



## Attendance Policy (Students)

Produced By:	Mr P Harty Headteacher
Date reviewed by Governor Advisor	March 2022
Date reviewed by Full Governing Body Chair:	15 March 2022 Dr J Savin
Next review Date:	March 2023

## Consultants for the policy

Headteacher, The Manager of the School Inclusion Unit, School Student Support Officer, the Education Welfare Officer (Bucks CC) and DFE guidance

## Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years. On-going monitoring of actions will be:

- Feedback within school to the Headteacher
- Regular monitoring and benchmarking of attendance data

## AIMS

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework that defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.

### **To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Students at School**

- A whole school attendance policy is applied consistently.
- Attendance and punctuality are given a high priority. Measures to support this are outlined in this policy.
- Attendance issues are directly related to the school's values, ethos and curriculum. Good school attendance has a positive impact on learning and a sense of belonging to the school community.
- Attendance is monitored closely. There are regular meetings between school staff and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). County procedures on attendance are followed. All unexplained and unjustified absences will be investigated.

### **To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Students, Parents, Teachers and Governors**

- Reports to governors are produced as required.
- Students must not leave the school without permission and must arrive punctually to school and to lessons. Sanctions are applied when students do not comply.
- Parents are made aware of the possible penalties for poor attendance when issues are discussed.
- A Year 7 induction evening is held for parents. Students new to the school are also invited into the school before they start. This provides the opportunity to outline the procedures regarding absence
- A school newsletter is produced every month. This is a good way to highlight attendance issues to parents.

- Attendance issues are discussed in regular meetings with the school's EWO.
- Attendance issues are discussed in pastoral staff meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings
- Concerns about attendance and punctuality may be brought to the attention of parents at parents' evenings and in school reports.

### **To Develop a Framework That Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks**

- Procedures for statutory registration are unambiguous and maintained. There is an electronic registration system in use and Lesson Monitor; students are monitored throughout the school day as attendance is recorded electronically at the start of lessons by class teachers. The morning registration is at 8:30 am and the afternoon registration is at 1:55pm, at the start of lesson 5, or at the nearest available time (the register closes once the last name has been read out). Staff who take registers are constantly reminded of the need for accuracy as the register is a legal document.
- Sixth Form students who are not in a lesson at 1.55pm must sign in with Matron at that time.
- Parents are expected to telephone or email the school by 9.30am on the first and subsequent days of a student's absence. If this does not happen, the school Matron makes reasonable efforts to contact parents using the Intouch system to text where possible and phone calls where texts are not possible on each day of absence.
- Any student who is late for whatever reason must report to the Student Support Officer and sign the late book. A reason must be given and a sanction could be applied in line with school guidelines. Regular reports about lateness are given to Heads of Year and Form Tutors so they too can discuss concerns with students.
- Lateness is responded to quickly (in respect of both students and parents). Students are considered to be late for registration if they arrive in the classroom after the register has been taken and closed.
- Student support staff are given time to meet with the EWO in order to discuss attendance issues.
- Attendance of students is reviewed every two week period and at the end of each term. Any student with less than 85% attendance over the previous five week period is investigated. Any disadvantaged student whose attendance is less than 90% over the previous five week period is investigated by the Head of Year.

### **To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Students**

- Support and advice for students comes from the pastoral team at the school. Other sources are the School Counsellor, the Connexions, Blueprint Outreach support and other outside agencies. Outside Agency support is co-ordinated through the Inclusion Unit. Students experiencing difficulties with attendance maybe re-integrated via the Inclusion Unit
- The EWO makes home visits whenever necessary.
- Pupil Support Programmes and are organised for students to provide extra support
- Communication with parents is seen as vitally important
- Contact information of parents is accurate and up-to-date, it is corrected as necessary. Regular data checks ensure that contact information is as up- to- date as possible. Parents should contact the school to inform of any changes.
- Parents are contacted by using School Comms on the first and subsequent days of absence from school, where parents have not provided a reason. Parents are also contacted repeatedly if absence continues.

### **To Develop a Systematic Approach to Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

- The computerised registration system and lesson monitor is used to provide up- to- date data. This data is analysed every two weeks and appropriate action is taken where necessary. If there is a concern highlighted by lesson monitor, immediate action is taken.

