ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AIM

1.1. It is the personal responsibility of every individual referring to this policy to ensure that they are viewing the latest version; this will always be published on Cygnet's online policy library, **myPolicy/CAMHS'** and on each schools website.

1.2. In line with our school vision 'learning to be all you can be' it is vital that students attend school as often as their wellness permits so they can reach their personal and academic potential and will do what we can to prevent poor mental health being a barrier to achieving these goals. We strive to create a culture based on our core values of Care, Respect, Empower, Trust and Integrity.

1.3. Since we are a school which sets high standards for our students it is important that we are meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance using a consistent approach through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- All students to be punctual to their lessons.
- Emphasising the importance to all of good attendance at school as an essential component of improving the well-being of our students.
- Making explicit to all relevant parties (all hospital staff, parents/carers and students) Cygnet Health Care's expectations on attendance levels.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- Stress the need for hospital and school staff to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

2.   SCOPE

2.1.   This policy applies to all Cygnet Schools.

2.2.   It is the agreed Policy and any deviation by staff from following this policy and supporting procedures and documents may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

2.3.   Links to supporting Policy, documents and references are in **Section 15**.

3.   INTRODUCTION

3.1.   Children and young people admitted to hospital for treatment of mental disorder should be admitted to an environment that is suitable for their needs, and be provided with '*a routine which allows them to continue their social, personal and educational development and … equal access to educational opportunities as their peers*'. (S131a Mental Health Act / Mental Health Act Code of Practice - paras 19.90/1)

3.2.   We recognise that some of our student have significant needs and therefore it can be very challenging to secure consistently high attendance rates. At Cygnet Schools we take a 'no excuses' approach to all students engaging with education. This requires all of us (including YP) to understand and address any barriers to learning. If a student has been disengaged from learning for some time, we will work closely with the medical team to formulate an individual plan. This will typically use a balance of educational and therapeutic strategies to build up their courage, resilience, skills and confidence to begin learning again without delay. The HOE will be made aware of such plans during weekly meetings with the HT.

4.   LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

4.1.   This policy 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)**
- **The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**
- **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**

4.2.   This policy also refers to:

- **Keeping children safe in education**
- **Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools**

5. POLICY

5.1. Local authorities have a legal requirement to arrange education for any young person of compulsory school age whose illness prevents them from attending school.

5.2. Cygnet provides an education service to young people in Tier 4 CAMHS services at Sheffield, Bury and Coventry. The school service is for 12 to 17 year olds.

5.3. Cygnet schools are independent schools. Ofsted are responsible for inspecting the quality of education provided. The Care Quality Commission also plays an important regulatory role in assuring quality.

5.4. For students admitted to an inpatient child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), education is usually provided alongside a programme of therapeutic activities. This is the Cygnet approach and timetables and attendance tracking reflect this.

5.5. By law, students must stay in school until the last Friday in June if they turn 16 before the end of the summer holidays. They must then stay in full time education, start an apprenticeship or work or volunteer until they are 18. **https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school**

5.6. The local authority must make sure students continue to get a full time education - unless part time is better for their health needs. Cygnet Schools avoid the use of part time tables by using a bespoke curriculum offer and working in partnership with the wider hospital teams. **https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education**

5.7. Cygnet believes that:
- Education is a key component of the therapeutic process.
- Regular attendance at school is vital. Put simply, absence means missed learning; without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory.
- Young people in Tier 4 CAMHS provision often have a long history of being unwell and may have missed significant parts of their education. They may be looked after and/or also have an Education and Health Care Plan.
- It is our duty to do our very best for these vulnerable students.

5.8. At Cygnet, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all of our students.

5.9. Cygnet expects students:
- At Key Stage 3 and 4 to engage in education & other therapeutic activities (either in class or on a 1:1 basis) on a full-time basis whenever possible.
- Post 16 to engage in education or training on a full-time basis whenever possible.

5.10. It is a legal requirement that students of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this means regular attendance at school (or 1:1 provision).

6. WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ATTENDANCE RATE?

6.1. Attendance is a national priority. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high examination performance.

6.2. At Cygnet schools we expect:
- All staff to promote good attendance.
- That students will attend education unless they are deemed too unwell by a Doctor.
- Students to attend education every day during term time.
- Where ever possible young people who are granted home leave engage in school activity back 'home' if this falls in term time.

7. AUTHORISED ABSENCE

7.1. The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences and one of the key reasons is when a student is ill or receiving medical attention. At times students will be too unwell to access learning on ward or attend school in the hospital.

7.2. We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; authorised home leave should be arranged out of school hours whenever possible unless the student is attending their own school as part of a managed transition.

7.3. Occasionally students may need to visit a new school or foster placement for example. These visits should always be coordinated with the headteacher to minimise the impact on the young person's education.

8. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
- These are absences at Cygnet schools where a medical professional provides no acceptable explanation.
- All absences that are not agreed by a Doctor should be treated as unauthorised for reporting purposes.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Cygnet Schools have two sessions divided by a break in the middle.

9.2. On each occasion they must record whether every student is:
- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

9.3. Every session marked as absent from school has to be classified by the school as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why accurate information about the cause of any absence is always required.

9.4. Prior to school starting, school staff attend Daily Risk Assessment (DRA) meetings to ascertain any authorised absence from the school.

