

Attendance Policy

Cantell
SCHOOL

2024-25



Attendance Policy

Statutory/Non-Statutory:	Statutory
Approval Level:	SLT
Governing Body Ratified:	N/A
Reviewer:	Ian Creswell Deputy Head, Pastoral Care Senior Attendance Champion

Review Date: September 2024

Next Review Date: September 2025

*Cantell – An exceptional school experience:
Academic excellence / Exciting teaching & learning
Life-changing opportunities / A richly diverse community*

Policy Aims

The 2024-2025 statutory government guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 is explicitly clear that;

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Cantell School is an exceptional place to learn and every support is given to meet the needs mentioned above.

This policy is designed to outline the way Cantell School will work with students, parents and the Local Education Authority to ensure good attendance to school for all children and reflects the statutory government guidance on school attendance .

The Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance continues;

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

CANTELL SCHOOL'S EXPECTATION IS FOR AT LEAST 95% ATTENDANCE FOR EACH STUDENT

We expect parents to support us in achieving this goal by ensuring their child attends well.

We expect students to do everything they can to be in school and maximise their attendance.

Parents and students can expect Cantell School to provide exceptional support and guidance in order to achieve this goal.

National GCSE analysis shows that at KS4, pupils **NOT** achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an average attendance of 91.2%%, compared to 94.8% among those achieving grade 4+.

This trend is supported by our own analysis of results. The first table below shows the impact of good attendance on GCSE outcomes for our 2024 Cohort and the second shows how much time is lost at key attendance figures:

Attendance Group	Average grade
93-100%	5.4
90-93%	4.3
<90%	3

Attendance percentage	Time Lost	Lessons Missed
98	1 Week	35
95	2 Weeks	70
93	3 Weeks	105
90	4 Weeks	123
86	5 Weeks	175
80	7 Weeks	245

The Law is clear on the responsibility of parents to

ensure good attendance:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Cantell School and the "Working Together to Improve Attendance" guidance are clear that successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.

All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Role of the School

The school will develop and consistently implement policies and practice to support attendance and reward those with good attendance regularly; all staff will endeavour to raise the profile of attendance in everyday life.

The school is committed to supporting the attendance of our students and pro-actively dealing with non-attendance. Therefore, the school will work collaboratively with parents, partner schools, and outside agencies in supporting and promoting good attendance.

The school will monitor attendance daily and inform parents of unexplained absences – where parents have not informed the school of their child's absence. This will be by phone call or via Edulink by 10 am.

The school will analyse attendance data to establish any significant patterns that may help to combat poor attendance. The school will then communicate regularly via phone, email, letters and meetings as appropriate, with families of children who are not attending regularly.

The school will conduct home visits to support families where no reason for absence has been given and contact cannot be made or where the absence is longer than 3 days and the school has a concern regarding the validity or welfare of the student.

The school may also visit where the absence is authorised but we wish to support our students and wish them well, and in any other reasonable circumstances.

The school will maintain a list of students with less than 90% attendance and monitor these students with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) on a half-termly basis.

The school will monitor Leave of Absence requests and will follow government guidance regarding issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

The Role of the Parent

By law, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children, of compulsory school age, receive an education. Parents are expected to support the school by ensuring their child's regular

attendance, arriving at school fully equipped, in correct uniform and in time for registration, no later than 8.30am.

Parents are expected to notify the school of any absence on the first morning by contacting the school – for details please see **Appendix 1**. Parents will then need to let the school know of each further day's absence or contact the Head of Year Directly.

Parents are expected not to take students out of school during term time unless absolutely necessary. This includes ensuring that medical appointments are made outside of school hours, ensuring that no holidays are taken in term-time and that extended visits to family, in or out of the country, are done during the 14 weeks a year that the school is closed.

Parents should understand that the Head Teacher can only grant leave in what is deemed to be exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. These are very rare.

Parents are expected to provide medical evidence for extended absences or repeated absences for the same cause.

Parents are expected to take an active interest in their child's school life and where attendance drops below 95%, are expected to work with the school in addressing any issues.

