

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

(in conjunction with the Peninsula Multi Academy Trust)

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## **AIMS**

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and engagement in the school.

## **OBJECTIVES**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including to:

- Promote a culture of excellent attendance habits at all times.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved with the school, including students, parents/carers, teachers and Governors.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure that every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Address patterns of absence as a priority and act swiftly to reduce further absence.
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure that students have the support in place to attend school regularly.
- Promote and support punctuality throughout the school day and ensure that students are attending all lessons.
- Develop strong communication between school and home on all matters concerning attendance and punctuality.
- Work in collaboration with the Local Authority and other outside agencies regarding support for families whose children's attendance levels are a cause for concern.
- Share our daily attendance data with the Department for Education and work closely to analyse emerging trends of poor attendance and areas of improvement.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

- The implementation of this policy will support the school in meeting its safeguarding obligations to all students and it recognises equality of opportunities for all.
- All students are expected to maintain attendance as close to 100% as possible and arrive punctually to school.
- Excellent attendance and punctuality are highly valued by all and students will be recognised for excellent attendance.
- The school will work in partnership with parents/carers to address higher than expected levels of absence.
- Annually, the school will set a target for student attendance.
- In order to safeguard all students, the school will contact parents using the 'first day response' system if their child is absent from school without an explanation.
- The school will report regularly to parents on their child's attendance.

## **THE LAW**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is in regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

## LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of every member staff to ensure that attendance is given a high profile and that issues are identified, communicated and dealt with by the most appropriate member of staff.

### Assistant Headteacher (Student Services)

- Lead on the school's attendance strategy and the implementation of this policy.
- Monitor and review the Attendance Policy annually.
- Provide clear guidance and direction to all members of staff with responsibility for securing good attendance.
- Ensure effective data systems to enable attendance to be closely monitored.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions and monitor the efficacy of these systems.
- Maintain the high profile of attendance across the school.
- Communicate attendance and punctuality expectations clearly to parents and students.
- Monitor holiday requests during term time and work with the Local Authority to ensure that statutory guidance is followed.
- Work with all stakeholders to tackle persistent absenteeism and ensure that students are supported to encourage better habits of attendance.
- Oversee and apply the Staged Intervention System and chair Attendance Panel Meetings for persistent absentees with relevant agencies if required.
- Report on attendance to Governors and the wider SLT and report regularly to the whole school on attendance at Weatherhead.
- Ensure appropriate training for staff managing school attendance.
- Provide clear direction to the Attendance Team.

### Headteacher

- Promote and recognise good attendance and punctuality amongst students, staff and parents.
- On an annual basis, present a target level of attendance for the school year to the Governing Body for approval.
- Receive regular feedback from the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services) on matters concerning the attendance and punctuality of the students.
- Report regularly to the Governing Body on the attendance of students at school and the effectiveness of strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Consider requests for leave of absence on a case by case basis in light of the existing statutory regulations and the individual circumstances concerning the request.

## **The Governing Body**

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data.
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **Year Leaders**

- Keep attendance high profile throughout the school year.
- Monitor Year Group attendance against targets and disseminate data with key staff involved with the students.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions, and work in line with the school policy to uphold excellent attendance.
- Support Form Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and implementing supportive measures.
- Contact parents to discuss attendance concerns as soon as they are identified.
- Alert the Attendance Team of concerns with regards to persistent absenteeism and refer names of students to begin the Staged Intervention Approach.
- Regularly meet with the Attendance Team and the Local Authority to review the attendance of Year Group.
- Assist the Attendance Team with referrals to the Local Authority.
- Work with the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services), Attendance Manager, Pastoral and Academic Support Worker and, where appropriate, other agencies to create individual packages and re-integration plans for students.
- Review individual cases following Attendance Panel Meetings.
- Work with targeted students identified from attendance tracking meetings, with the view to improving attendance.

## **Form Tutors and Class Teachers**

- Create a high profile for attendance and punctuality:
  - Praise students for being present and arriving on time.
  - Liaise with Year Leader / Attendance Team for any concerns or issues.
- Keep an accurate register:
  - Complete the class register on Edulink, SIMS or using a paper alternative if the system is unavailable.
  - Ensure that N codes are changed appropriately, alongside the Attendance Team procedures.
- Monitor individual students at risk of falling below the school attendance target and take appropriate action with the Year Leader as required.
- Maintain effective communication with home regarding attendance depending on Year Leader requirements.
- Form Tutors are responsible for students' attendance in their form group and should take direction as required by Year Leader, SLT or the Headteacher, and should celebrate good attendance with the tutor group.
- Class teachers should support students who have been absent from school to catch up on missed work.

