



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' academic success.

Introduction

There is overwhelming research evidence, that poor attendance at school significantly reduces the life chances of a student through a marked impact on academic success. There is also strong evidence to suggest students with poor attendance at school are much more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. This is reflected in the significant focus on improving school attendance at national, local and school levels.

Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive a full time education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability. Parents/carers must ensure their children attend school and are punctual on a daily basis.

The school has a legal responsibility for accurately maintaining school registers, and for taking the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The school also has a responsibility to share this data with the Local Authority and Department for Education.

Students are encouraged to become independent young people, including taking responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality.

Aims

- To improve the overall percentage of attendance for all students. The expectation is for all students to attend school for a minimum of 95% for each academic year
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and governors
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- To recognise the needs of individual students

Absence from School

There are two categories of absence from school:

Authorised - approved

Unauthorised – not approved

Absences will be recorded using the registration codes recommended by the Department for Education.

Types of Authorised Absence:

- Medical Appointments – with hospitals or orthodontists. (Non-urgent, routine check-up appointments should be made outside of school hours, or during school holidays). Students attending medical appointments are expected to be absent from school for the least amount of time possible, and not for the whole day.
- Illness
- Exclusions
- Religious observance – where it has been authorised by the Head teacher in advance.
- Leave of absence – where the Head teacher has authorised a request for absence in advance.

Types of Unauthorised Absence:

- Any request for absence that has not been authorised by the Head teacher in advance
- Truancy
- Late arrival to school after the registers have closed
- Illness not supported by medical evidence where this has been requested

All absence, authorised and unauthorised, will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence, and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence, and the expected date of return to school.

School uses an automated Truancy Call system to contact parents/carers when we have received no prior notification of a student's absence. If parents/carers fail to respond to this, the student's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Punctuality and Registration

The school applies the following procedure:

- Students are expected to be on site by 8.40am.
- School starts promptly at 8.40am. Students should go straight to Tutorial where registration for the morning session takes place.
- Any student arriving after 8.40am is considered late 'L' and will be marked as such by the school.
- If a student arrives late to school, without genuine reason, they will be given a 30 min after school detention on the same day. Parents will be informed.
- Students arriving after 9.00am when the registers are closed, will be recorded as 'U' on the registers. As well as being classed as Late, this is also classed as an unauthorised session absence and will impact on the student's overall attendance percentage. These students will be given a 60 min after school detention on the same day. Parents will be informed.

Holiday in Term Time

Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school. It is always the Head teacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If permission is not requested in advance, or permission is declined and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The Head teacher may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family.
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, and you must be the parent the child normally lives with.

Children Missing Education

The school has a duty to inform the Local Authority of any child who is on the school roll, not in attendance and whose whereabouts we have not been able to confirm. A child is considered to be missing education once they have missed 10 days of school and there has been no contact from parents/carers.

Medical Evidence

Where a student's attendance has fallen below expectations, the school has the right to request that parents provide medical evidence to support any future absences. Medical evidence can be an appointment card from the doctor's surgery/hospital, the label from any prescribed medication which shows the student's name and the date the medication was prescribed, a photocopy of the prescription or a letter from the GP or other medical professional.

Once medical evidence has been requested, if it can't be provided each time the student is absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance for all students is monitored on a weekly basis by the school's Attendance Officer.

Parents of students whose attendance falls below 95% will be notified in writing of the school's concerns. Attendance will then be monitored for 3 weeks. If there has been little or no improvement, parents will be invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) with the school's Attendance Officer.

There will be a 3 week monitoring period following the SAM. If there is little or no improvement a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who can either prosecute, or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for non-attendance.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence.

A penalty notice is an alternative to parents/carers being taken to court by the Local Authority for non/poor school attendance. If your child has 10 or more sessions (a session is either a morning or an afternoon, total of 10 sessions per week) of unauthorised absence within a six month period, the school will inform the Education Welfare Service

who can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) for each child to each parent. Anyone who has day to day care of a child is considered a 'parent' and legally responsible for making sure the child attends school.

The cost of a FPN is £120.00 per child, per parent. This cost can be reduced to £60.00 per child, per parent if the FPN is paid within 21 days.

The only statutory defences under Section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act are:

- The student was absent for medical reasons (needs evidence from GP to support this)
- The Local Authority failed to provide transport when they were required to do so
- The absence was authorised by the school

Fixed Penalty Notices will also be issued for unauthorised holiday absences where this totals 10 or more sessions.

Summary

Concerns about absence from school and the likely negative impact on a student's progress will be communicated to both students and parents.

The school has a legal duty to submit the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence to the Local Authority and the Department for Education three times a year.

School staff are committed to working with parents to promote good attendance to help secure the best possible academic outcomes for students.

Stephen Clark
Headteacher
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