The Role of the Local Education Authority

The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) meets with the School Attendance Officer regularly to discuss all students with attendance below 90%. The Education Welfare Officer will discuss action plans, undertake home visits, and advise on any attendance matters within school.

The Education Welfare Service will take student referrals when intervention by the school has had no effect. The EWO will work with the family to improve attendance and may instigate legal proceedings if there is no significant improvement.

The Education Welfare Service also support and provide regular training and updates to support staff at Cantell school.

The Role of the Lesson A Tutor

It is the responsibility of the Tutor to make attendance a high priority in everyday school life and embrace attendance initiatives and competitions organised by the Pastoral Team.

Lesson A tutors will take the register at 0830 and ensure it is saved accurately by 0835.

The Tutor is responsible for checking with their student on any unexplained absences and reporting any information to the Pastoral Team.

The Tutor will support the Pastoral Team in issuing a Catch-Up for those students identified as being frequently late.

The Tutor must report any specific concerns regarding attendance to the Year Leader for further investigation.

The Role of Staff Regarding Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents and the accurate completion of registers is a contractual obligation.

Registers must be completed electronically at the beginning of each lesson by the teacher. If SIMs is unavailable, a paper register must be completed and sent to the Admin Office as soon as possible.

Staff must ensure that the appropriate mark is recorded against each student. No gaps should be left on the register.

If a reason for a student's absence cannot be established, then the member of staff must report the absence via the first response system.

Registers are monitored throughout the day by the pastoral team and anomalies investigated.

Any member of staff who regularly fails to complete their register will meet with the DHT – Pastoral Care.

The Admin Office will ensure that accurate registers are printed daily and will be available in the event of a fire. These will be passed to the appropriate Fire Officer at the assembly point, to carry out an immediate head count.

The School Day

Years 7, 8 & 11	
08:15	Arrive at School
08:30	Lesson A
09:00	Lesson 1
09:50	Lesson 2
10:40	Break
11:10	Lesson 3
12:00	Lesson 4
12:50	Lunch
13:20	Lesson 5
14:10	Lesson 6
15:00	Close of school day

Years 9 & 10	
08:15	Arrive at School
08:30	Lesson A
09:00	Lesson 1
09:50	Lesson 2
10:40	Lesson 3
11:30	Lunch
12:00	Lesson 4
12:50	Lesson 5
13:40	Break
14:10	Lesson 6
15:00	Close of school day

Punctuality

The school doors open at 8.15am and Lesson A begins at 8.30am. **Students are expected to be in class ready to learn at 8.30am.** The school doors will lock at 0830 and any student arriving to school after 8.30am will sign in through the common room and be marked with an 'L' mark.

Any student arriving after 9.00am must sign in with the Admin Office. AM registration closes at 0950 and students arriving late after this time will be marked 'U' and will not receive a mark for the morning session – this is an unauthorised absence and may be used as part of a Fixed Penalty Notice. See **Appendix 2** for details of the FPN system.

Students who are regularly late to school will meet with their year leader, be issued with sanctions and parents informed. If the lateness persists, they will be placed into an after school catch-up for each day late until their punctuality improves. Parents will be informed of this via letter.

Leave of Absence

In accordance with the Southampton City Council Attendance Policy, as a school we will not authorise any leave of absence in term-time except in the most exceptional or circumstances.

Parents are required to complete a Leave of Absence form to notify the school of their intentions to travel and provide clear evidence of why this absence must be taken during term time.

The school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice for any leave of absence that forms all or part of 5 days unauthorised absence in any 10-week period.

The school has the discretion to waive the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice if a child's attendance has been excellent and assurance has been given that it will not be repeated, in matters relating to safeguarding, or for compassionate reasons. In these situations a return to school date will be agreed. If the student fails to attend school by that date then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Details of the FPN system can be found in **Appendix 2** and a copy of the LOA form with further details is **Appendix 3**.

Authorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The school may authorise absence in certain circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Head teacher and this responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Head teacher.