9.5. At the start of each school session an attendance regist er is taken. The school will follow up any unexpected absences immediately with the ward teams.

9.6. Education staff will monitor incidents of lateness and liaise with wider hospital teams to keep these to a minimum.

9.7. Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and wards to work closely together.

9.8. To this end, we expect from the following:

Ward staff
- Do all they can to ensure that students arrive on time for morning or afternoon school sessions including promoting good sleep hygiene and modelling positive morning routines.
- Notify the school as swiftly as possible if a student is medically unwell.
- Support students to engage in learning in class or on a 1:1 basis.
- Support students to undertake self-study and complete homework.

The school team (including Education Officers)
- Contact wards on day one of medical absence if no message has been received from the ward.
- Contact ward staff over any unexplained absences.
- Follow up promptly any concerns ward staff pass on to the school that may be affecting a student's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing, in school.
- Involve the education officer to help students re-integrate into school after a period of illness or other individual circumstances.
- Regularly and consistently, remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend morning meetings to discuss school attendance and DRA information.
- Reward excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

All staff
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for the students and provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure each student has an appropriate and responsive curriculum i.e. aspirational models are prioritised but where appropriate, other models are implemented flexibly.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any students' concerns;
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- See student' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff;
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures;
- Be pro-active in providing support for students who have additional learning needs;
- Use trauma informed restorative practice when working with students in the school or on ward.

Headteachers
- At Cygnet schools the headteacher is the attendance champion.
- The Attendance Champion for **Phoenix School** is **Dave Best** Email address: **DavidBest@cygnethealth.co.uk**
- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Monitor, analyse and report on trends of attendance.
- Ensure all students have access to high quality education.

- Drive high standards of attendance across the school to support academic and personal development.
- Ensure that the promotion and rewarding of good attendance is a key priority.
- 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.
- Lead discussions with the MDT, Local Authority, Parents/carers to address attendance issues in school.
- Stay up-to-date with any new guidance, legislation, and best practice in regards attendance in schools.
- Make recommendations in regards policy/policy updates, to the head of education.

Hospital Internal Governance Team to:
- Challenge and support all staff to ensure that student's access education and learning whenever they are well enough to do so.

National Education boards to:
- Set strategy on promoting attendance
- Approve policy changes.

Head of Education:
- To assure the proprietor that this policy is compliant with legislation and guidance and being implemented at all school sites.
- Update policy.

National Attendance and Billing Officer:
- To produce national reports on attendance on a weekly basis.
- Confirms the discharge summary has been sent to the community school/social worker

10.   PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

10.1.   Students will be rewarded for good/improving attendance rates, on a weekly basis.

10.2.   As a minimum HT's will be expected to have schemes in place to reward:
- Student attendance
- Staff contribution

10.3.   These can be individual, group or both and a member of school staff will be present at ward community meetings to issue these. Possible reward schemes include:
- Weekly Attendance Cup
- Weekly 100% attendance certificates
- Half Termly attendance certificates and gift voucher
- Positive attendance reward trips

10.4.   Parents are informed of their child's attendance at ward rounds and CPA meetings. The Education Officer will inform parents directly if there is an issue with their child's attendance and positive attendance strategies are then shared and discussed.

10.5.   Students with additional SEND, Medical needs or Mental Health Needs may need additional support to attend education sessions in school. For these students

education can take place on the ward and they can be provided with specialist or safer equipment. Positive attendance strategies are discussed and agreed daily during daily risk assessment (DRA) meetings with the Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT).

11. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

11.1. Each headteacher must ensure that the admission and attendance system complies with this guidance:

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

11.2. The register for the first session will be taken at the beginning of the students' first lesson and will be kept open until 30 minutes after that session begins. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the students third lesson and will be kept open until 30 minutes after that session begins.

12. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

12.1. Cygnet Schools monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students that require support with their attendance, Attendance concerns are raised at Student Progress Meetings where support plans are put in place and reviewed. If attendance issues remain a concern, the ward MDT can be consulted for further support and guidance.

Monitoring attendance

12.2. The school will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school. Due to the small size of the school as well as the particular needs and transient nature of our cohorts we pay particular attention to attendance at an individual level.

12.3. The school share all attendance data if required with their Local Authority.

Analysing attendance

12.4. The school will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.

Using data to improve attendance

12.5. The school will provide regular attendance reports to the HoE and Hospital stakeholders to facilitate discussions with students and families if necessary. Also use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

12.6. Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

12.7. The school will use attendance data to identify students with high levels of absence. Also hold regular meetings to assess the success of targeted positive attendance strategies and feedback this information at ward rounds and CPA meetings.

13. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

13.1. This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and as a minimum annually

14. RETENTION OF ATTENDANCE DATA

14.1. All attendance and admission data is recorded electronically and will be retained for 6 years from the date the data was entered. Where amendments are made, the school will ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

15. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

15.1. This policy links to the following policies:
- **Safeguarding in Schools Policy** (4-17)
- **Behaviour policy** (8-06)
- **Assessment and Marking Policy** (8-03)
- **Records Management and Data Quality** (IG 11)

17.   APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES

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

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	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
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 local authority 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 one 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

18. APPENDIX 2: REDUCING SEVERE ABSENCE PROCESS FLOW