

Attendance And Punctuality Policy

Updated October 2016

To be reviewed July 2017





ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Attendance is at the heart of educational achievement and central to the well being of our students. It is essential that all students attend regularly and on time and that they access all of the opportunities that the school offers.

Students who do not attend school regularly are at risk of a whole range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes including low attainment and social exclusion.

Excellent attendance is a means by which vulnerable students are regularly monitored and tracked and as such forms a vital aspect of Child Protection Procedures.

This policy reflects the LA Attendance Guidance and Procedures for Schools Policy and the Statutory Framework.

Principles:

- Every child has a fundamental right to be educated;
- Parents, teachers and students have a duty and responsibility to ensure full attendance at school.

Aims:

- To encourage and support students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly;
- To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and work in partnership with parents, the schools' Attendance and Welfare Officer, attendance checkers and other agencies to address difficulties;
- To create a culture in which attendance is valued and celebrated and where students want to be punctual to school and to lessons, are keen to attend and know that they are missed when not attending school.

Objectives:

- To identify patterns of non-attendance and poor punctuality at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties.
- To provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring and reporting of attendance and punctuality.
- To devise strategies for tackling individual attendance and punctuality concerns.



Practice:

The tutor is at the forefront of addressing attendance in the tutor group. In support of this all tutors should:

- Complete the register accurately and according to the specified requirements, using the appropriate symbols, during registration/tutor time.
- Be aware of attendance and punctuality as a key feature of their students' education and achievement and should communicate this to their students through the Pastoral programme, individual meetings and via the Academic review process.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality of those in their tutor group carefully on a weekly basis and discuss any attendance concerns directly with the student in the first instance.
- Consult with the Year Learning Co-ordinator (YLC) about any student who is falling below 100% attendance and punctuality.
- Apply any agreed strategies to assist in improving the attendance and punctuality of any student with attendance problems.
- Review, with the YLC, any agreed strategies to assess any effectiveness in improving attendance and punctuality.
- Direct records of communications concerning attendance and punctuality to the Year Learning Coordinator and Attendance and Welfare Officer.

The Year Learning Co-ordinator should:

- Ensure a climate and culture that is more likely than not to lead to excellent attendance and punctuality for the vast majority of students.
- Ensure that 100% attendance and punctuality targets are set for their year group and that these are communicated to all relevant parties.
- Reinforce, when appropriate, the value of excellent attendance and punctuality with students (through assemblies and rewards).
- Monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year group and liaise with tutors, parents, the School Attendance and Welfare Officer, Inclusion Plus and external agencies concerning attendance and punctuality concerns
- Agree with tutors the strategies to be employed in addressing attendance and punctuality concerns and support tutors in the implementation and monitoring of these strategies.



- Ensure accurate documentation and records are kept on all aspects of attendance and punctuality.
- Account to line managers for the attendance and punctuality trends in their year group.
- Work with the Schools' Attendance and Welfare Officer to share knowledge and information and to design support interventions for students whose attendance falls below 90%

The Senior Leadership Team, working as Line Managers should:

- Discuss with the Year Learning Co-ordinator the targets and strategies for their year group; the targets should be challenging and aspirational
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality trends for all year groups and assist in the evaluation of any strategies employed;
- Work with the Year Learning Co-ordinator on improving attendance and punctuality through any additional intervention, e.g. letters home, meetings, sanctions etc

The Governors will:

- Receive a termly report on the school attendance, which will indicate trends over an agreed period of time.
- Receive information on strategies used and the effectiveness of measures undertaken.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence by telephone before 8.30am
- Inform the school in advance of any known absence, and provide written evidence.
- Ensure that no holidays are taken during term time. Permission for a holiday must be sought in writing from the Headteacher. This is only likely to be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Check their child's attendance and punctuality record regularly using the school's Information Management System.
- Provide a written explanation, if their child is absent or late.
- Discuss with the tutor, Year Learning Co-ordinator or Attendance and Welfare Officer any concerns about attendance or punctuality;



- Inform the school of any personal changes which may interfere with their child's education.
- Provide school with accurate and up to date contact numbers
- Attend Parents' Evenings where academic progress and target setting are discussed fully with regard to attendance and punctuality.