I – Illness will be authorised if the school is notified by the parent on the first day of absence or a signed note is provided upon the student's return to school. Any consecutive absence of 5 days or more must be supported with medical evidence.

Parents please note:

- No absence for illness will be authorised if a student's attendance is less than 90%, without sight of medical evidence, such as an appointment card or copy of prescription.
- If you have informed the school of the length of the absence but your child is feeling better sooner than expected and you send them in – you must contact the school to let us know to expect them so we can ensure you are informed if they do not arrive.

C – Other authorised absences, such as a funeral or family emergency, where time off is essential.

R – Leave granted for Religious Observance. Parents should inform the school beforehand. The school will only authorise a maximum of 1 day for religious observance per academic year.

If you wish to have further information on the codes used by schools please see the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance.

Persistently Absent (PA) and Severely Absent (SA) Students

A student who is Persistently Absent from school has an attendance figure of between 50% and 90%.

A student who Severely Absent has an attendance figure below 50%.

Cantell School will go above and beyond to ensure that students do not fall into these categories. The school will Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.

The school will intervene early to prevent students becoming PA or SA and parents will receive regular communication including a letter to inform them if their child's attendance is causing a concern. The school will then monitor the child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, then further communication will be required. This may include the Year Leader meeting with the student in school, a home visit or a meeting in school with parents.

Regular intervention days will be held throughout the year targeting specific groups of students.

The Education Welfare Officer will monitor the work of the Pastoral Team and assist in meeting with students and families when necessary.

If, after intervention by the school, there is no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service or a FPN will be requested.

The EWO will work with the family and instigate legal proceedings if required.

Measures to support Persistently Absent (PA) and Severely Absent (SA) students

At Cantell we will use a variety of strategies to support students who struggle to attend regularly. These are applied on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with our families. These strategies include, but aren't limited to:

Mentoring, Identifying and resolving barriers to attendance, Peer support, Individual goals and rewards, Parent meetings, Support/Wellbeing Hub, Emotional Support and guidance, Temporary Timetables, Adjusted times of the day, Attendance contracts, Referral to external agencies such as School Nursing Service and Educational Welfare Service, Work Experience, Early Help for families and additional academic support.

Supporting students where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

Cantell School works very hard with all our students and we have a very well-established team to support our students who have a mental health issue affecting their attendance.

We closely follow the DfE guidance – "Summary of Responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance" February 2023. *Some key areas of guidance are:*

Schools should set and maintain high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future. School staff will recognise that there can be attendance challenges where a child has a social, emotional or mental health issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment.

Our Wellbeing team are able to support a wide range of students and Year Leaders can request this support in conjunction with our families, where initial attempts to increase attendance have not been successful.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods. It is important to note that these

pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. School staff should work quickly to communicate this expectation to parents/carers, and work together with them to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance. Any associated anxiety about attending should be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance ... that should be agreed by and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers.

Parents and Year Leaders will work closely together to address these issues and can offer many ways to support as mentioned above.

*There is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised for mental health reasons. This is because, in general, primary care health professionals such as General Practitioners are unlikely to be able to offer such evidence to support one-off absences related to mental health. **In instances of long-term or repeated absences for the same reason, however, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate** to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods. **If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.***

As with physical illness we will ask for medical evidence in order to be able to a) authorise and b) support further referrals for additional help. This does not necessarily mean that we do not believe parents and are not listening to their concerns.

Rewards

The main reward for good attendance, as shown on page one is exceptional academic progress and outcomes for your child.

Teachers and support staff should praise students whenever possible for good attendance and punctuality. A weekly Attendance tracker will be sent to tutors to discuss with their students.

Attendance figures are monitored throughout the year and students are regularly praised for good attendance in house or year assemblies.

There are regular prizes awarded throughout the year including, but not limited to:

Prize draws, Non-Uniform days, Trips, Pizza and Film afternoons, fast passes for the dinner queue, extended lunches and other reward events.

