

Attendance Policy



Chelsea Community Hospital School

DATE MAY 2023

THIS IS AN ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR CHELSEA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SCHOOL WHICH HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY INCLUDING STAFF, GOVERNORS, RESPECTIVE HEALTH TRUSTS, LOCAL AUTHORITY, PUPILS AND PARENTS.

School Mission Statement

The Chelsea Community Hospital School aims to ensure that children and young people have their rights to education preserved as hospital school pupils, community pupils or home tuition pupils.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, in line with the National Curriculum, taking into consideration each student's individual needs, and through this to extend the development of the whole child, spiritually, socially and intellectually.

We firmly believe that education is a partnership between school and home, and we actively seek parental involvement in the learning process.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- We are a Community Special School providing education for students and young people while they are in hospital.
- We also provide places for a number of pupils who cannot access mainstream school due to their medical conditions.
- Our school is based across six NHS hospital sites in central London as well as a site for community pupils, they are: The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, The Royal Brompton Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, The Collingham Child and Family Centre, Lavender Walk Adolescent Unit and The Bayswater Children's Center for our community pupils. We also work with children and young people in their home settings when necessary.
- We teach across all key stages in both primary and secondary.

TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS

Variable due to hospital admissions.

DISSEMINATION

Key information from this policy will be incorporated into the following documents where appropriate:

- School website
- Staff induction materials
- Governor induction materials
- Pupil documentation
- Newsletters
- Staff meetings
- Parent events
- On request from the school office

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DATE

May 2023

POLICY REVIEW DATE

May 2027

NAME: Marie Sherlock

DATE: May 2023

1. Aims

At Chelsea Community Hospital School pupils at five of the six sites that comprise the school, attend as a result of an admission to hospital for a medical or mental health need and are for the vast majority, dual enrolled with a school in their local community. Pupils at our community school site have been referred as a result of their medical or mental health needs, and are for the most part solely registered with Chelsea Community Hospital School (CCHS)

Patients of school age, admitted to hospital are not obliged to come to school. The overwhelming majority of pupils admitted to the hospitals where CCHS is situated choose to do so, as they like it, it is also a good place to meet other children and young people and it provides an opportunity to keep up with their education, learn new skills and do activities that keep them busy. This is especially relevant for pupils who have long term or recurrent admissions to hospital. Parents and carers are often very relieved to find that there is an opportunity for their child to continue with their education during a time of hospital admission. In addition, for children at the hospital sites there is an expectation from the clinical teams that they attend school and for patients in the psychiatric units attending school is part of their treatment

Our attendance policy reflects the very different environment in which our pupils access education and also the additional external stressors that can be part of this different environment. Our attendance policy is linked to our admissions policy, i.e. that any pupil can access education within CCHS from the moment of admission.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance whilst balancing the health needs of a pupil during their time in hospital. Integral to implementing the attendance policy is our communication with the pupil, their parents/carers and the clinical advice from the MDT working with that pupil to ensure maximum access to education. For longer term, SEND and recurrent pupils this communication and collaboration will extend to working with the school in the community and other agencies to ensure that disruption to education and impact on attendance is minimized.

Our whole-school culture and ethos values good attendance. We do this by:

- Building strong relationships with pupils and their families to ensure that they know about education in hospital and the offer available.

- Providing a range of ways in which a pupil can access education whilst in hospital; remotely, bed-side, 1:1 tuition, small groups etc.

- Removing barriers to education as a result of infection control needs.

- Providing environments which are welcoming and 'school-like' in appearance giving a 'familiar' image to pupils, supporting their attendance.

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for all; parents, carers, siblings, family members, to support the pupil attending.

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Providing an individual curriculum for pupils based on their current needs and when appropriate as informed their community school and by their clinical team.

- Acting early to support parents and community schools to address patterns of absence as a result of a medical or a mental health need.

- By being a registered examination centre enabling pupils to access their exams during an admission to hospital should this be considered appropriate by the pupil, their parent/carer and their medical team.