## **Attendance Manager**

- Oversee the administration of the Edulink system and the use of SIMS and ensure that the correct and accurate codes are entered.
- Oversee the administration of the Truancy Call system.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- Support the work of SLT, Year Leaders and Form Tutors by:
  - Providing regular attendance information.

- Contacting parents on the first day of absence using the Truancy Call system.
- Liaising with Year Leaders to monitor accuracy of record keeping.
- Working with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance.
- Sending letters to students / parents / carers at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Staged Intervention Approach.
- Liaise with the Local Authority monthly to discuss concerns and to track progress of cases open to the Education Welfare Service.
- Inform the Local Authority if a student is classed as a Missing Child and follow appropriate procedure.
- Sign students in as they arrive late and issue a notice for a same day sanction.
- Update attendance display boards to celebrate attendance and maintain the high profile across the school community.

## **Parents**

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and leaves for school on time every day.
- Provide a valid explanation for any absences for their child from school and aim to support school in ensuring that their child attends school as swiftly as possible after this period of absence has finished.
- Avoid taking children out of school in term time for unnecessary absences or holidays.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance and support the approaches adopted by pastoral and/or SEND teams.
- Inform school on the first day of the child's absence and for any subsequent absence after that.
- Provide a suitable reason for their child's absence on the day of each absence.
- Where required, attend attendance meetings to support their child's attendance and ensure that the school is kept fully informed of any changes to their child's health or wellbeing that may result in their child being absent from school.
- Have a duty of care to not allow their child's attendance to fall into a category whereby their child would be classed as Persistently Absent or Severely Absent (see glossary in Appendix One).

## **Students**

- Must arrive to school punctually and be in registration for 8.35am each morning.
- Arrive on time for lessons and attend all lessons on their timetable.
- If leaving school during the school day, take a note from home to the Student Services Office and then sign out at Main Reception.
- Tell Form Tutor or Year Leader / Pastoral and Academic Support Worker if they are having any problems attending school so that school teams can effectively support.
- Take responsibility for completing classwork and homework missed during a period of absence. If necessary, the student should discuss this with their Year Leader or Pastoral and Academic Support Worker, who will assist in collating work.

## **PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Informing School of an Absence**

If a child is absent, parents / carers must contact the school on the same day of the absence and provide a valid reason for their child's absence. If the absence runs over multiple days, it is the parent / carer's responsibility to inform the Attendance Office (Sixth Form Office for students in Years 12 and 13) each day of their child's absence. Parents / carers should follow the correct extension number as provided on the school absence line, depending on whether their child is in KS3, KS4 or KS5. If there is not a reason for their child's absence reported, school have a duty of care to contact parents / carers and, in some cases, conduct a home visit.

## **Taking Registers and Recording Absence**

The statutory absence codes will be used to code any absence and all attendance will be accounted for in a timely manner each day. Attendance codes applied by the school are taken from the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) which can be found at this [link](#).

Absence will be coded as an 'N' until a satisfactory explanation is provided. At that point, the code will change to a suitable reason. Parental reasons for absences will be recorded on our school system. Where the authenticity of an absence is in doubt, or a pattern of absence causes concern, then the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. A member of the Student Services team may be in contact for further clarification regarding these absences.

Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, the absence may remain unauthorised. Such circumstances may include:

- Leaving the school without permission.
- Not attending school because it is a child's birthday (or a family member's birthday).
- Not attending school so that a child can go shopping.
- Not attending school to visit a relative.
- Attending a demonstration or a protest.
- Not attending school due to a medical appointment that is not the child's.
- Not attending school due to being tired or due to returning home from an event the previous evening (sporting, recreational, holiday, trip).
- Attending a medical appointment in the AM or PM and not attending in the subsequent session (unless a clear reason is provided).
- Not attending school due to minor ailments or period related problems.

