



**Inspiring Optimistic Learners**

## **Attendance (Students) Policy**

<b>Reviewed:</b> January 2019	<b>Next review due:</b> January 2020
<b>Governing Body Committee:</b> N/A	<b>CLT contact:</b> Martine Blandin- Neaves
<b>Policy adopted by the Full Governing Body on:</b> N/A	

## **RATIONALE**

This is a thriving and improving College and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at College, on time, every day the College is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

## **WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT**

**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance at College is the parents' legal responsibility and permitting absence from College without a good reason creates an offence in law and can result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend College regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this College, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for our students encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend the College on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of College staff.

To help us all to focus on this the College will report to parents on how their child is performing in College, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment. To this end the college is working with an Education Welfare Officer.

The main role of the Council's Education Welfare Service (EWS) is to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. The EWS does so in partnership with both school and parents. This can take many forms, from attendance clinics, home visits, school meetings, letters and telephone conversations amongst others. The aim of this is to come up with an action plan that will work towards supporting the student to increase their school attendance, and therefore their future prospects.

The College regularly celebrates good attendance by recognising students with termly and half termly rewards. Students start afresh each half term allowing more opportunities for them to receive incentives for 100% attendance in any half term or term. There is also formal recognition in the form of termly certificates, ranging from 97%-100% attendance.

Follow the procedures outlined below for every student in the College.

## THE LAW RELATING TO ATTENDANCE

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory College age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have*

*either by regular attendance at college or otherwise'.*

## THE LAW RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from College for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in College time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to meetings with parents and/or the Education Welfare Office (EWO) or in extreme cases legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off College unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the College day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at the College too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

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

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

In line with the DFE, the College uses the term persistent absentee for a student who misses 10% or more across the College year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will impact negatively on any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

### **If your child is absent parents must:**

- Contact the College as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence;
- If it is a planned absence, complete an Absence Request Form

### **If your child is absent the College will:**

Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from parents;

Attendance will be tracked on systems developed at the College internally and if the child's attendance becomes a concern then the tutor will speak to the child and telephone the parents/carers outlining their concerns and offering any support that may be needed.

If attendance continues to be a concern, parents may be contacted by the attendance coordinator, the Education Welfare Officer or the House Leader of Learning and parents may be invited in for a meeting.

If a student's attendance continues to be a concern, at this stage, the College will seek advice from the Education Welfare Officer on legal procedures which may include penalty notices or court proceedings. Parents will be invited in for a meeting with either the HLOL and/or the Senior member of staff for Inclusion. A letter will also be sent home outlining the concerns and stating that any future absence will only be authorised with a medical note.

If all interventions above have failed, the College will issue a first warning letter followed by a second warning letter if need be in order to inform parents of the severity of the situation in relation to the poor attendance. If this fails to lead to an improvement in attendance then the College will invite the parents/carers in for an Education Planning Meeting to discuss an attendance action plan for their child. (Appendix A).

The Education Planning Meeting is designed to ensure that all parties continue to support the full attendance of the student.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher or tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

The College day starts at **8.45am** and we expect students to be in their tutor groups for that time.

Students will receive a late mark and a breaktime detention if they are not in by that time. Exceptional circumstances will be considered (for example, issues with transport).

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and will be marked as unauthorised absence.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

Taking a leave of absence, e.g. a holiday in term time will affect children's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in College time.

It is now illegal for schools to authorise any leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.

Any applications made for a leave of absence must be made using the official college form and we request that at least 15 days-notice is given. Each application will be made on a case by case basis.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the College, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice may also be issued by the Local Authority.

## **COLLEGE TARGETS**

The College has targets to improve attendance and all members of our College community have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this college is 96% attendance. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful outcomes for students. The current national average is 95%.

Throughout the college year, the College monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

## Education Planning Meeting

(Insert name) PLAN

(Insert date)

Pupil	Date of Birth	Address	Attended
Parents / Guardians	Date of Birth	Address	Attended
Significant Others		Address	Attended
Professionals		Agency	Attended
Reason for the Meeting	<p><i>(insert name of parent)</i> is in receipt of a warning of prosecution in accordance with the Education Act 1996 Section 7 for failing to ensure their son/daughter's regular school attendance. The meeting will give consideration of legal proceedings under Section 444(1) 444(1a) of the 1996 Education Act, consideration of an application for an Education Supervision Order and consideration of a Penalty Notice. This meeting is called under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 because of the pupil's poor attendance at school. The meeting will consider all the information brought by those attending.</p> <p>Decisions will be taken as to whether the Education Welfare Service will proceed to prosecution, or make an application to the court for an Education Supervision Order should attendance level not improve significantly. Magistrates may make a Parenting Order in addition to any other penalty imposed. Consideration will also be given as to whether a voluntary Parenting Contract or Family Group Conference may be helpful. A Penalty Notice can also be considered.</p> <p>.</p>		
Education Welfare Service interventions and concerns (including Chronology)	.		

Parental views	
Pupil's views	
Professional Views	
Strengths identified	
Risks & Concerns that may affect improvement	
Consideration for an Education Supervision Order	
Recommendations & Actions Agreed (please state by whom and when)	

Education Welfare Officer :	Signed :
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This plan is intended to support the pupil in improving school attendance and addressing any barriers that may be preventing regular attendance.