2. Legislation and guidance

The link between attendance at a hospital school and access to education for pupils with a medical or a mental health need are managed primarily using the legislation below. This is our primary guidance.

DfES 0732/2001 – Access to Education for Children with Medical Needs

DoH HSC 2001/019

LAC (2001) 27

Should it ever become necessary this attendance policy also meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

3.3 The SLT are responsible for attendance at each of the six sites

The SLT are responsible for:

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 Site Coordinators

Site Coordinators are responsible for recording attendance at their site using the appropriate codes on a daily basis.

3.6 School admin staff at the Community Pupils' Site of CCHS

School admin staff will:

Take calls from parents and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

Transfer calls from parents and pupils to key teachers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents/carers of pupils at the Community Pupils' Site of CCHS

We understand the challenges that can arise for the parents and carers of a child with a chronic medical or mental health condition. We therefore look to work with parents and carers and support them to:

Ensure their child attends every day/timetabled session when they can.

Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

3.8 Pupils across CCHS

We understand the challenges that our pupils face due to their medical and mental health needs. We greatly value and respect the determination and resilience that they demonstrate by attending school during a hospital admission and welcome them into the classroom whenever their health needs and treatment regimes allow.

Similarly, for pupils attending the Community Pupils' site of CCHS we acknowledge and work with the challenges that these pupils have had in attending school. We therefore work with these pupils to ensure that they can gradually build up their experience of attending school and use a range of strategies to enable this to happen, e.g. support from learning mentors to get to school, individual timetables and a solution focused approach to dealing with absences not related to medical or mental health needs when/if this becomes apparent.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils admitted to the hospital sites and the community pupils' site onto this register. Occasionally siblings will also be included on this register. This register is maintained on the CCHS database.

Due to the nature of our school, the attendance register at CCHS changes daily. New patients admitted to any of the hospital sites or patients readmitted, and patients discharged from hospital, are added or removed from our register on a daily basis.

As part of our safeguarding measures, discharging a pupil who is dual enrolled with another school, automatically triggers an email to the community school for that pupil, alerting them to the fact that they were a patient in hospital and have now been discharged.

At the hospital sites the register records the attendance of a pupil for morning and/or afternoon sessions. At the hospital sites the register will record whether every pupil was:

Taught

Taught in isolation/segregation

Absent due to illness/medical procedure/treatment

Absent due to other reason – visitors, refusal

Off Site due to home leave, reintegration with community school

At the community pupils' site, the register is taken for each of the lessons attended by that pupil with the addition of recording morning and/or afternoon attendance. At the community pupils' site of CCHS the register will record whether every pupil was:

Taught

Taught and session was interrupted

Late arrival

Absent due to illness

Absent due to other reason, hospital appointments, refusal

Off Site due to college visits, integration/reintegration to school, work experience

Pupils receiving home tuition within the bi-borough of RBKC and Westminster are usually dual enrolled and are included in our register. Attendance is recorded as previously stated.

Every entry on the CCHS attendance register, held on the CCHS database, will be held for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence at the Community Pupils' Site

For pupils attending the community pupils' site of CCHS, the pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff at the community pupils' site. If we have heard nothing by 10.30am parents/carers will be contacted by telephone for an update on the pupils. All unplanned absences will be followed up on the day.

If there is a concern regarding a pupil's attendance, we will inform the parents/carers and other professionals involved with their care to enable us to work collaboratively to support the pupils. We will also write to parents/carers to let them know of our concerns and arrange to meet with them to discuss how we can improve attendance.

4.3 Planned absence at the Community Pupils' Site

Due to their medical and/or mental health needs, our YP at this site, frequently have to attend appointments related to their care and treatment. We work closely with parents/carers and are in communication with them daily to ensure that this information is shared in a timely manner and is counted as an authorised absence.

