



CITY OF LONDON
ACADEMY
SHOREDITCH PARK

The COLASP Guide to Attendance, Punctuality and Managing Absence

Responsibility:	COLASP
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Next Review Date:	July 2025

Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a **priority** for those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students.
- To develop a systematic approach to collating and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive communication between home and school.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To work effectively with the **Education Welfare Service** and other services and agencies.
- To monitor and review the policy.

Introduction

At COLASP, we believe that student success begins with regular school attendance. We're here to support parents and carers in creating a positive and welcoming environment where their children can thrive. Our goal is to work together with parents/carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time, as we know it's vital for their progress and future success.

Our target for every student is that over the whole year they achieve 97% attendance or above, that is no more than 5 days off in a year (for authorised and unauthorised reasons). The Government's national expectation is 96%, the equivalent of 7 days of absence in a year.

Research shows that students achieve:

- **One full grade less** progress if they miss 17 school days (91% attendance)
- **Half a grade less** progress if they miss 9 school days (95% attendance)

COLASP recognises that regular school attendance is crucial if students are to achieve their full potential. **This is why our attendance target for all students is 97%.** This target is set annually.

This table shows the number of days off for each equivalent %:

Attendance	Days Absent	Sessions Missed		Attendance	Days Absent	Sessions Missed
90%	19 days off	38 sessions missed		96%	7 days off	14 sessions missed
91%	17 days off	34 sessions missed		97%	5 days off	20 sessions missed
92%	15 days off	30 sessions missed		98%	4 days off	8 sessions missed
93%	13 days off	26 sessions missed		99%	2 days off	4 sessions missed
94%	11 days off	22 sessions missed		100%	0 days off	0 sessions missed

COLASP's Commitment to Students:

Encouraging Positive Habits: We want to celebrate every child's efforts in attending school regularly. We'll establish a system of incentives and rewards to acknowledge their commitment to learning, such as certificates, prizes and trips to celebrate excellent and improved attendance.

Effective Communication: We'll keep parents informed and engaged through effective communication. Our aim is to provide information, advice, and guidance to help parents/carers to support their children's education. **The academy will challenge students and parents/carers who do not prioritise attendance and punctuality.**

Creating a Supportive Community: School is a safe and positive community where students can learn and grow. By attending regularly, they become part of this supportive environment.

Improving Overall Attendance: Our goal is to improve the overall attendance of all students at school. With the help of parents and carers, we can prioritise attendance and punctuality for the benefit of every child associated with the school.

- COLASP will ensure that absence and punctuality is monitored regularly.
- Information will be published weekly for year groups and form classes during assembly and form periods.
- Individual data will be shared formally on a monthly basis and personal records will be maintained.
- Whole school data will be shared weekly with all staff and termly with parents via the school newsletter.

Monitoring and Support Pathways:

Continuous Absence: In COLASP's commitment to support every student to have the best attendance possible, we follow a step-by-step pathway involving calls, emails, and home visits to ensure absent students are safe. (See p11 for details).

Non-Continuous Absence: A tailored approach is taken to address persistent absence, involving communication with parents and potential involvement of support services, all with a focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of absent students. (See page 12 for details).

Persistent Absence Pathway:

Persistent absence is defined as students who have 90% attendance and below. This means the student will have missed the equivalent of 3 days of school in each half term. **All interventions taken to address absence are measures of support designed to ensure student safety and improve attendance.** Improved attendance links to stronger academic outcomes for students and we want to ensure every child at COLASP is given every opportunity to achieve their potential.

Early Intervention: Concerns about attendance below 96% prompt communication with parents, requiring medical evidence for further absences.

Gradual Intervention: As attendance declines, a series of letters and meetings are initiated, involving the Education Welfare Officer if necessary.

Local Authority Involvement: If attendance continues to decline, the case may be referred to the Local Authority for further action, maintaining a vigilant approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of the student.

Lateness

All students are expected to be punctual. Late arrival to school means a disorganised start to the day, disrupts lessons, and students will miss important information from their teachers.

