

# Attendance Policy

## Cherry Tree Learning Centre



**Approved by:**

**Date:** September 2022

**Last reviewed on:** September 2022

**Next review due by:** September 2024

**Introduction:**

This is a successful short stay school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be present, on time, every day the Learning Centre is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Referrals to the Centre supported by medical professionals assume that pupils will attend. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly as agreed with staff and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

**Learning:** - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** - Your child, may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the Learning Centre regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of the Learning Centre, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis could be considered as a safeguarding matter. Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

### **The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

### **The Law relating to safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

All Cherry Tree pupils are expected to achieve attendance of 90% or higher. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of the Centre's staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this Cherry Tree will:**

- Agree individual attendance targets around your child's needs;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and rewards.
- Appoint a member of staff from the senior leadership team to oversee attendance.

### **We expect parents/carers to:**

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open.
- Book medical appointments outside the school day where possible.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. (Mrs Howard cannot authorise leave of absence for holidays. This request will have to be submitted to the child's mainstream school.)
- Engage with support offered by Cherry Tree to help overcome their child's barriers to attendance.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from the Centre has to be classified by the Centre (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the Learning Centre for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the Learning Centre does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children, parents/carers or birthdays •  
Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

These types of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

However, whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the Learning Centre. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Centre, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 generally will only make the situation worse.

Pupils identified as having attendance less than 90% who have not provided medical evidence will be required to obtain further information from their health practitioner that the absence is necessary. Failure to do so will result in all further absence being recorded as **unauthorised** on the Centre's register, which could result in the Learning Centre **withdrawing** the school place **and/or enforcement proceedings**.

Please be aware that absence exceeding 20% will require further evidence in regard to the condition identified at the time of referral. Where clear and concise medical evidence is not received, the Centre will reserve the right to refer the case for enforcement proceedings and/or withdraw the place with immediate effect.

However, the Learning Centre will endeavour to provide additional support to pupils within

this category and no decision on withdrawing the place will be made without a review meeting in school.

### Dual Registration:

All pupils at the Learning Centre will be dual registered with their host school and or alternative provision.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other	Unauthorised absence

	code/description)	
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveler absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

All Cherry Tree pupils are expected to achieve attendance of 90% or higher. The Government state that students who accrue 10% or more absence will fall within the persistent absence (PA) category. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

However, here at Cherry Tree Learning Centre, we understand that students may accrue above average absence due to their medical conditions. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us 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;
- Or, you can visit the Centre and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Usually telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a Form Teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist;
- If we still have concerns you may receive a visit from a member of Cherry Tree staff;
- Refer the matter to the child's mainstream school if absence becomes persistent.

### **Lateness:**

We encourage punctuality and positive attendance as missing the start of a lesson can be disruptive, increase an individual's anxiety and is a detrimental start to a pupil's time at Cherry Tree.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 9.00am when pupils attend form groups. The afternoon session starts at 12.30pm. If a pupil arrives after 9.20am or 12.50pm (depending on personalised timetabled expectations) a late mark will be recorded. Registers will be closed by 11.00am and 2.30pm and a pupil will receive an unauthorised absence mark if they are expected in by these times but their actual arrival is after.

We do not penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition. [DfE 2015 Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the Learning Centre staff and/or Attendance Advisor/member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the Centre on time.

### **Holidays in Term Time/ Leave of absence**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

### **Leave of absence in term time**

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the head teacher of the child's mainstream school may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing/or a form provided by the mainstream school. Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the local authority may be requested by the mainstream school. When requesting a penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12 month period.

**Mrs Howard is cannot give permission for a leave absence for holidays. All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher of the child's mainstream school at least 10 school days prior to the requested leave date.**

### **Recording and Reporting:**

The Learning Centre has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum expected level of attendance for Cherry Tree is ~~90%~~90%. We will keep you updated regularly about your child's attendance data and how it compares to the minimum expected level.

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We have a duty to present our data on attendance and punctuality to the Management Committee on a termly basis. In their role as a critical friend the Management Committee will offer support and challenge in order to raise standards. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Newsletter bulletin and we ask for your full support.

### **Education Investigation Service:**

Parents/carers are expected to contact the Learning Centre at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the pupil's host school in collaboration with the Learning Centre may refer the child to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) from the Local Authority, who will allocate an officer to the case. He/she will investigate the reason for absence and if no further medical evidence has been received and the child's attendance has failed to improve and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the EIS themselves to ask for advice or information. They are independent of the Learning Centre and the mainstream school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Members of the Senior Leadership Team, Form Teachers.

### **Summary:**

The Learning Centre has a legal duty to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All of the staff at the Learning Centre are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

**Links to other policies** – Relational Policy  
- Safeguarding