## **Intervention and Support**

Students at Weatherhead will receive a wide variety of sources of support if they find themselves struggling to attend school regularly and these include:

- Academic and Pastoral Support Worker intervention.
- Attendance Reports that highlight patterns of absence.
- Attendance support meetings and regular reviews of progress made.
- Personalised Attendance Action Plans.
- Panel meetings conducted by the Attendance Team and the Assistant Headteacher.
- Meetings with Year Leaders, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to provide support for children and their parents.
- Re-integration programme after a long-term absence.
- Reduced or re-integration timetables, where appropriate.
- Personalised curriculum, where appropriate.
- Attendance Officer home visits.
- Signposting and referrals to external agencies who can support a child and their parent / carer with ensuring that good attendance habits are secured.

## **Rewards**

The school will celebrate excellent attendance where appropriate through a number of different approaches, including:

- Weekly IRIS rewards for individual students achieving 100% attendance.
- Weekly Attendance Cup given during assembly for form group with best attendance in each year group.
- Reward trips for excellent attendance.
- Individual Year Group attendance drives each half term.
- Attendance display board that celebrates achievement.

## Sanctions and Legal Proceedings

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance and punctuality. It is important to note that sanctions will be used as a final measure where all other avenues of support, provision and packages have failed:

- Local Authority involvement and referrals to external agencies if there are growing concerns that a child's needs are not being met.
- Parenting Contracts may be issued: Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a student's truancy under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (with The Governing Body).
- Educational Penalty Notices issued by the Local Authority, in conjunction with the school: Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the Local Authority issuing a fixed penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.
- Prosecution by the Local Authority and potential court proceedings.
- If issued with a fine, or a penalty notice, there will be a notice to improve attendance. If there is no improvement, the rate of fines is as follows:
  - £160 if paid within 28 days and £80 when paid within 21 days.
  - A second fine would be issued at a flat rate of £160
- Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services), the Local Authority Officer or the police.
- Failure to pay the Penalty Charge will result in further legal action being taken by the courts with possible outcomes of a fine (up to £2500), a community order or three months in prison.
- The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
  1. The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year (five days or 10 sessions within a ten-week period).
  2. One-off instances of absence, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
  3. Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## Absence Procedures

- If a parent needs to notify the school of their child's absence, they will ring the specified absence number and press the appropriate number for their Key Stage.
- Calls for absences will be taken at the Student Services office or Sixth Form office and coded appropriately.
- Pastoral and Academic Support Workers will then contact any students who have not provided a reason and are marked as 'N' code. This will be completed by 10.30am.
- The truancy call will be sent out to remaining students who are not accounted for.
- Home visits may be conducted if appropriate.

## Home Visits

Schools have a safeguarding duty for all students and in cases where we are unable to make contact regarding a student's absence, a home visit may be carried out. The purpose of a home visit is to identify the reason and duration of the absence and to ensure that the student is safe. If the parents / carers are not home, the visiting member of staff will make appropriate enquiries and leave a note. Home visits are also a useful way of addressing problems that cause poor attendance as they open a positive dialogue between parents / carers, students and school, allowing for the necessary supportive measures to be implemented to enable students to attend school more regularly.



## **Child Missing in Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The Local Authority will be notified of any student who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more after making reasonable enquiries. In accordance with the Local Authority's Child Missing in Education procedures, the Local Authority will also be notified of any student who is to be removed from the admission register.

## **Persistent Absence and Severe Absence**

Being in school every day is fundamental to a child's development, both academically and socially. A child whose absence is 10% or more will be classed as Persistently Absent and a child whose absence is 50% or more will be classed as Severely Absent. High levels of absence impact significantly on a student's learning – it is difficult for them to catch up and they have significant gaps in their learning. For example, a student with 10% absence misses 114 lessons during a school year. A child with an attendance figure of 85% will be absent from school for 28.5 days which constitutes a considerable amount of lost learning. It is difficult for students to catch up with missed work when they have been absent and they risk falling behind their peers which, in turn, has a detrimental impact on an individual's well-being. Students who are Persistently Absent will be closely monitored and appropriate intervention and support will be put in place. Any student who has an absence rate of 50% or more and is classed as Severely Absent may be subject to the involvement of the Local Authority and/or an external referral for safety and well-being concerns.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Legislation prevents the Headteacher from authorising any requests for leave of absence taken during term time unless in exceptional circumstances (for example, an urgent medical appointment or attending a funeral of a close relative). Parents / carers should, where possible, endeavour to book routine medical and other appointments out of school time. If attending a medical appointment, parents should ensure, if possible, that their child attends school either side of the appointment. Taking students out of school for family holidays is not acceptable and will not typically be authorised. Parents who choose to take their children out of school without permission must be aware that the absence will be coded as (G) family holiday (not agreed) or (O) unauthorised absence. All requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis and in line with the DfE guidance, may be followed with an Education Penalty Notice if the absence is taken. If parents are requesting leave of absence, they must send a written request via email or letter, addressed to the Attendance Office or the Assistant Headteacher for Student Services.