Parents/Carers must contact the school about their child's late arrival before they arrive to school, or the student will be sanctioned. **They should do this by phoning the school or emailing attendance@shoreditch.cola.org.uk.**

- Students are expected to be at line up in their year group's designated location for the official start time in the morning (8.40am) and at the start of their period 5 afternoon lesson (1.40pm).
- Students arriving after these times must sign in at the academy office. They will be recorded as late and marked late in the register. **All lates incur a sanction unless evidence has been provided.**
- Failure/refusal to sign in will result in an additional sanction.

Persistent Lateness Pathway:

All interventions taken by COLASP to address lateness are measures of support designed to ensure students do not fall behind on their studies.

Early Intervention:

- **Arriving late between 8.40am-9am:** The first late sign in during a term will be sanctioned with a 20 minute detention, the second late will be sanctioned with a 1 hour detention and a third late and subsequent lates will be sanctioned with a 2 hour detention.
- **Arriving late after 9am:** The first late sign in during a term will be sanctioned with a 1 hour detention, the second late and subsequent lates will be sanctioned with a 2 hour detention

The purpose of these sanctions is to give students directed time to catch up on the classwork they miss by being late.

Gradual Intervention: As punctuality declines (more than three lates in a term) a series of letters and meetings are initiated, involving the Education Welfare Officer if necessary.

Parents/Carers Responsibilities

Section 7 of [The Education Act \(1996\)](#) says parents/carers must make sure their child is regularly attending school or 'otherwise' (i.e. another suitable alternative). [Section 444\(1\)](#) of the Act says parents are guilty of an offence if their child does not regularly attend school.

The Department for Education (DfE) [statutory guidance for schools](#) (page 5) reiterates that responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with parents, including caregivers or anyone with 'parental responsibility'.

Making School a Priority:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, dressed appropriately, and ready to learn. **The school day begins with a line up at 8.40am, this means that students must be on site in the correct location at this time.**
- Make non-emergency medical/dental appointments outside school hours when possible. **All students are expected to attend school before and/or after their appointment.**

Communicating Absences:

- If their child is absent, **they must call reception before 8.40am** to inform the attendance team.
- They must provide medical evidence for appointments either by medical letter/card/text/email as proof of evidence stating the date and time of the appointment at least 24 hours in advance of the appointment.
- Parents/carers must ensure their children **catch up on all missed classwork and homework within one week of the absence.**

No Unplanned Absences:

- Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school during the day without proper documentation.
- Authorised absences include illness and emergency treatment during school hours.
- Unauthorised absences include looking after siblings, caring for a parent, birthdays, shopping, general trips, etc. **Only the academy, within the context of the law, can approve or authorise absence – not parents/carers.**
- When a parent/carer has notified us of the reason for a particular absence, the school does not have to accept the explanation as a valid reason for absence.
- Absence without a valid reason, or where no explanation is offered at all, is recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Holidays during term time are not authorised, and any such requests should be submitted to the Headteacher in advance, in writing, for permission to be granted/authorised. Any such unauthorised absences will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Students' Responsibilities

Maintaining High Attendance:

- Students play a crucial role in their own success.
- They should always be striving for attendance between 97% and 100%.
- Students must record their attendance weekly in their planners.

Being Punctual:

- Arrive at school by 8.37am and be in the correct location in the building ready for lineup at 8.40am.
- Attend all classes on time, equipped, and ready to learn.
- Students must follow the correct procedure when arriving late to school after the gate closes at 8.40am.
- Students must sign in at reception and will receive a sanction for being late to school unless evidence has been provided by a parent.

Handling Absences:

- If a student is unsure if they are too ill to come to school, they should come in and can be sent home later if necessary.
- Any problems with attendance should be discussed with their form tutor, their trusted adult or a member of the pastoral team so that support can be put in place for them.

Maintaining Progress:

- If absent, students must complete missed lessons and homework within one week of returning to school.
- Students should speak to their peers and to their teachers, as well as checking google classroom, to find and complete all work they've missed to ensure they don't miss out on their learning.
- This work must be handed in to teachers and will be sanctioned if not completed.
- Year 11 students who miss a day of school will be required to attend compulsory Study Club in the café bar the day they return to school.

