Education will liaise with the Local Authority to secure good attendance.

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

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

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

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

# Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

1. Absence of a young person/ child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children and young people, dual registration is allowed. That means that we would not remove a Traveller child/ young person from our roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away Cairn Education holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code.

# Teenage pregnancy

1. Support will be directed to keeping a student in education and, wherever possible, her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks’ authorized absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorized.

# Record preservation

1. Cairn Education registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies (if schools are not SIMS centrally hosted and do not have secure electronic server back-up they must print hard copies of the official registers and bind into annual volumes).