



Statutory Policy

On

Attendance

Drafted by:
Senior Deputy Headteacher

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Signed by Chair of Governors:

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Person(s) Responsible for Day to Day Management:
Senior Deputy Headteacher

Person Responsible for Review:
Senior Deputy Headteacher

Attendance Policy

Please note that elements of this policy have been adapted to meet the DfE guidance for this interim (Covid19) period.

This Attendance policy aims to:

- Ensure a whole school attendance figure of 95%+
- Ensure the % of persistent absentees is at least in line with national average
- Monitor the attendance of all students by:
 - Year group
 - Vulnerable groups
 - Pupil premium
 - SEN
 - EAL
- Monitor the punctuality of all students and ensure sanctions are applied consistently

Principles

Our aim is to ensure that all students are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and we firmly believe excellent attendance and punctuality play a crucial part in helping our students reach their full academic potential and expanding their future life choices.

All of our staff are committed to supporting parents and carers, so that every student is able to achieve the maximum possible attendance. We encourage every student to strive for 100% attendance but attain at least 96% in a school year. This is achieved by providing an outstanding pastoral care that allows any issues preventing full attendance to be identified and acted on promptly. Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school's culture & ethos will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by students will be recognised appropriately, through the issuing of the appropriate rewards/awards. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Present at approved educational activity
- Absent, or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only school can authorise the absence. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school without reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to Visionary Independent Pathways (VIP). He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days of issue, which rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The local authority will consider taking legal action if a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days of the date of issue. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months’ imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact VIP themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice.

Procedures

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly however, if a child is unavoidably absent from school then parents/carers are expected to:

- Telephone the school office on the first day of absence, and on each subsequent day, to report the reason for the absence and the expected date of their child’s return to school
- When requested, provide medical evidence or other appropriate documentation that supports the level of absence.
- Provide an appointment letter or card to support any hospital or clinic appointment that takes place during school hours
- All students must attend morning registration in their Period 1 lesson.
- During this interim period, note all year groups have staggered start times:
 - Year 7 8:30 – 8:35
 - Year 8 8:35- 8:40
 - Year 9 8:40 – 8:45
 - Year 10 8:25 -8:30
 - Year 11 8:20 – 8:25
- Students arriving on site after their designated time will have their name taken at the school gate. 2 lates in a week will acquire a 30 minute after-school detention. Failure to attend this detention will result in an after-school detention with the Head of Year.
- Students arriving after 8.50am need to report to Reception and inform them of a reason for their lateness.
- All teaching staff must take an electronic register at the start of each lesson.
- Students arriving late to lessons must be registered as normal using the behaviour for learning scores and the number of minutes late entered into the system.
- Afternoon registration is taken as part of the Period 3 register. This must be completed before 12:30pm.
- Any student leaving school before the end of the school day must sign out at the school reception and show written reason why they are leaving school early.

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to make the school aware of a child's absence and the reason for it. Parents/carers should contact the school before the start of the school day and state why the child is absent and where possible for how long the absence will last. We ask that absences are reported daily.

Any student arriving after the AM register has been taken will receive a late mark (L code - late before the close of register). Any student arriving on or after the AM register has closed will be marked as absent for the entire morning session (U code - late after the close of register). This is classed as an "unauthorised absence".

Monitoring

The responsibility for dealing with the attendance of students lies with the Heads of Year and Senior Deputy Headteacher (Culture & Ethos), though the data required to monitor students and the administration of letters will be provided by the Attendance Officer. All procedures are monitored and reported on by the Senior Deputy Headteacher (Culture & Ethos).

Termly procedures

We monitor the attendance of all of our students on a daily basis for safeguarding. Attendance is reviewed by the school along with VIP and where concerns are identified, we will work with the student and their parents/carers to explore the reasons for the absences and to try and resolve any difficulties. Lateness is reviewed weekly.

- Attendance Officer to highlight any Persistent Absence (PA) from previous year and any PAs in Year 7 that we have been informed about from feeder schools.
- Attendance is reviewed weekly and actions determined.
- Letters are sent out to parents/carers where students' attendance is of concern. These letters are tiered.
- Initial Attendance Clinics will take place with the Head of Year and VIP if early concerns are raised (i.e. students who were red the previous term begin the new term with poor attendance).
- During the year attendance data is produced and given to Heads of Year and the Senior Deputy Headteacher.
 - Form tutors / HoY to contact parents/carers where necessary
 - Parents/carers of PA students are contacted via letter and asked to discuss any issues. If this is not the first 'warning letter' then a referral to VIP is made and appropriate proceedings started.
 - Attendance data by sub-groups will also be produced and analysis will allow the school to see if any particular group is having disproportionately poor attendance
- The process repeats itself through the year with attendance data being provided regularly and letters being sent at the end of each term.

Term-time holidays

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 previously allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.
- Changes to the law as of **1 September 2013**, mean that headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Any leave of absence granted due to exceptional circumstances is done so entirely at the headteacher's discretion who will determine the number of days your child can be absent. The regulations do not allow for retrospective approval to be given and therefore a written application must be made in advance of the leave being taken.
- Should a leave of absence be taken without obtaining the prior permission of the headteacher, or your

child is kept away for longer than was approved, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution or a Penalty Notice may be issued.

- Parents/carers who need to request an absence for their child during term time should complete a leave of absence form and must, wherever possible, be submitted to the headteacher prior to the leave date. Each request will be considered separately and any decision to grant a leave of absence is done so entirely at the discretion of the headteacher.
- The dates of the school holidays are published a year in advance and can be obtained from the school office or via the school's website. Family holidays are not considered to be "exceptional circumstances" and will not be authorised.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

- Changes have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These changes also came into force on **1 September 2013**.
- Penalty Notices can be used where the student's absence has not been authorised by the school and fines imposed on parents/carers. If a Penalty Notice is served, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance Penalty Notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix A

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Parent

Under education law, “parent” has a wider interpretation than under The Children Act 1989 and is defined as follows:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person as defined by the Children Act 1989
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Compulsory School Age

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and ceases to be so on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Regular Attendance

The Court has determined that “regular” attendance means that which is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school” (*Isle of Wight Council -v- Platt (6th April 2017) [Supreme Court] [2017] UKSC 28 (on appeal from [2016] EWHC 1283 (Admin))*). This means attendance is required at every session the school is open to students, unless their absence has been authorised by the school.

Attendance at every session the school is open to students unless their absence has been authorised

Absence

- Not attending school for any reason
- Arriving at school after the register has closed

Authorised Absence

The school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Examples of authorised absence:

- An absence due to illness or significant injury
- Urgent medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances or unavoidable cause
- Formal exclusion from school

Unauthorised Absence

The school has not been provided with an explanation for the student’s absence or is not satisfied with the reasons given. Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Absences that have not been properly explained
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy, or an unwillingness to attend school
- Shopping, birthdays or looking after other children
- Holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Illness where medical evidence has been requested but not provided
- Arrival at school after the register has closed

A penalty notice can only be issued in the case of unauthorised absence.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student is classed as a “persistent absentee” when their attendance falls to 90% or below for any reason. Over the course of an academic year this equates to 38 missed sessions (19 school days).

Visionary Independent Pathways Education

An independent education welfare support service to support attendance, punctuality and student welfare needs.

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning	Collected in census
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session	No
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session	No
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)	Approval Education Activity	Out for whole session	No
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session	No
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning	Collected in census
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session	No
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session	No
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	In for whole session	No
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning	Collected in census
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session	Yes
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session	No
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session	No
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session	No
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session	Yes
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session	No
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session	No