Cobham Montessori School

Education for life

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Key References: In addition to this policy Cobham Montessori School has due regard for, and refers to the following legislation and guidance, any additional details found in the following publications:

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024 including subsequent technical amendments) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Links are current as of August 2026

1.0 Importance of Attendance

Children need a continuity of experience in order to fully benefit from the education offered at Cobham Montessori School. Children thrive within the stability of the community in terms of both the adults and children who are present each day. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support children throughout their lives. For these three reasons we emphasise the importance of consistent and high attendance over the school year.

All staff will be aware that children missing from education or persistently absent, without explanation and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Further, it may also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. We are also aware that absence can increase any existing safeguarding risks.

Attendance is closely monitored at Cobham Montessori School to support us in identifying abuse and acting early. Our staff will be aware of our school's unauthorised absence and children missing education procedures. To support the school's procedure for addressing children missing or absent from education, we aim to make sure we have more than one emergency contact number for each child. We work in partnership with Surrey County Council Attendance Service when patterns of absence give rise to concern, including notifying them when a child leaves our school without a new school being named.

Useful links:
The Inclusion Service Resources Area (Surrey Education Services)
Inclusion Service - Pupils missing out on education (PMOOE) (Surrey Education Services)
Children Missing Education Guidance:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education/children-missing-education-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-schools Missing Education statutory government guidance
Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual Children Missing Education

1.1 Scope

Children below normal school age (from September following the child's 4th birthday) in the Children's House may attend on a sessional basis and, whilst we encourage regular attendance in all communities, there are no restrictions on parents removing younger children during term time for family holidays. All other children are expected to attend full time.

The requirements of this policy apply to children who have reached primary school age (i.e. their 4th birthday occurred prior to 1st September of current school year).

1.2 The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (more/less than 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

2.0 Procedures

Parents will:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly
- Notify school on the first day of absence before 8.30 am by phone or email sent to attendance@cobhammontessori.co.uk
- Complete an Approval for Absence Request form (Appendix B) for absence during term time for exceptional circumstances
- If requested, hand in medical evidence for 4 or more days consecutive absence due to illness
- Meet with the Head of School to discuss their child's attendance when necessary

Class Teachers will:

- Complete a register in Transparent Classroom at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the Head of School.
- Provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances.
- Make parents aware of concerns over attendance during termly progress meetings or sooner if required.
- Ascertain the reason for a child's absence if not already provided, by phoning parents and other provided Emergency Contacts on the first day of absence.
- If no contact has been possible, use professional judgement as to whether to alert police or other services

Office Staff will:

- Input admissions data on the Admissions Register
- Review and analyse registers each term for monitoring purposes
- Monitor alongside the Head of School patterns of attendance and lateness
- If requested by a class teacher, make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence
- Instigate procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern.

Head of School will:

- Monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified
- Inform parents of individual pupils' attendance record in the end of year schools report
- Inform/Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern
- Involve Surrey County Council's Inclusion Service where appropriate

DSL will:

- Notify children's services if a child who has a social worker is absent from school without a suitable explanation.

2.1 Late Procedures

- Children who arrive late (after the doors close) must wait with their parents until it is convenient for the child to be admitted.
- Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored;
- Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M (in).
- Any child arriving after 8.45am in Elementary or 9.00am in the Children's House for any reason other than a medical appointment will be marked U (late after registers closed).
- Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out. This is strongly discouraged.
- Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

2.2 Holiday in Term Time Procedures

Children attend school for approximately 36.5 weeks in the calendar year. There are many weeks for holidays – 2.5 over Christmas, 2.5 over Easter, and more than 6 over the Summer. In addition, there are the half-term breaks and the bank holidays. We encourage parents to make the most of these holiday periods, and to avoid booking holidays during term time.

Children are generally not allowed days absence for holidays or other elective reasons. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as (G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised.

Parents may choose to complete an 'Approval for Absence Request' stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Head of School. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised, such as family weddings/funerals or other significant events which could not be arranged outside of term time.

If an 'Approval for Absence Request' is rejected, then the absence; should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time, is recorded as unauthorised (Code G or O) as appropriate.

2.3 Children with attendance below 90%

Persistent Absenteeism will be monitored by the Head of School. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

This attendance policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the schools Child Protection Policy.

2.4 Illness

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern (we may request medical evidence to be provided for absences of more than 4 days). In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

3.0 Part Time Attendance for Children of Compulsory School Age

Please note that we expect all children who have reached normal U.K. school 'Reception' age to attend on a full-time basis. This occurs in the September following the child's 4th birthday. If parents wish their child to continue to attend part-time until they reach statutory school age (the start of the term following their 5th birthday), please discuss this in advance with your child's lead Guide. Please be aware that full-time fees will be charged from the start of the Reception school year, as we have to hold the place for the child to take up during the year.

As a rule, we will not offer part-time places to children of compulsory school age. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs: for example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package or the child has a SEND which cannot be met by the school in the short term (for example while specialist resources including specialist staff are being sourced). A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence, using Code X.

Appendix A – Registration Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (LA)	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority (LA)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the LA has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in

		the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or · Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using 1 of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix B
Approval for Absence Request

Name of Child:	
Community:	Children's House / Elementary
Proposed Dates of Absence:	From: To:
Time of Absence:	All Day / Part of Day
Reason for Absence:	
Details of Exceptional Circumstances (if applicable):	
School Response:	Approved by: Not Approved – with reasons:
Follow Up Action Needed:	