Whenever possible we support and encourage parents/carers to make appointments outside of their child's school timetable. We understand that due to the complex needs of our pupils, and the many external agencies that are working with the pupil and their family, that this is not always possible. Our liaisons with parents/carers and other agencies involved with the pupil are recorded on our CCHS database and will reflect the impact that this can have on their attendance.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

At the hospital sites we welcome pupils for learning either in the classroom or by their bedside whenever their clinical treatment allows.

At the Community Pupils' site, we welcome pupils to school whenever they can be there. Our close daily communication with parents/carers allows for the early identification of concerns for a pupil attending with appropriate strategies put in place to support getting to school.

4.5 Reporting to parents/carers at the Community Pupils' Site

In accordance with DfE expectation to report to parents/carers on their child's attendance, at CCHS should attendance be an issue for a pupil, this is achieved through our daily communications with parents/carers. The discussion is recorded in our liaison on the CCHS database.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence for Community Pupils' Site

The headteacher will grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' which are additional to the challenging circumstances that pupils at this site already negotiate due to their medical or mental health needs. Many of our pupils, as a result of their health needs, already have lower attendance than they would like. Consequently, they and their parents/carers seek to maximise their attendance whenever possible

Occasionally we have requests from families to take their child to visit extended family abroad during term time. This is often viewed by their clinical teams as part of the pupil's recovery and agreed by both education and health.

A request for a leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing to the head teacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** at the community pupils' site include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers.

5.2 Legal sanctions for Community Pupils' Site

At the community pupils' site of CCHS we would employ every strategy at our disposal to avoid this situation arising. This is a cohort of pupils for whom their education has already been impacted on by their medical or mental health needs.

As we work closely with the students, their parents/carers, social workers, mental and medical health teams any consideration of fining parents would be discussed thoroughly as to the implications of applying such a process. We work with parents/carers managing complex and serious mental and physical ill health. We have always preferred to support a pupil's attendance by identifying what the obstacles for attendance are for the individual pupil, and implementing strategies to minimise this, e.g., arranging transport, travel training, later start times, reduced timetable etc. Should this process ever be deemed necessary we will follow the appropriate measures as laid in in the LAs guidance.

For pupils attending the hospital school sites we can work collaboratively with the pupil's school in their community to support with attendance issues should it be necessary.

6. Attendance monitoring

As previously stated, pupils admitted to the hospital sites comprising CCHS are not obliged to attend school, however they are encouraged and supported to do so by the CCHS teaching team and the

MDTs within the different hospitals. When a patient or their parent/carer is reluctant to engage for reasons that are not related to their medical or mental health status this is explored during daily handover meetings with nursing teams, daily site meetings and when necessary at multi-disciplinary and psycho-social meetings at each site. This gives further context and informs any planning which may be considered necessary to support a pupil and the parent/carer to engage with education in its broadest sense during a period of hospital admission.

Attendance at the community pupils' site is monitored with daily discussion between parents/carers, pupil, teaching team and learning mentors to address obstacles to attendance. Liaisons are recorded on the CCHS database.

6.1 Attendance monitoring in the summer term for Yr 11 pupils at the community site of CCHS, post examinations

When pupils at the community site have completed their public examinations the opportunity is available to them to continue attending CCHS until the summer term officially finishes. There will be an alternative curriculum in place at this time comprising of outings, workshops and other life skill learning opportunities.

CCHS learning mentors will discuss this with each individual pupil and their parent/carer before final exams happen. The option to attend is the choice of the young person and their parent/carer. Their decision is recorded and necessary external agencies involved with the pupil are informed. For those pupils who decide not to return for the remainder of the term or to have intermittent attendance at the community pupils' site for trips etc., phone check-ins will happen. These will be undertaken by the pupil's learning mentor. The frequency and nature will be agreed with the pupil and their parent/carer and recorded as part of their risk assessment for the summer term.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every four years by Marie Sherlock. The policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Admissions policy
- Communication Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

