

Attendance Policy

THE HUB SCHOOL



Transforming Lives

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Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Governing Body.....	2
3. Improving Attendance.....	2
4. Attendance Officer.....	3
5. Parents/Carers.....	3
6. Persistent Absence.....	5
7. Requesting Medical Evidence.....	5
8. Religious Observance.....	5
9. Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Absence.....	5
10. Safeguarding.....	5
11. Children Missing from Education.....	6
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes.....	7
Appendix 2: Registration Procedure.....	8

1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to maximise the attendance of students in order to facilitate the highest standards of achievement. The school considers attendance to be of paramount importance. Without good attendance the best efforts of teachers will not have the maximum effect on the learning processes. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Students need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Our aim is to work collaboratively with parents/carers to offer support around issues relating to absence and punctuality.

2. Governing Body

The Governing Body is required by law to ensure that the registers are kept accurately. The information needs to be available should it be requested for panel meeting on attendance. School attendance figures are also required to be published annually and reported to parents/carers.

3. The School will try to improve attendance by

- Encourage students to understand the importance of attendance at their lesson and the relationship between attendance and attainment
- Identifying patterns of non-attendance and then work with students, parents/carers to discuss areas of concern, and formulate a support plan where necessary
- Providing a clear statement of attendance on the student's academic review (termly)
- Sharing attendance data with all students on a regular basis
- Working proactively with students whose attendance has declined over a period of time.
- Meeting with Progress Leaders regularly to discuss students causing concern.
- Liaising with parents/carers to support improved individual attendance targets

- Any student with attendance ***below 95%** will be monitored
- Any student with attendance ***below 90% will likely** trigger further intervention or action
- Incentivised school based reward system for strong attendance
- Ensuring that parents/carers are aware of their responsibility to communicate with the school to report a student absence. This can be done by telephoning the **school direct on 01482 304200**

4. Attendance Officer is responsible for

- Ensuring registers are being completed accurately (please see Appendix A: Registration procedure) and challenge any discrepancies that may be apparent
- Providing requested data for governing Body (termly)
- Providing punctuality data for Progress Leaders (weekly)
- Providing 95% attendance certificates (half-termly)
- Rewarding good and improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance levels of all students and sharing this data with the Progress leaders and tutors. Relevant information may also be shared with teaching staff
- Liaising with parents/carers to identify any problems which may be affecting attendance and offer support if appropriate to parents/students with the support of Progress Leaders
- Making home visits if appropriate to meet with parents to discuss issues around attendance.
- Implementing support plans with parents and students and monitoring improvements for attendance.
- When improvements have not made significant changes to liaise with Education Welfare Service and support with a referral form.
- Attend Local Authority Panel Meetings with the relevant attendance data, and communicate with the school governors who are invited to attend and support.
- Where necessary, informing parents of the legal responsibility for regular attendance and possible sanctions (penalty fines) per adult per child and prosecution
- In some instances of prolonged absence School may seek the support of the Education Welfare Service and Home Tuition Service.
- Should students have missed a substantial period of learning, Attendance Officer may work in partnership with local authority services to determine an appropriate reintegration plan.

5. Parents/carers will try to improve attendance by

- Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible, but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that s/he can complete most of the school day before leaving.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure s/he has an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that s/he has a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the school week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Encourage your child to come to school even if s/he is feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and school will contact you if it becomes necessary.
- Talk positively about going to school – “What was good about school today?” “Did anything funny happen?”
- If a student is likely to be absent for a known period of time, parent/carers should liaise with school, and where appropriate

Parents/carers – have a legal responsibility.

“All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs which they have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.” (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

This responsibility includes ensuring that all children attend punctually, regularly and stay in school.

Parents/carers to encourage a good attitude to learning and support the Home-school Agreement, working in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of the child.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of their child's absence. This can be done via telephone. This must be done on the first day of the absence. The Attendance Officer will contact home if this has not been done. On the third day of absence, communication will be sought again. If communication has not been established, a home visit may be instigated to confirm your child's attendance. In the event of concerns, efforts will continue and information will be shared accordingly (in school with DSL and if necessary EWS) to clarify reasons for absence and any related concerns.

