

# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY [INCLUDING MISSING FROM EDUCATION]

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## 1. **Rationale**

We recognise our responsibility to promote the highest levels of attendance and punctuality by all students. Regular attendance is not only vital in the development of good learning and maximising student attainment, it also helps the development of a sense of community, of personal and social skills, as well as supporting safeguarding in its widest sense.

Good attendance reduces exposure to the negative influences associated with truancy. Our aims are:

- To maximise attendance rates by promoting, encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance.
- To investigate individual absences and ensure that students, parents/ carers clearly understand that unauthorised absences are not acceptable.
- To work closely with students and parents/carers, along with other professional agencies, to help students overcome barriers which may prevent them from attending school regularly.
- To review the school attendance target annually.
- To work closely with students, families, relevant local authority and external agencies where children go missing to prevent further risks of a student going missing in the future.

## 2. **Statement of Expectations**

### **Students are expected to:**

- arrive punctually each school day
- attend the school at all times unless there is a justified and agreed reason not to do so

### **Parent/carers are expected to:**

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- provide at least two emergency contacts
- provide evidence of medical appointments to the attendance team if appointments prevent them from attending e.g. hospital/dental appointments
- wherever possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day or seek authorisation in advance from the Attendance Team
- contact school each day their child is unable to attend
- contact the Form Tutor/Pastoral Team/attendance office, in confidence, if ever a problem occurs that may affect the student's attendance
- ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period
- cooperate with school if their child's absence reaches an unsatisfactory level, including providing medical evidence, engaging with home visits and attending meetings in school on request.

Parents are reminded that in September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came in to force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers/Principals should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the Attendance Office for consideration two weeks prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. Parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

## **The school will:**

### **a. Promote good attendance through all aspects of school life. This will involve:**

- Helping to solve problems that prevent students attending school
- Rewards for attendance. These are frequently revised and kept alive by continual reference to the importance of good attendance.
- Taking of the register at the start of the day, and then at the start of each lesson, to highlight its importance.
- Monitoring all students' attendance and taking appropriate action where cases fall below the school target.
- Regularly reviewing attendance with the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Team and Form Tutors in order to ensure plans are put in place to improve all students' attendance.
- Contacting parents via text, email or telephone if a student does not arrive or is late to school.

Attendance is regularly reported to parents/carers

- i. through Assessment Point reports
- ii. through phone calls/letters where students' attendance is a cause for concern.

### **b. Work with students whose attendance is a cause for concern:**

- i. Form tutors will
  - explore reasons for absence through verbal communication with the student
  - refer students to Pastoral staff in the event of any concerns (eg: following a number of one day absences, a pattern of absences, etc)
- ii. Pastoral staff will
  - monitor attendance with the Attendance Officer
  - work with the Attendance Officer to improve the attendance of students who fall below the school target
  - liaise with home regarding concerns and issues.

### **c. Staff monitor attendance by:**

- taking registers efficiently and accurately (both session and lesson registers)
- recording minutes late to lessons for individual students
- informing Pastoral staff/Attendance Officer of unexplained absence, including within the school day / suspected truancy.

### **d. Follow-up students with poor attendance and/or punctuality by:**

- the use of detentions for unexplained lateness
- the use of report cards for lateness or truancy, monitored by Form Tutor/Pastoral staff/SLT
- informing parents of concerns by letter and/or phone call
- the offer of support for the student via Pastoral staff, Form Tutor, or other colleague who has a good working relationship with the student.
- requesting medical evidence be provided when absence reaches an unsatisfactory level
- requesting a parent to attend meetings with Governors, Attendance Officer, Pastoral staff or SLT, which may also be attended by external agency or local authority colleagues
- working with local authority officers, where appropriate, to explore the use of penalty notices and other legal actions, including for term time holidays.

### 3. **Known unavoidable long term absence** e.g. following hospitalisation

Subject teachers have a responsibility to provide work for students when they are informed of long term illness

- a) Subject teachers work in conjunction with Pastoral staff and the Attendance Team to:
  - send appropriate work to the student
  - receive work for marking
  - maintain contact between home and the school.
- b) Students are encouraged to return to the school as soon as possible. This is achievable through the following arrangements:
  - facilities are in place for work to be sent to one point in the school if a student is unable to move around
  - permission is given for part-time attendance e.g. if the student needs a shortened day
  - permission to leave lessons early to avoid crowded stairs and corridors.

### 4. **Students missing from education**

**It is important that all staff are aware that students going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities;** this could include abuse (which may include sexual exploitation/abuse, child criminal exploitation/county lines activity), neglect, a range of mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or forced marriage (see Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 for further detail).

Unexplained absence is monitored daily by the Attendance team by contacting families, using provided emergency contacts.

Where no contact is made we will attempt to make direct contact via a home visit. We may also liaise with local primary schools if siblings are known, to check attendance and build a fuller picture of a family situation. We will also work with the local authority's children missing from education team where appropriate.

Where we have reason to have specific concerns we will alert the police and children's social care as a matter of urgency following our safeguarding procedures.

Those students we deem to be particularly vulnerable of missing from education, will be monitored closely and are more likely to have additional support in school.

No student will be removed from roll until we have confirmation that they have enrolled at a new school or we receive a deregistration letter from the local authority.