Staff Responsibilities

Classroom Teachers' Responsibilities

Accurate Attendance Tracking:

- Staff will ensure registers are completed in the first 15 minutes of each lesson.
- Amend the register during the lesson if a student arrives late.
- Check the daily absence list and report any students they know to be present.
- Report the absence of any pupil, who is known to be in school.
- Alert Active Classroom Support (ACS) if a student does not arrive to class but was recorded as present in previous lesson(s).
- Alert the pastoral team and Attendance Officer of any attendance and punctuality patterns.
- Liaise with the pastoral team regarding attendance issues.

Positive Ethos & Early Intervention:

- Staff will promote a positive ethos emphasising the value of attendance and punctuality.
- Staff will positively greet students who have been absent, they will show the student they notice they've been off and welcome them back in (early intervention)

Communication and Academic Support:

- Staff will communicate attendance concerns promptly, providing support and guidance to students and parents about their academic progress.
- Upload every lesson and associated materials to google classroom before the lesson takes place, including homework that is to be set with the deadline clearly stated.
- Check missed classwork has been completed by absent students within one week of the missed lesson and apply homework sanctions when it hasn't been completed.
- Assign a student to pass on the homework to the absent student, apply homework sanctions if it is not handed in on the same deadline as other students.
- Ensure absent students complete all assessments upon their return.

Form Tutors' Responsibilities

Attendance Monitoring:

- Assign two students in the tutor group each week to be 'register monitors' – they will be responsible for reminding their teachers to complete the register within the first five minutes of the lesson.
- Ensure absence is recorded accurately in the planner every Monday during tutor time planner checks.
- Check their tutees have completed missed classwork for the day(s) they were absent.
- Check the daily attendance email and make a note of any tutees on the list.

Early Intervention

- Have a 'back to school' check-in conversation with their tutees for each day of absence, be as positive as possible and remind them of expectations (can be on the playground/canteen etc.) and record this on the managing absence spreadsheet.
- Phone home if a tutee is on their second day of absence in one half term. Use the scripts provided to ensure all points are covered including a check on wellbeing, reiterating expectations about catching up missed work and encouraging students to improve their attendance to school. Record this phone call on the managing absence spreadsheet.
- Arrange a parent meeting if a tutee has been absent three times in one half term and record this on the managing absence spreadsheet.

Achievement Team Leaders Responsibilities:

Attendance Oversight:

- Regularly check form tutors have completed their responsibilities outlined above and hold them accountable using the managing absence spreadsheet.
- Meet with the Attendance Manager and Education Welfare Officer weekly to discuss attendance concerns in the year group and the needs of acute cases of persistent and severe absence.
- Always have current knowledge of attendance patterns in the year group and be proactive in planning interventions to improve attendance.
- Assist in following up absences at times when the Attendance Officer may not be available.

Incentivising Attendance:

- Manage the attendance league for your year group, create excitement around this through prizes and reward trips
- Celebrate high attendance and improved attendance in assemblies and tutor time.
- Share individual monthly attendance and punctuality data with students for self-monitoring purposes.
- Regularly speak about the importance of attendance for achievement in assemblies and tutor slides.

Intervention:

- Have a 'back to school' check-in conversation with students on their third absence, be as positive as possible and remind them of expectations (can be on the playground/canteen etc.) and record this on the managing absence spreadsheet.
- Liaise with parents/carers to discuss concerns regarding poor attendance.
- Conduct parent meetings for all students on their fourth absence and record this on the managing absence spreadsheet.

Attendance Officer/Manager Responsibilities:

The attendance team will:

- Check registers as a matter of priority every morning. Any absences will be checked with the academy office in case a parent/carer has called to report an absence.
- Ensure that physical checks are made in the morning for students who are absent from morning registration.
- Send absence texts to all parents/carers by 12pm at the latest.
- Make follow-up calls to all parents/carers whose child has not arrived to school.
- Record all calls made and matters discussed on students' SIMS records for reference.
- Generate weekly attendance figures for year groups including the breakdown by tutor group and send to the ATLS.
- Meet regularly with the Achievement Team Leaders and keep updated records for future reference. The Deputy DSL, SENDCO and members from the pastoral team may also attend these meetings and will contribute to discussion and decisions.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer regarding persistently absent students.