Good or significantly improving attendance is a requirement for many reward trips and visits, applications to Prefect and other positions, and in Year 11, attendance to the school Prom. Students with unauthorised absence are at risk of being ineligible for consideration.

Key Contacts regarding Attendance

If you have any questions or need support for your child and their attendance, please don't hesitate to email the relevant member of our pastoral team on the email below:

Year 7	Mrs Jo Hartley	Jo.Hartley@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Mrs Phillips
Year 8	Mr Ryan Swain	Ryan.Swain@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Miss Dodds
Year 9	Mr Bradley Magookin	Bradley.Magookin@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Mr Godwin
Year 10	Miss Sandy Bassi	Sandy.Bassi@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Miss Sheath
Year 11	Mrs Karen Huelin	Karen.Gange@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Mr Fehners
L2L	Mrs Lena Beattie	Lena.Beattie@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Mr Creswell
SENCo	Mrs Rachel Bridges	Rachel.Bridges@cantell.co.uk	SLT Link Mr Kutty

Cantell School Senior Attendance Champion

Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and we have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed.

The Senior Attendance Champion is expected to set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.

It is an ongoing responsibility, and the Senior Attendance Champion is also expected to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

For any comments or general questions regarding this policy or attendance at Cantell School please contact our Senior Attendance Champion:

Mr Ian Creswell – Deputy Head Teacher - Pastoral Care ian.creswell@cantell.co.uk

Key Supporting Documents:

Associated school policies which can be found in the policy section of the school website:

SEND Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Medical Needs Policy

Equalities Policy

Government Guidance Documents:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Summary of Responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance 2023:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

APPENDIX 1

How to Report Your Child Absent

To report your child's absence – it is vital that you call and report the absence before 8:20am, by calling 023 80323111 – Option 1 then for

•	L2L		press	1
•	Yr	11	press	2
•	Yr	10	press	3
•	Yr	9	press	4
•	Yr	8	press	5
•	Yr	7	press	6

or by emailing: attendance@cantell.org.uk

Please include the student's name and year group and leave as much detail as possible about the absence.

Alternatively, by using Edulink and logging onto your parent account. Selecting your child and click on the icon 'Absence Reporting' and then complete the absence form. If you require your log in details for Edulink please do not hesitate to contact the Student Services Team.

Parents please note:

After your initial contact above you will need to let the school know of each further day's absence or contact the Head of Year directly.

No absence for illness will be authorised if a student's attendance is less than 90%, without sight of medical evidence, such as an appointment card or copy of prescription.

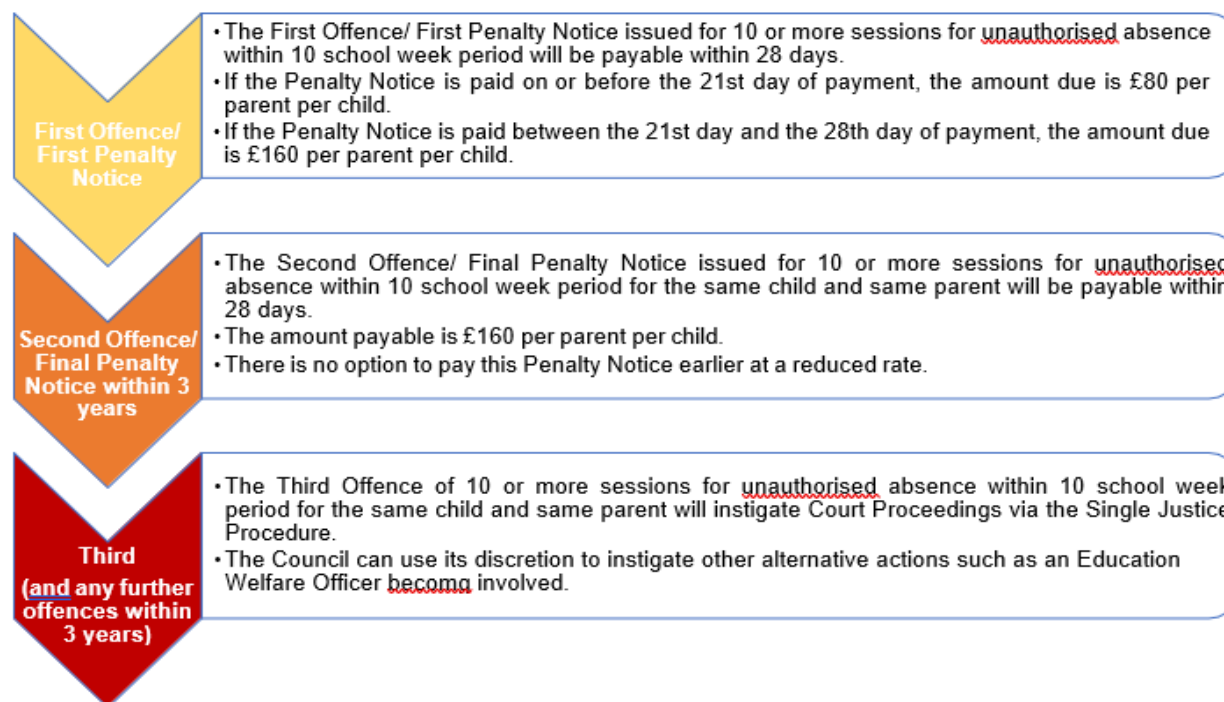
If you have informed the school of the length of the absence but your child is feeling better sooner than expected and you send them in – you must contact the school to let us know to expect them so we can ensure you are informed if they do not arrive.