- DfE coding is used.
- A consistent approach is used in the collection and provision of information. Information is provided for:
  - governors
  - staff
  - parents
  - students (individual or groups)
  - Education Welfare Service
  - DfE
- Patterns of irregular attendance and lateness are identified from the data and are followed up. This is done in the first instance by the school and then with the help of the EWO.
- Data from the SIMS data base is used to identify patterns which can then be analysed and followed up. This includes the monitoring of sub groups within the school.

### **To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School**

- Parents are expected to contact the school if their son/daughter is absent each day.
- Parents must cover every absence with a signed letter; this will be placed in the student's file. It is at the school's discretion if the absence is deemed authorised or unauthorised
- Full use of computer generated letters is made to enquire about unexplained absences
- Parents are strongly discouraged from making holiday requests in term time. Any requests must be put in writing to the Headteacher at least 4 school weeks before the absence. Requests must only be from service families due to deployment conditions or parents who have to take holiday at this time due to work commitments/requirements. In both cases, there must be a letter from the employer to confirm this. Absence will not be authorised if:
  - Attendance is below 90% at the time of application
  - Any part of the request is wholly or partly during internal or external examinations or assessments or work experience. Parents are notified about these dates at the start of the school year and they are on the school's website.
  - The absence is for more than 10 school days
  - The student has already had one annual holiday during the school year
  - The student has punctuality issues
  - The application is not due to military service/work requirements or commitments
  - The application is less than 4 school weeks before the absence and so insufficient notice has been given
  - The reason is not exceptional
  - The holiday is not a close family holiday
  - The holiday request is due to affordability
  - Insufficient reasons have been provided for the holiday request
- Parents may make exceptional absence requests in term time. Any requests must be put in writing to the Headteacher with as much notice as has been possible. Absence may not be authorised if:
  - Attendance is below 90% at the time of application
  - Any part of the request is wholly or partly during internal or external examinations assessments or work experience. The absence is for more than 2/3 school days
  - The student has already had one annual holiday during the school year
  - The student has punctuality issues
  - The reason is not exceptional
- All parents are made to feel welcome and comfortable in school. Support is offered whenever it is necessary

### **To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

- Attendance is actively promoted. This is done in assemblies. Certificates and prizes are awarded to students with the best attendance in each year group.
- There are immediate sanctions for lateness. These include loss of free time (breaks and lunchtimes), after school detentions, letters/phone calls home to parents.
- Students who truant from lessons or for the whole of the school day are given sanctions at school and their parents are informed
- Action for persistent non-attendance is taken in accordance with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. EWO, parent. This will include invitations to meetings to discuss attendance issues and ways in which support can be given if required; Parent Contract Meetings; Warning of a Penalty Notice; Issue of a Penalty Notice; Legal proceedings which could lead to fines or imprisonment. (See Appendix 1)

### **To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with Other Services and Agencies**

- Designated key staff liaises with the EWO Service and other agencies.
- There are timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Service. These take place on a fortnightly basis or as and when required. There are also attendance panel meetings hosted at the school and chaired by the EWO to discuss attendance issues with parents.
- Initial enquiries are carried out prior to referral.
- Relevant information is gathered and recorded to assist the Education Welfare Service.
- Multi-agency liaison meetings are arranged and attended as appropriate.
- The active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school e.g. Connexions, the School Nurse, Social Care, Home Tuition etc. is encouraged.

### **To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Student When Planning Re-integration Following Significant Periods of Absence**

- The individual needs and circumstances of returning students are catered for e.g. the re-integration of students after long-term absence on a modified timetable. This is organised through the school's Inclusion Unit
- Staff are informed and involved in the reintegration process.
- Opportunities for counselling and feedback are provided for students experiencing difficulties.
- Peer support and mentoring is available to support students
- Parents are involved as far as possible.
- Timescales are agreed for the review of reintegration plans. The EWO, parents and students are involved in the reintegration plan.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Legal Sanctions (Taken directly from Bucks County Council advice)**

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, John Colet School will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance.

The Education Welfare Service may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 28 days or £120 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Children at Risk of Missing Education The school must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:  
Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);  
Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered; Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;  
Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or, Have been permanently excluded. The local authority will be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made. All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Local authorities have a duty (5) to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

### Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not

seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

### Attendance Codes

The school uses codes as define by the DFE in 'School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' October 2014

## **Intervention Flow Chart**

**(Taken directly from Bucks County Council advice)**

School will notify parent of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend

Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.

Ensure your child attends school regularly

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and may issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between yourself and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 this must be paid in full within 28 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120. If you fail to pay the Penalty the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.

If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.