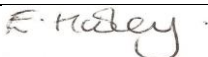





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## Attendance and Absence Policy and Procedure

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<b>APPROVED:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2017
<b>SIGNED:</b> <b>Headteacher</b>  <b>Chair of Board of Trustees</b>	 
<b>TO BE REVIEWED:</b>	February 2020

## **Principles of the policy**

It is widely accepted that attendance has a direct impact upon achievement, success and welfare. Strong evidence shows that where any individual pupils' attendance percentage is below 96% it will have a detrimental effect on their achievement, becoming increasingly damaging as their attendance percentage becomes lower. Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement and the school carrying out its function in safeguarding the welfare of children. Regardless of the reason for absence, not being present at school disadvantages children.

Therefore, it is imperative to work with parents and carers to maximise every student's attendance. By focusing on good attendance we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes for pupils.

## **Statutory Obligations**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/carers are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

## **Registering Attendance**

- Registers are to be marked using SIMS within 10 minutes of the start of each period.
- Pupils present should be given a "P" mark (present for that session). At the end of the lesson this will be converted to an ATL (attitude to learning) score 1-5.
- Pupils not present in the lesson should be marked with an "O" (No reason yet supplied for absence). If it appears that the student has been present in other lessons, pupil reception to be informed.
- Pupils who arrive late should be given an "L" mark and the number of minutes late recorded.
- Paper registers should only be marked when there is no possible alternative and these should be returned promptly to pupil reception unless another arrangement has been made.

## **Punctuality and Arriving Late to School.**

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.40am) and to lessons.
- Students arriving after the registration bell at 8.40am will be marked as late using an L code.
- Any student who is late to school must attend a 20-minute lunch time detention in seclusion.
- Failure to attend this detention will lead to Headteacher's Detention on a Friday 3pm – 5pm
- Students who arrive after 09:30 will be marked with a "U" code (Late after register closed) and the absence will be unauthorised unless a satisfactory reason is given.
- Students who are late to school twice or more in a week are given a Headteacher's Detention on a Friday 3pm – 5pm.

## **Attendance procedures and responsibilities**

Parents are asked to telephone school before 09:30am to notify us of a child's absence.

For an absence to be authorised, for example due to illness, it must be supported by a letter, note in the planner or phone call from the parents explaining the reason for the absence.

Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents explaining the reason.

Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the main office and should sign out at the main office if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.

Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the attendance and pastoral team will endeavour to contact them by text initially with a follow up telephone call or home visit.

A first day response strategy is in place whereby when a child has not attended school by 09:30 the attendance team will make contact to establish the reason for the absence and an estimated time of return to school.

## **Categories of Absence**

All absences must be categorised as either authorised or unauthorised. In basic terms, an authorised absence is one which the school is allowed, by the DfE to give permission for. All other absences will count as unauthorised absence. The more common word for this is truancy. Below is a list of absences which can be authorised, and another list of absences which have to go on your child's record as unauthorised.

After consideration of individual circumstances, the following types of absence from school can count as authorised:

- Illness
- Dental or medical appointments
- Interviews
- Work experience
- Approved public performances (including elite sporting activities)
- Approved educational visits organised by individual students (Visits organised by the school count as attendance in the normal manner)
- Approved study leave
- Exclusion from school
- Off-site education (e.g. certain students with special educational needs)
- Reduced timetable
- Family bereavements
- Holidays (only in exceptional circumstances, please see below)
- Days of required religious observance

The following types of absence have to count as truancies (unauthorised absence) from school:

- Absences for which we receive no explanation
- Shopping during school hours
- Looking after the house/looking after younger brothers or sisters
- Private visits to concerts and similar events, including travel time to and recovery time after the visit
- Holiday leave
- Absence from work experience without good reason
- Refusal to cooperate with readmission conditions following a fixed term exclusion
- Refusal to attend 3:00 – 5:00 school
- Lateness to school after the register has been closed
- This is not an exhaustive list and school will make a final judgement on each absence.

### **Education Welfare Officer and Fixed Penalty Notices**

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the Education Welfare Officer.

The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Education Welfare Officer or by the school attendance team to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

In circumstances where a Penalty Notice has been served with no impact or attendance patterns show chronic poor attendance the school may request a prosecution through Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance.

### **Holidays and Leave of Absence**

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Applications should be requested before any expenses are committed. Costs already incurred are not considered when a leave for absence request is reviewed. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent. Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This can be collected from reception. Completed forms should be returned to the school and addressed to the Headteacher at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible). Leave in

term time will not be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

If the school have not received any contact from a parent or not been able to make contact with the parent, where the student has not attended school for a period of 5 days, then a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral will be processed.

In considering the leave of absence requests we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request
- When a student is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- The student has a serious work deficit.
- Other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.
- A leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references. Unauthorised absence of ten or more school sessions in a half term can lead to the authority issuing a penalty notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re- admission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a student can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

### **Monitoring Attendance**

The school's attendance team, consisting of Pastoral Managers, Attendance Administrator and Assistant Head continually monitor attendance of all pupils. Parents are alerted by letter, phone calls, text messages and home visits about their child's attendance and any concerns that school have. There are different thresholds for interventions that school take based on the child's percentage attendance.

### **Celebrating and Rewarding Good Attendance**

Students are rewarded for good attendance and for improved attendance. This can take the form of positive letters home, awarding achievement points and entry to a prize draw.