School Absence Penalty Notices 2024/2025- A Parent's Guide

With the introduction of the new Department of Education National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into effect for all Penalty Notices issued due to unauthorised

When will Penalty Notices be issued?	Who will Penalty Notice be issued to?	How will Penalty Notices be issued?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penalty Notices can be issued when a statutory school-aged child has had 10 sessions (5 school days) or more of <u>unauthorised</u> absence within a <u>10 school week period</u>. Only two penalty notices will be issued to the same parent for the same child within a <u>3 year period</u>. Also see below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each absent child. For example, for a family of four, the mother would receive 2 penalty notices (1 for each child) and the father would receive 2 penalty notices (1 for each child), <u>totalling 4</u> penalty notices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools in Southampton City Council's area can request the Council to issue penalty notices. If the school's request meets the criteria for issue, the penalty notice/s will be issued with a <u>accompanying letter</u>. The penalty notices and accompanying letters are sent via first class post to the recorded home address of each parent.



Further information can be found on the school website (<https://www.cantell.co.uk>) and on Southampton City Council's website, under [School attendance and support \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk).

APPENDIX 3



**Cantell School
Leave of Absence Application Form 2024/2025**



Parents/Carers/Guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child/children's attendance at school. Good attendance is linked to higher achievement. Under Government legislation, the Headteacher is only able to authorise leave of absence of a pupil during term time, if they deem the reason/s given for the leave of absence to be exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider your application using the information you have provided below so please include as much information as possible. You will be notified of the Headteacher's decision in writing.

Applications should be received at least three weeks in advance to allow consideration

Pupil Information:

FORENAME	SURNAME	DATE OF BIRTH	YEAR GROUP	CLASS/TUTOR

Details of siblings at other schools that will be travelling: *(Please note that we may contact these school/s in relation to this application)*
 Name of sibling/s: _____ Current school/schools: _____

I am applying for leave of absence for my child/children

from: _____ **to:** _____

Total number of school days absent:

Please explain fully the purpose of this absence & why it cannot take place during the 13 out of term time weeks:

Name of City/Country being visited during the leave of absence? *Please note, we may ask for outbound and inbound flight confirmation concerning the leave of absence.*

Parent/s email addresses and contact telephone numbers whilst on the leave of absence:

Email:
Telephone Number:
Current Address:

Has your child had leave of absence in the last 12 months?

Yes/No

If yes, please provide dates/details:



I submit the information above for consideration by the Headteacher:

Signed: _____ Printed: _____
 Relationship to Pupil: _____
 Date: _____