If your child has been off ill for a period of time, you may be requested to supply a medical note from your GP to support the absence. This is in line with the guidance from the Local Authority.

Educational Visits – Paper registers must be taken prior to departure and a copy sent to Attendance Officer. Students will be given their marks for lessons in that session.

No student will be given permission to leave school site without verbal or written consent from parent/carer

First Aid Room Procedure – if any student is feeling unwell they should inform a staff member who will give them written permission to go to the First Aid room. A medical assessment will be made and should the First Aid person believe that the student is not well enough to remain in school then they will make contact with parent/carer to see if suitable arrangements can be made to collect the student.

Under no circumstance should students make their own arrangements to be collected from school. These procedures are in place to enable us to maintain a high level of safeguarding.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason and that are permitted under government guidelines like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Medical and Dental appointments, where possible, should be made for after school or during school holidays. The School understands that this isn't always possible, however, students should attend school prior to or following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the School and the Educational Welfare Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Holidays

If a student is absent without prior authorisation or explanation, the school will treat the absence as unauthorised. This could lead to a possible referral for a penalty notice. Please note that if you believe that there are exceptional circumstances that require taking your child from school then the exceptional circumstances request form can be found on the school's website under term time absences. Please follow the guidance on the website.

6. Persistent Absence (PA)

The Government's has had a strong emphasis on attendance, with evidence showing the better their school attendance, the more likely students will succeed at school with a downward spiral in students' level of attainment as overall absence increases. Schools take attendance very seriously and will be expected to take preventative measures well before any national persistent absence threshold is reached. As from September 2015, the persistent absence threshold was changed to 10%, an equivalent of 38 sessions or 19 school days missed in a school year, rather than 15%, 56 sessions or 28 days.

Term time holidays can no longer be authorised. This is in line with government policy from September 2013. All requests for term time holidays will be unauthorised.

7. Requesting medical evidence

Schools have the right to consider whether to accept the parent's explanation for the absence as there are occasions when parental condoned absences are reported to the school as illness. If there are concerns that students absence from school is not genuine, or become a regular occurrence, the DfE guidance, September 2014, states that schools can ask for proof of illness

(appointment card, date of medication, prescriptions etc.) before marking as 'I'.

8. Religious observance

School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Where necessary, school will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart from religious observance.

9. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly and in line with school expectations.

10. Safeguarding

School reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e.: female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence, school will refer concerns to the appropriate external agency, i.e.: Children's Social Care, Police. Should a referral to an external agency be made, school will endeavour to inform parents/carers, however, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern, and as such, a referral can be made without informing the parent/carer.

11. Children Missing from Education

School recognise that when a child goes missing from school, it may be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School follows local authority procedures, and under section 8 of the Education Regulations Act

(2006), School will make enquiries into the location of students with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence, or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. School reserve the right to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, Police, Education Welfare Service) if any child is absent from school for five days without confirmation from parent/carer.

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance misuse, risk of travelling to conflict zone, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence and child missing from education procedures.

Appendix 1

New 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 another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
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	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Registration Procedure

Class Teacher must complete the morning register accurately and save it within the first 10 minutes (remembering that the register is a legal document). If this is not possible for whatever reason, Karl O'Sullivan - Attendance Officer, must be notified immediately.

When marking a register any discrepancies in attendance need reporting to the Attendance Officer immediately.

Students arriving late should be marked with an 'L' and enter how many minutes late.

Morning registration closes at 9.15am, students signing in after this time without a valid reason, will be marked as an unauthorised late. This is registered with a 'U' and will be included alongside any unauthorised absences when looking at individual's attendance.

Lesson registration is a vital element in tracking post-registration truancy and records will be used by the EWO in communications with parents and as evidence in legal proceedings.