

Attendance Policy (Students)

Ratified by the Governing Body – May 2018

Under the 1995 Education Act the responsibility for ensuring school attendance rests with parents. All registered students should attend all sessions.

This policy has been written in accordance with DFE School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities November 2016

The Governing Body regards non-attendance as a serious matter. They believe that all students have the right to access a curriculum appropriate to their needs and ability. Non-attendance and encouraging the non-attendance of others, deprives them of this right. The Governors aim to ensure that the organisation of the school, its procedures and curriculum work to support and encourage good attendance.

Good communication links with home promote good attendance and punctuality as do high quality teacher/student relationships. Governors recognise that there are close links between attendance and other school issues such as behaviour, pastoral care and special educational needs and aim to ensure these are of a quality commensurate with high attendance. The Governors recognise the link between attendance and achievement. The school will make this link explicit to parents and students throughout their time in school.

Parents are to be informed regularly about attendance and punctuality and they are made aware of the school procedures and criteria for authorising absence. We will work with parents, student the locality team and where necessary, legal services and other agencies to alleviate problems arising from non-attendance. We aim to create a positive attitude towards school so that students feel supported, realise that staff care about them as individuals, have attendance valued and are helped by the School to participate successfully.

Children should attend school each session during the prescribed number of school days unless there is a genuine reason for absence. Parents will be informed of school times, holiday dates and the dates of public/and or school examinations.

- The only reasons for absence are medical, sickness, bereavement, approved educational trips, interviews, and other reasons deemed appropriate by the school. The school is the only body who can authorise absence, not the parent.
- When a student is absent there must be written communication from parents either before the absence if it can be anticipated, or on students return. A phone call alone is insufficient.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 as stated in Dorset Schools Memoranda 7.9.95. Electronic registration is used in school.
- Attendance will be checked weekly by the Year Leader. If there is cause for concern appropriate action must be taken which could be:
 - Letter to parent
 - Meeting with parent / carer
 - Referral to FASTRACK
 - Legal action
- A student is officially deemed absent on the register if they are not in attendance thirty minutes after the first bell. However, the school will seek to ensure prompt attendance and may impose sanctions against students arriving after 9.00am.

- It is the policy of the school that students should not leave the premises at lunchtime or during school session without prior school and parental approval.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Government has placed a duty on The Wey Valley School to notify Dorset Local Authority to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by *suitable* we mean efficient full-time education suitable for her/his age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs the child may have.

These children are referred to as **Children Missing Education**. Children are identified as missing from education when they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.
(*At The Wey Valley School ten consecutive days of missed education would deem the child to be a "Child Missing Education".*)

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system
- They are removed from school by their parents
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Family breakdown
- Children who do not make the transition between key stages, e.g. Nursery to Primary, Primary to Secondary

Children and young people in the following groups are more likely to be missing from education:

- Young people who have previously committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families perhaps in temporary accommodation or housing
- Young people who run away from home
- Children with long-term medical and emotional needs
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees and child who are from asylum seekers/refugees families
- Children of immigrant families not yet established in the UK
- Looked after children
- Children with Gypsy/Traveller background
- Young carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Excluded students

Children missing from education are at a much greater risk of:

- Physical harm
- Becoming involved in crime
- Demonstrating anti-social behaviour

- Abusing drugs and alcohol
- Sexual exploitation
- Being illegally employed
- Forced marriages

The Wey Valley School will inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school without the school's permission for a period of 10 consecutive school days or more.

In the first instance the school will make every effort to ascertain the whereabouts of the student, this might include telephoning home, contacting the GP, friends, other relatives that are known. The school will follow guidelines in relation to 'children missing education', particularly as some of our most vulnerable families who frequently change addresses are likely to get lost in the system if the appropriate action isn't taken.

A chart is provided (Appendix A) illustrates the process the school will follow should a child be identified as missing from education.

APPENDIX A (CME Procedures)

