

Attendance Policy

Committee	Student and Community
Approved by Governors	September 2010
Review Date	September 2012

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment is based on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 Attendance Manager

The dedicated full time attendance manager, oversees directs and co-ordinates the college's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and ensures the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The attendance manager also ensures that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Link, Heads of Year and tutors. The Senior Leadership Link reports on attendance to the governing body termly. The attendance manager liaises with the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.2 Heads of Year

Heads of Year ensure that good attendance is promoted in their year and ensures that the attendance manager is fully aware of any circumstances that affect the attendance of any student in their year group.

2.3 Tutors

Tutors are responsible for ensuring that registers are taken accurately and correctly twice daily. Tutors celebrate and encourage good attendance, promoted it in their tutor group and ensure that the attendance manager is fully aware of any circumstances that affect the attendance of any student.

2.4 Governors Student & Community Committee

The governing body monitors school attendance and with the headteacher establishes annual targets for whole school attendance.

2.5 Registration

- i) The school marks the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session, using the prescribed codes (shown in appendix A).

- ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.45 am** and **2.00 pm** by each form tutor and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **10.00 am** and **2.30 pm**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see paragraph 4.5).

2.6 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended as appropriate. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.
- ii) The College recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education and can render children vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, the Attendance Manager will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the college**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see paragraph 5);
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);
 - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;
 - (f) the student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.7 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.8 Class registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up as soon as practicably possible by the attendance office and measures taken to locate the student.

2.9 Staff Training

The School will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership link, and the governing body (see paragraph above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the local authority and central government within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at the school, with an emphasis on celebrating good attendance, and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school.

4.2 First-day calling

The school has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

4.3 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. In circumstances of concern plans will be put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. In some circumstances it will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.4 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Students who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.5) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be subject to a range of strategies both positive and negative. These include; being on report to the Attendance Manager, detentions, counselling and encouragement and communication with home. Punctuality is also rewarded through whole College reward system.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to Student Services

4.8 For the same reason students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign out through student services.

4.9 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. Post registration truancy is reported to Heads of Year and Tutors and dealt with as seriously as truancy from school. If, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

4.10 Study Leave

Study leave is only granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period and is kept to a minimum. A programme of study support lessons continues throughout the exam period.

5. Term-time Holidays

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 The Headteacher considers every application individually, our policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made using the form issued by the college, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 The Headteacher will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;

- exceptional family circumstances such as the need to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

The student's overall attendance will also be considered.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 The Headteacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence via the form giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 The Headteacher will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national examinations.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the school.

7.2 The school expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the School on the first day of absence by phone or by letter
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The school will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Students' responsibilities

8.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their form tutor.

8.2 Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

9. Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy at least bi-annually and share it with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Appendix A REGISTER CODES

Morning and Afternoon Registration

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. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	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	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Additional codes used only for in lesson registration

\$	Internal exclusion	Present
%	Student services/medical room	Present
K	Attending PE without KIt	Present