Pupils should:

- Attend school every day;
- Be punctual every day

Subject teachers should:

- Complete all registers accurately at the start of the lesson using the appropriate symbols,
- Take appropriate action in relation to absent students who are unaccounted for or who are late for their lesson

Curriculum Leaders should:

- Support subject teachers to establish why lesson absence and poor punctuality is occurring
- Liaise with YLC's about lesson absence and poor punctuality and develop support for students for re-integration in the case of persistent absence

School Attendance Officer: will support school attendance by:

- Working closely with staff in Inclusion Plus
- Undertaking primary/secondary transfer interviews and visit identified year 6 students with poor attendance and punctuality
- Liaise closely with YLCs and SLT to develop strategies for and monitor students whose attendance has fallen below 90%.
- Liaise closely with YLCs and SLT to develop strategies for and monitor students whose punctuality becomes a concern
- Make home visits when required
- Liaise with the Inclusion Team to design individual support for students who are reintegrated following long term absence



- Prepare data required by the LA for audit meetings
- Make referrals to the LA and prepare papers to support court action. Attend court-warning meetings when required.
- Authorise students off roll under the guidance of the Headteacher
- Make Child Protection referrals when required in liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Lead, manage, supervise and monitor the work of register checkers to ensure that accurate data is available to all staff and families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Work alongside the SLT to provide a statistical breakdown of figures when required and develop whole school electronic registration.

The school day

8.40am – 3.20pm for Years 7 to 11

Twilight sessions 8.00 -8.50am and 3.30 – 5.00pm

Absence from School

Notification must be provided by parents or carers for all absences from school on a daily basis. Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Parents or carers must contact the school on the first day of absence by 8.30am on 020 8699 6731.

If the school is not informed of an absence, the attendance team will either phone, text or email the parent/carer for an explanation.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are a morning or an afternoon away from school for a valid reason; this includes serious illness and urgent medical/dental treatment. The school may authorise an absence for illness if it has received an explanation from a parent/carer. After 5 days or more, a letter will be required from a GP signed and dated with the reason for and the duration of the absence.

Letters regarding absence and, where applicable, medical certificates should be given to the school office.



Unauthorised Absence

Any absence where the school does not receive information from the parent/carer or when the reason for the absence is one that the school cannot authorise because it is not a valid reason for non-attendance is an unauthorised absence. For example:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason e.g. waiting for the gas board, shopping or baby-sitting for younger children
- Truancy from a whole session (a morning or an afternoon)
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get marked in the register on time
- Taking unauthorised holidays in term time

Parentally condoned unauthorised absence and persistent absence (below 90%) will be referred to the Lewisham Attendance Welfare and Inclusion Service and are likely to result in the parent/carer being served a Penalty Notice (£60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days) or summons to court.

Unauthorised absences could also result in a referral to Children's Social Services. This is because failing to ensure a child attends school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding matter, which potentially puts the child at risk.

Medical appointments and illness

Parent/carers are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time. Medical or dental treatment that is either urgent or cannot be made outside school hours can be authorised. For example, an orthodontic appointment for which a copy of the appointment card must be given to the school.

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as 'M' which is an authorised absence. Students are expected to attend for some of the school day, rather than miss the whole day.

Students unable to attend school for extended periods of time for medical reasons (certified by a medical practitioner) may be referred to the Local Authority Medical Programme. Additionally, the school may support students with health difficulties through the involvement of the School Nurse, referral to CAMHS or by drawing up an individual Health Plan to support attendance.

Special Leave/Special Occasions / Family Emergencies or Bereavement

Schools can now only grant leave in 'exceptional' circumstances. Our policy is to refuse all applications for holidays during term time. The law clearly states that a parent has no right to expect 10 days of holiday absence and that it is at the discretion of the school.



Only exceptional occasions warrant authorised absences e.g. attending the funeral of a close family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or shopping outing would not.

Days of Religious Observance

Such absences can be classified as authorised and it is helpful if parents can give advance warning. These dates will be stated in the school diary.

School procedures regarding lateness (Punctuality)

A student arriving late may seriously disrupt not only their continuity of learning, but also that of others. The school has a legal duty to promote excellent punctuality. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend on time, every day.

All students must arrive by 8.50am. Any student arriving after this time will be coded as "**Late**". The registers will close at **10.00am**; students who arrive **after** the closing of the register will be marked as "**Unauthorised Absent**"; and will be dealt with as such.

Weekly checks of lateness will be carried out by the Attendance Team, YLCs and SLT. Detentions, meetings and / or warning letters are sent to parents. If there is no improvement after a period of monitoring a letter will be sent to the Local Authority, whereby a fine may be imposed.