SLT (overseeing attendance) Responsibilities:

- Weekly, half-termly, termly and annual reports regarding attendance will be generated.
- Patterns will be analysed over time to check improvements are being maintained and that there are no circumstances which are inadvertently causing attendance to decrease.
- Data for various groups will be analysed to ensure that all pupils are accessing their full time education.

The Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service is responsible for discharging the local education authority's legal duty to ensure that all registered students of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually. If a student fails to attend regularly and attempts by the Attendance Officer and pastoral team have failed to ensure a return to regular attendance, then the Education Welfare Officer will monitor attendance and can refer the case to the local authority to take legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Education Welfare Officer will provide supporting evidence for fixed penalty notices and any court proceedings. The local authority will issue warning and FPN letters to parents/carers for persistently absent students.

Some strategies that are used when concerns about persistent absence are raised, include:

- Telephoning parents.
- Texting, emailing or writing to parents/carers.
- Meeting students.
- Arranging meetings between school and parents/carers.
- Visiting students' homes.
- Liaising with Social Services and other agencies.

Reporting Absence to Parents

Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is expected and is strictly enforced; it is both a legal requirement and essential in order for students to maximise their learning.

Registration

- Students must go to line up each morning in their year group's designated location by 8.40am.
- The form tutor or subject teacher (or cover teacher) will take electronic registration, recording a mark for each student present at the beginning of period 1. This register closes at 9am.
- Any student who is absent when the lineup takes place and arrives after this, must sign in at the academy office.
- In the afternoon, the formal registration will be at the start of Period 5.

Reporting Absence or Lateness to Parents/Carers

- If the academy has not received notification from a parent/carer regarding their child's absence, a text message will be sent on the first day of absence.
- The number of sessions (i.e. half day) missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence is recorded on students' annual reports and will be reported on any reference that is requested.
- The number of times a student is late for registration is also recorded on the annual report.
- Heads of Year will record those students whose falling attendance or frequent lateness is cause for concern and liaise the Attendance Officer, the Education Welfare Officer, inclusion manager, SLT and parents/carers.
- Attendance and punctuality reports will be shared with outside agencies who have a legitimate reason for requesting them.
- Truancy from school is treated seriously and parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

100% attendance and punctuality, and the biggest improvement to these, are rewarded with certificates of achievement and incentives are put in place to encourage students to maintain improved attendance such as reward trips and attendance breakfasts. For those students who are unable to maintain 100% attendance due to legitimate medical reasons, reasonable adjustments will be applied to attendance rewards.

Parents will be notified if their child's attendance falls below 96%. This means their child has missed at least 7.5 days of school. Texts and letters regarding concerns and improvement are also sent to parents at least half-termly.

Reasons for Absence

What if my child is ill?

1. The parent/carer should contact the school via telephone or email as soon as possible to inform them of their child being ill, giving details of their symptoms.
2. The absence will be authorised if the school accept the reason as valid and the child's attendance is 96% or more
3. Parents/carers should continue to phone in or email the school for every day of absence.
4. When the child returns, the parent/carer should confirm their child is returning to school in writing
5. If there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school will not authorise the absence.
6. If an absence is not confirmed by parents, it is assumed that the absence was unauthorised, and will be recorded as such.

What if my child needs to attend a medical or dental appointment?

1. Appointments should be made out of school hours as far as possible.
2. If a medical or dental appointment has to be made during the school day, the parent/carer must inform the school at least 24 hours in advance for the absence to be authorised.
3. Evidence for appointments must be provided, this can be a medical letter/card/screen shot of a text/email as proof of evidence stating the date and time of the appointment at least 24 hours in advance of the appointment.
4. Students must attend school before or after the appointment. They must sign out before they leave school to attend appointments and sign in again when they return.
5. The student must inform the Attendance Officer of their appointments, so they may have permission to leave their lesson and sign out at the main reception. If parent/carer hasn't informed the school, they will be contacted to verify the appointment. Students will be issued with permission to be excused from their lesson if necessary.
6. Medical appointments for students whose attendance is below 96% will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

What if there is a bereavement in the family?

The school recognises that the death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event and the academy has the discretion to authorise such absences.

1. The school should be contacted about the bereavement as soon as possible via email or by phone.
2. The Achievement Team Leader will put pastoral support in place for the student's return to school

What if there is a day of religious observance?

