

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Rationale

The governing body is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment thus depends on good attendance.

Policy

The school will:

- ensure that this policy is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents and carers, students and staff;
- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual students and for the student body as a whole;
- support parents and carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of students and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance;
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and carers eg some parents and carers may have difficulty understanding written communications, need the assistance of a translator or may be reluctant to come into school.

Guidelines

1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Head will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

The Pastoral Support Officers will monitor attendance and punctuality daily and code absences using the designated DfE codes. In preparation for the fortnightly meeting to review attendance the Data Manager will produce attendance and late data for all students. Students with attendance below 92% will be discussed with year staff, the designated PSO for the year group, the Attendance Officer from the LA and the Deputy Head and appropriate action will be taken to improve attendance.

All staff will have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2 Collection and Analysis of Data

The Deputy Head will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and punctuality. Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupil premium, students with special educational needs,

and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

3 Registration and Attendance Registers

Registers are important legal documents and it is essential that they accurately record the attendance of all students.

Electronic registers are taken at the start of the day during Period 1 (between 8.40am-9.40am) and again during afternoon registration (between 1.50pm-2.10pm).

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to either north or south school office. For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day should inform staff in one of the offices and sign in.

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. The school takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up by subject staff and the PSO for the relevant year group. Action will then be taken to locate the missing student.

4 Authorising Absence and Approved Educational Activities

The school recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a student's education as unauthorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can make children vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance;
- a student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
- a student is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered;
- in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the

- parents have sought permission in advance;
- where the school is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend;
- where the student has a medical appointment (parents will be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;
- in other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house or siblings;
- the student is shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, enacted September 2013 make it clear that the school should not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are special circumstances:

- where the parent or carer is unable to take a holiday during school holidays due to the nature of their employment;
- family bereavement;
- to participate in an educational activity/event;
- to participate in a competition;
- to represent an organisation at local, national or international level;
- to attend a wedding or other significant family event.

Holiday requests for the following reasons are not considered to be special circumstances:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlapping with beginning or end of term.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where a student takes a holiday during term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school. If a holiday is taken during term time, parents or carers should complete a 'Holiday Application' form and return the form to the appropriate head of year, asking permission for their son or daughter to have leave of absence. Holiday application forms are available from the student's head of year, the school website or the school office. This should be not less than two weeks before the absence is due to start.

5 Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance

5.1 Meetings with parents or carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence with or without explanation, the school will invite parents or carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans are put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

5.2 Medical Evidence

Parents or carers are asked to provide medical evidence to explain why their child is absent.

5.3 Referral to Attendance and Inclusion Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absence by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Inclusion Service.

5.4 Fixed Penalty Notice

Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 if a student is absent from school without authorisation we may ask the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60. A Penalty Notice may be issued if a student has accrued at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence during the previous 12 school weeks. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, the Notice rises to £120 if paid within 28 days. The Access and Inclusion Service may issue up to two Fixed Penalty Notices in a single school year.

Punctuality

5.5 Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room, on time, every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent through lateness will be referred to the Attendance and Inclusion Service.

5.6 Detentions

Multiples of 3 lates per 6 week cycle will result in a 30 minute detention for every 3 lates eg:

- 3 lates per 6 week cycle = 30 minute year team detention
- 6 lates per 6 week cycle = 2 x 30 minute year team detentions

Failure to attend detentions would result in students being issued senior team detentions.

The PSOs monitor punctuality and arrange for the student to attend a detention with the year staff. Where a student has been issued with three detentions for lateness they will be referred to a Deputy Head. Students who are persistently late risk the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

6 Study Leave

The school believes that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave will **only** be granted to years 11, 12 and 13 students during the time of the summer examination period. Should any students wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements of:

- study leave should only be granted to years 11, 12 and 13 students and never to students in years 9 and 10;
- it should always be granted sparingly, taking account of an individual student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study;
- any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so;
- any sessions given to students as study leave have a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it is unsupervised) and will be recorded as such.

7 The Use of Legal Action

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Officer and the school fail to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the Local Authority will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the student's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Deputy Head and the Head of Year. If, after legal action has been taken, the student still fails to attend school regularly the Attendance Officer will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date. In cases where parents wilfully withhold a student from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the Attendance and Inclusion Service will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available. The Deputy Head must give approval before legal proceedings take place.

8 Deleting a Student from the Register

A student's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register. A student of compulsory school age shall have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

- the student has been registered at another school. (Schools can register Traveller children even if they are on the roll of another school. The school the child normally attends is the base school; the other registration is temporary);
- the school has received written notification from the parent that they are educating the student themselves (Elective Home Education);
- the student has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school;

- the student is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age and neither the student or the parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- the student has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and both the school and the Attendance Officer have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her. In such cases the school should ensure that form Children Missing Education is sent to the Attendance and Inclusion Service in order that efforts can be made to trace the student. This may involve contacting other relevant agencies and authorities that may be able to provide further information;
- the student has died;
- the student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and intends to cease to attend. (All registered students are required to remain at school until the leaving date - last Friday in June. "At school" includes for these purposes approved educational activities undertaken off site, including work experience);
- the student has been permanently excluded and the exclusion has been upheld.

If we are informed that a student is leaving to attend another school, year staff will establish the student's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the student will start there. Confirmation will then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school will arrange to transfer the student's file to their new school. If we are concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a student has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the Attendance and Inclusion Service. When a student's name is removed from the admissions register the Deputy Head will notify the Admissions Team.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be monitored annually by the Deputy Head. The policy will be evaluated and reviewed every three years by the pastoral committee and the senior leadership team.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy is available on the school website, on request to parents and carers, the LA and Ofsted through the Head teacher.

Other policies to which this policy relates include:

Behaviour Policy

Date approved by governors	January 2016
Date for review	January 2019

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all students	Not counted in possible attendances
3	Out of lesson with a member of staff	Present
4	In isolation	Present
5	Late for a lesson due to an approved reason (i.e. bus late, music lesson, exam)	Present