## **Punctuality**

- Students are expected to attend school on time every day and be in registration at 8.35am.
- Being late by 10 minutes every day for one academic year is equal to 33 hours of learning (approximately 6.5 days of lost learning).
- A student who arrives late before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- A student who arrives late after the register has closed, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- If a student arrives later than Period One, the student will be coded as attending after the acceptable time and will lose their attendance mark for the AM session.
- Students are expected to be on time to every lesson and subject teachers may detain students at break and at lunchtime for lateness.
- Students will be issued with a 'same day' sanction for any late marks, which could potentially be escalated to involvement with the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services) if this persists.
- If a student is late more than three times in one week, this will be investigated by their Year Leader and parents / carers will be contacted.
- The Assistant Headteacher (Student Services), in conjunction with the Attendance Manager and the Local Authority, can issue a penalty for students with persistent late marks in accordance with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## **Attendance Staged Intervention Procedure**

**Stage 1:** Form tutor to speak to the student after their absence. A Stage 1 letter will be sent to parents / carers informing them of their child's attendance if it falls below 95%, there are 5 days of sporadic absence or more than three broken weeks of attendance.

**Stage 2:** If attendance does not improve after Stage 1 intervention, then parents will be invited in for a meeting with the Year Leader / Attendance Manager and, in some cases, the Assistant Headteacher (Student Services). If the parent does not attend the meeting, then the meeting will go ahead with the student and the parent / carer will be notified of the outcome.

**Stage 3:** If none of the above intervention improves attendance then an Educational Penalty Notice will be issued (EPN) and further prosecution may occur in conjunction with the Local Authority.

## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL**

The school will aim to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for making and monitoring these arrangements in conjunction with the Director of SEND, Year Leaders and Pastoral and Academic Support Workers. A meeting will be made with parents / carers to discuss arrangements for working from home or hospital. A plan will be drawn up detailing agreed actions and timeframes for review from the discussion. The plan will then be carried out to deliver education to the student. Arrangements could include classwork and homework being set on Google Classroom and other online learning platforms, sending work home where necessary or attending a hospital school. Work will be set and marked by class teachers. When necessary, the school will liaise with relevant outside agencies (for example, Local Authority, CAMHS and the NHS) to ensure that students with medical needs receive effective education. The student will be slowly reintegrated back into school with either alternative arrangements to make it possible, such as alternative provision for break or lunch times, or the student may come back into school on a reduced timetable until their health needs have been met. A named member of staff will facilitate the reintegration into school. The school will remain responsible for the safeguarding of pupils on roll and host and chair regular review meetings (approximately half termly).

The school will make suitable arrangements to facilitate students taking public examinations where they cannot attend school due to a medical condition. If necessary, the school will submit applications for special arrangements to the relevant awarding bodies.

## **APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Authorised absence:** student absence that has been approved by school and coded accordingly as an acceptable reason has been provided. Details of the illness must be provided to the school and medical evidence may be requested.

**Unauthorised absence:** student absence that has not been approved by the school and coded accordingly as the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable (for example, a shopping trip, a family holiday, any form of truancy or where a suitable medical reason cannot be provided)

**Persistent absenteeism:** A student who has an absence level of 10% or above and is deemed to be missing a considerable amount of school that will have a detrimental impact on their learning.

**Severe absenteeism:** A student who has an absence level of 50% or above and is deemed to be missing a considerable amount of school that will have a detrimental impact on their learning.

**Vulnerable children:** this term is inclusive of Children Looked After, Previously Looked After Children, Free School Meals, SEND (including those with an EHCP), children on Social Care Plans or those who have previously been open to social care.