1. The parent/carer should contact the school in advance by phone or by email.
2. Absence for participation in a day exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong, will be authorised. This permission is not given on two consecutive days.

What if I need my child to mind the house/look after siblings/look after parents?

In the vast majority of cases, such absences will be unauthorised.

What about shopping during school hours?

It is highly unlikely that such absence can ever be justified and is therefore unauthorised.

What about special occasions or other circumstances?

1. The parent/carer should contact the school in advance by phone or by email with the details.
2. The Headteacher will determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not and each application would be considered separately.
3. Absences for social occasions such as birthdays and family outings will be unauthorised.

What about family holidays?

If parents/carers take their child out of school for family holidays, these absences will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parents/carers may receive a **penalty notice**.

First month of a new academic year

All absences will require medical evidence to be authorised as a one-day absence in the first four weeks will result in the student's attendance falling below 96%.

First and last week of a half-term

All absences require medical or official evidence to be authorised.

What if my child is absent during mock or official exams?

We will not authorise absences during mock and official exams without medical evidence or official documents.

Attendance Monitoring/Action Pathway (Continuous Absence)

Continuous absence is when a student is off from school for more than one day at a time. **Where contact has not been made or does not continue to be made for a continuous absence, we have a legal duty to make sure the student is safe.** Legally, a child becomes ‘missing in education’ if we do not hear from a parent/carer in three days. **This is why we take the actions on the pathway below very seriously.**

Absence day	Action to take
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send text message. ● Call home, speak to parent/leave message if no response.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email/text parents/carers. ● Call home if reason unknown, speak to parent/leave message if no response. ● Call second emergency contact if parent doesn't pick up. Leave message if necessary.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absence referred to EWO as child is now deemed missing in education. ● Email parent. ● Inform social worker or other professional working with family. ● Home visit.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home visit (second attempt if first attempt was unsuccessful). ● Send formal attendance letter home. ● Inform Safer School Officer to carry out background police check on address. ● Email parent re absence and inform that a missing child report may be sent.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Call home if reason unknown, speak to parent/carer or leave message if no response. ● Email parent/carer. ● Access and Engagement team informed and decisions made regarding further action.
Further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If there was no genuine reason for the long absence then a fine should be issued. ● Any ad hoc absences leading to attendance dropping below 90% should receive a warning letter regarding a fine (and making clear the attendance expectation). If no improvement is seen within a week then a fine should be issued. ● Any repeat of long term absence <u>without good reason</u> will receive a fine.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Request assistance from staff speaking another language if needed. ● Reporting issues to Children's Social Care when they already have involvement and attendance is becoming an issue.

Persistent Absence Pathway (Non-Continuous Absence)

First drop in attendance

- **Attendance officer:** Phone call with parent
- **Form tutor:** Conversation with student



Second drop in attendance

- **Form tutor:** Phone call with parent and conversation with student



Third drop in attendance

- **Attendance officer:** Sends 'Letter 1' with the written warning and invitation to meeting with Form Tutor
- **Form tutor:** Arranges and conducts a meeting with the parent and student
- **ATL:** Conversation with student



Fourth drop in attendance

- **Attendance officer:** Sends 'Letter 2' with the second written warning and invitation to meeting with the relevant ATL
- **Form tutor:** Conversation with student
- **ATL:** Arranges and conducts a meeting with the parent and student



Fifth drop in attendance

- **Attendance officer:** Sends 'Letter 3' with the third written warning and invitation meeting with the SLT link
- **Form tutor:** Conversation with student
- **SLT:** Arranges and conducts a meeting with the parent and student

Further Action

- **Below 96%** - Medical evidence required for further absences.
- **Attendance continues to decline** – persistent absence letter sent requesting a home visit. Education Welfare Officer (EWO) letter sent outlining agreements made at the parent meeting. If medical condition is affecting student's attendance, the student will be referred to appropriate support service.
- **Parent/carer failed to attend meeting** – attendance will be monitored by the EWO and a final warning letter sent to parent.
- **Attendance continues to decline** – EWO refers student's attendance to Local Authority.

STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE

1. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
2. Children Missing Education - September 2016
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf