



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date Policy Updated:	November 2015
To Present to Governors:	December 2015
Date Policy Ratified:	December 2015
Date for next Review:	December 2016
Signature of Headteacher	<i>Paul Woods</i>
Date of signing	December 2015
Signature of Chair of Governors	<i>Richard Davies</i>
Date of signing	December 2015

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This policy has been written and implemented in accordance with the School's dedication to its Christian values. These are underpinned in the Stopfordian ethos and the message and example of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

We as a school believe that central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption that students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to improve overall attendance rates and punctuality rates for pupils to ensure that all pupils receive the highest quality education and that through this they are able to develop the skills necessary for future employment.

This school aims to:-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

We expect:-

- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- All students to be punctual to their lessons.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

1. Set challenging targets to meet and exceed national averages.
2. Appoint the attendance lead at a reasonably senior level.
3. Take an interest in attendance and punctuality and support interventions in place for students with the poorest attendance.
4. Report attendance statistics as part of the termly report to governors.

The Governing Body

1. To be familiar with current legislation on attendance and the school attendance policy
2. To request the Headteacher to report on attendance at each governing full body meeting.

The Attendance Lead

1. Work with the Headteacher to agree the attendance targets.
2. Ensure that there is a clear attendance policy.

3. Ensure that all staff are aware that attendance is their responsibility.
4. Ensure that accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.
5. Ensure that attendance data is accurate, analysed and reported on a regular basis.
6. Encourage a positive and proactive ethos within the school, by which attendance is prioritised, promoted and embedded in school policies, plans practices and processes.
7. Ensure that the school has a range of strategies that are applied consistently to promote whole school attendance.
8. Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer whenever necessary.
9. Monitor attendance weekly.
10. Supervise the Attendance Officer and ensure that the required action is taken at each level.
11. Meet pupils and parents/carers to discuss attendance and punctuality issues and devise effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.

The Attendance Officer

1. Ensure administrative system is effective, organised and accurate.
2. Follow the school's procedures for first day calling.
3. Seek explanations from parents/carers for absence.
4. Issue attendance letters where and when required.
5. Hold regular discussions with the Attendance Lead. Ensure the system works. Come up with suggestions to improve it.
6. Inform the Head of Year/Attendance Lead if a Form tutor is failing to maintain their registers correctly.
7. Assist the Attendance Lead/Headteacher and others in collating data necessary for documents such as reports or attendance returns.
8. Check and file all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
9. Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer whenever necessary
10. Attend attendance meetings with Heads of Year/Attendance Lead and Educational Welfare Officer.
11. Pass messages from parents/carers to appropriate staff.
12. Attend meetings with parents/carers if required by Attendance Lead and /or Year Curriculum Co-ordinator.

The Head of Year

1. Promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through assemblies and rewards.
2. Ensure that tutors are following school's procedures in dealing with absences and lateness.
3. Meet with Attendance Officer to discuss specific pupils and intervention strategies to be used and to provide feedback on interventions.
4. Analyse attendance data for the year group, and co-ordinate the responses and interventions with form tutors and Attendance Officer.
5. Make a personal connection with parents/carers and students who have regular unauthorised absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.
6. Ensure the Attendance Lead is informed of your concerns over the attendance/punctuality of specific pupils.
7. Ensure pupils who are absent for any length of time are provided with appropriate academic work, that it is completed, returned and marked.
8. Ensure form tutors in their year team are recording attendance accurately and discuss any issues with the recording of registers with the form tutor in the first instance. If issues persist to liaise with the Attendance Lead.
9. Ensure that all casual entrants are familiar with the school's expectations on attendance and punctuality.

The Form Tutor

1. Ensure accurate electronic registration takes place between 8.35-8.55am and 3.05-3-15pm.
2. Ensure that registers are completed and the correct code is used. Never leave blank spaces.
3. If it is not possible to complete electronic register - e.g. if at assembly, to complete a paper register and ensure it is taken to the main office by 9.00am.
4. Look carefully at attendance data for their tutor group. Spot patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals.
5. Use attendance and punctuality data as part of learning conversations with pupils and parents/carers.
6. Ensure that the Head of Year is kept informed about concerns over attendance, as well as the interventions taken by the form tutor.
7. Promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through registration periods, make 100% the expectation.
8. Provide a positive welcome to students with poor attendance and support the student in catching up with missed work.

The Special Needs Coordinator

1. To monitor attendance of all pupils in school action and school action plus and refer to appropriate member of staff any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality.

The Subject Teachers

1. Do not accept poor attendance. Make 100% attendance the expectation.
2. Ensure that registers are completed accurately and at the start of the lesson.
3. Follow up absence/truancy.
4. Liaise with Head of Department and Head of Year regarding students with poor attendance/poor punctuality.
5. Ensure appropriate and challenging work is provided for students who are absent for any length of time.
6. Provide a positive welcome to students with poor attendance and support the student in catching up with missed work.

The Parents/Carers

1. To ensure that their child attends school every day, unless there is a valid reason not to e.g. illness, work experience.
2. Ensure that their child arrives to school on time.
3. To contact the school by telephoning our attendance line 0208 216 1772 on the first day of absence, stating the reason for their child's absence and the date they are expected to return to school.
4. To write a note when their child returns to school explaining the absence.
5. Make medical appointments outside of school time.
6. Ensure that no request for holiday leave during term time is made.
7. To seek help from the school if requiring assistance in improving their child's attendance or punctuality.

8. Support the school and the Educational Welfare Officer in strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality levels of their child, including attending meetings and engaging with outside agencies.

The Students

1. To ensure that they attend school regularly and on time unless there is a valid reason not to.
2. To inform their form tutor and bring in note from home to explain any absences.
3. To inform their classroom teachers if an absence is known in advance and to make sure they ask for work to complete, and they do complete the work.
4. To catch up on missed work on return.
5. If they are late to school to go to the main office to receive their mark before going to their lesson.

Understanding types of absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Examples of Authorised Absence are:

- Illness which results in the student being unable to attend school.
- Family bereavement.
- Homelessness.
- An interview with a prospective employer, higher education institution or at another school.
- Study leave granted by the Headteacher.
- Exclusion.
- School trip. Participation in an approved activity or work experience.
- A day set aside exclusively for religious observance.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence are:

- No explanation being provided by the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- Staying at home to mind the house, await deliveries or look after sibling/siblings or other family members.
- The school follow up procedures show that the student truanted and the parent/carer was unaware of the absence until informed by the school.
- Students who arrive at school after registration is closed.
- Day trips or a family holiday during term time which has not been agreed.
- Translating for a family member.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child.

If your child is absent you must:-

Contact us as soon as possible on 0208 216 1772

Registration Practice

All students are registered electronically; on occasions when the network is unavailable a written register is taken and made available immediately to our Attendance Officer.

All students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8.30 am each morning. Any student arriving after this time will be expected to serve a 4.30 detention that evening.

- Students are registered by Form Tutors at 8.35 am students arriving to their form room after that time will be marked late.
- Any student arriving after 8.55 am must report to the Attendance Officer in the main school office. **Registers are closed at 9.30 am each day, any student arriving after that time without a written note will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.**
- Afternoon registration takes place at 3.00 pm. Students who are not in their form room to be registered at that time will be marked as late. Students who fail to attend afternoon registration will be marked as absent.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to telephone the school to explain absence on the first day of absence. When a student returns to school following a period of absence parents must provide a signed and dated note to cover the whole period of absence. This note should be given to the Form Tutor. The Attendance Officer will record the reason for absence onto the school system. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to prove that their child is unfit for school it is the school's decision as to whether the reason given for absence will be authorised or not.

The Attendance Officer records any telephone messages received on the first day of absence.

Form Tutors should draw to the attention of the Head of Year any unusual reason or regularly repeated reason for absence or lateness.

Each half day (each session) of absence must be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. The school reserves the right to ask for further details and/or supporting evidence, for absence which would normally be authorised, where overall attendance is a cause for concern or where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging.

Practice to follow up absence

- Parents are requested to telephone the Attendance Officer when a student is absent.
- The Attendance Officer generates a SMS text message to inform of absence.
- Written notification as mentioned above and parental notes are recorded.
- The Attendance Officer maintains a list of students who are known to have truanted and/or have a poor attendance record and makes these the priority for first day absence calling.
- The Attendance Officer will contact as many families identified by the Heads of Year and EWO on the first day of absence as time permits.
- If a student is seen leaving the premises during a school session or is not in a lesson having registered for a session, the Attendance Officer will contact parents once it is clear the student is not on the premises.

If an explanation for absence is not received and unexplained absence continues, the following staged procedure is followed:-

- The Form Tutor asks for a note to explain an absence.
- The Form Tutor asks a second time for a note to explain and absence and writes the dates of the unexplained absence in the student's planner with a note requesting an explanation.
- If no explanation is received the Attendance Officer will generate a text message requesting an explanation for the absence to be sent home to parents.

- Absences which have not been explained will remain unauthorised; this may trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Working with the Educational Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) undertakes preventative (clinic) work and caseload (formally referred) work with and on behalf of the school. If the student's attendance continues to deteriorate, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare service at the Local Authority. He/she will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court on the advice of the Headteacher. Parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. We monitor the absence of persistent absentee students thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and parents will be informed by the school's Attendance Officer of any absence from school (First Day Call). A medical certificate may then be requested (copy of prescription or medication could be sufficient) and in these circumstances work will be set and provided for the student by the school for any long term absence. PA pupils will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and monitored by the Lead Attendance member of staff.

Holidays in Term Time

1. Leave of absence during term time is not normally granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. As advised from the Local Authority a Death Certificate should be presented prior to the leave of absence.
2. Parents will be informed that any absence taken without permission will be unauthorised and that this could be used by the Local Authority to strengthen a case for penalty notice/prosecution where overall attendance is unsatisfactory.

Penalty Notices (PNs) Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Local Authority (LA) has set out a code of conduct with regard to imposing PNs as a strategy to deal with parents who appear unwilling to meet their parental responsibility by ensuring the regular attendance of their children.

This will include:

- overt truancy.
- parentally condoned absence.
- excessive holidays in term time and or delayed return.
- persistent late arrival at school, after the register has closed.

Parents at risk of a Penalty Notice will receive a warning letter from the school. Should there not be an immediate improvement, a referral will be made to the EWS and a formal warning letter will be issued advising of a period of 15 days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence, to include lateness after registration has ended. Should there be an improvement; a formal notice will not be issued. Failure to improve will result in the LA issuing a Penalty Notice.

The notice carries a fine. The penalty is £60.00 if paid within 28 days of receipt rising to £120.00 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.

If this fine is not paid after 42 days, the Educational Welfare Service will proceed to the Magistrate Court for prosecution under the education act 1996 section 444(1).

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Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire an attendance list is taken out of the building and circulated to Form Tutors and Heads of Year to ensure a full emergency registration takes place. In addition to the practice of student presence being noted by the Attendance Officer in the event of lateness, all students must sign out and in if leaving the school premises during the day for whatever reason. Such signing out is undertaken by reception staff upon receipt of a dated and signed parental note verified by a Form Tutor or Head of Year's signature or a note from the Head of Year indicating that the appointment has been verified by telephone if the student has forgotten a note. Students who are unwell report to Main School Office where they are assessed. Students who are unwell and need to leave school will have arrangements made by the designated office staff including contacting parents, and ensuring students have appropriate transport arrangements. Only designated staff make a decision to send a student home for sickness. If a student leaves school without the permission of the designated staff even if collected by a parent, the absence will not be authorised. If the member of staff has decided that a student should be sent home, the time at which they are collected by parents and leave the premises is noted in the same book at reception.

For students on a reduced, work-related timetable the Attendance Officer holds their timetables centrally for checking in the event of a school evacuation. Fire procedures for staff/adult visitors are dealt with separately.