

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Purpose

To ensure students have good attendance and thus ensure that effective teaching and learning can take place. To provide parents, students and staff with clear guidelines on the school's approach and commitment to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance.

In order to do this we aim to establish systems and practices which will:

- create an ethos in which good attendance is recognised as the norm
- promote good teaching since this provides the best incentive for students to attend School
- raise student awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance and encourage in students a sense of responsibility
- monitor and provide effective information on levels of attendance and punctuality
- develop mutual co-operation between home and school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing attendance issues
- demonstrate through the use of rewards and sanctions that the school recognises that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves
- recognise, reinforce and support the key role of the form tutor in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- ensure that time and organisation within the school enables the aims and objectives of this policy to be met

Principles

- The policy has been written in line with the school's core values as well as taking into account the Education Act (1996), Student Attendance Records (1991), Student Registration Regulations (1997) and the Social Inclusion policy (1999)
- Regular and good attendance is an essential pre-requisite of high quality learning
- A partnership with the school, parents, students and the Educational Support Services is essential
- Positive strategies will be used to reintegrate students who have poor attendance or have truanted. Assistance and support will be provided wherever necessary
- The school will maintain a positive regard for students and their individual circumstances whilst insisting on high standards of attendance and punctuality
- The school will work towards an overall attendance figure of 95%
- Good attendance and punctuality will be celebrated publicly and rewarded tangibly

Responsibilities

- The recent law changes make it essential for school to know the reason for every absence and we now have to distinguish between absences which are allowed by law (authorised) and those which are not (unauthorised). The law also requires us to publish true and accurate unauthorised absence figures.
- The school cannot legally authorise an absence if it does not comply with the law. It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends regularly, contacts the school daily to explain why their child is not in school and failure to do so could result in court action.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

The Principal and Governing body are responsible for the implementation and day-to-day management of the policy and procedures.

Vice Principal is responsible for overseeing:

- Monitoring of whole school attendance.
- Monitoring of year attendance. (The attendance officer will look at attendance lists on a weekly basis to identify patterns and consult with Key Stage Achievement Leaders)
- Contact of specific parents of identified poor attenders on the first day of absence if no notification has been received.
- First day absence calls
- Strategies for truants and poor attenders through consultation with Key Stage Achievement Leaders. Supporting students through the reintegration process back into full time education.
- Letters to parents of identified poor attenders (defined as below 92%) setting targets and updating parents on progress.
- Liaison with other external agencies e.g.. Educational Psychologist, school health, out of school tuition where applicable.
- Completion of the Annual Attendance Return for the DFE.
- Governor's attendance panels
- The work of the Attendance and Inclusion manager with particular reference to the issuing of Fixed Penalty fines through the EWO service

Attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring whole school attendance. They will review registers on a weekly basis and identify problem areas or queries. They will then report to the KSAL or Pastoral Manager
- Monitoring year attendance. The attendance officer will look at attendance lists every day to identify problems and consult with KSAL.
- Contacting specified parents of identified poor attenders on the first day of absence if no notification has been received.
- Working with the Attendance Manager in the generating of letters to parents of identified poor attenders.
- Completing of the Annual Attendance Return for the DFE
- Updating the weekly Attendance tracking sheet for years 7 -11
- Ensuring that registers are pre-marked
- Providing relevant pastoral data to the Assistant Head for matters such as attendance, PA statistics, lateness to school, FTE's and data for specified target groups in school.

Key Stage Achievement Leaders are responsible for:

- Creating a positive ethos within the year group which recognises good attendance and punctuality as being the norm
- Consulting with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis to ensure attendance targets are being met
- Managing the work of tutor teams and ensuring tutors fulfil their role with attendance procedures
- Publishing and promoting attendance figures. Raising the profile of good attendance and rewarding this in assemblies
- Working alongside the Assistant Head Pastoral/Attendance Officer and the Inclusion Leader to identify and support students whose attendance falls below the baseline target. Identifying students who fall below 92% attendance for whom a letter home setting a defined target for attendance may have a positive impact
- Monitoring the impact on of the support/inclusion measures that have been put in place
- Contacting parents where serious attendance concerns have arisen
- Monitoring first date absence call student lists
- Reviewing requests for 'Special Leave of Absence' giving authorisation where the request is for exceptional circumstances (for example funerals or religious observance)

The Form Tutors are responsible for:

- Marking the registers promptly and accurately to ensure up to date records for all students.
- Following all Attendance Policy procedures
- Acting promptly if there are any concerns over a student's attendance by speaking with the child and making the initial contact with home. For more serious concerns they should contact the Key Stage Achievement Leader
- Contacting the Attendance Officer if a student has been absent for three days without any contact from home
- Keeping files on students up to date and accurate with all correspondence recorded
- Praising and encouraging good attendance
- Ensuring the completion of Attendance Charts in tutees planners
- Rewarding daily IRIS praises for attendance
- Updating registers on a weekly basis where no-attendance is shown

Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- Accurately registering their teaching group at the start of every lesson and seeking information/contacting the Attendance Officer about any absence where the student has previously been marked as present in school
- Reporting any unusual patterns or concerns of attendance to the Attendance Officer/Key Stage Achievement Leader

The Role of the ESW

- To offer advice on the legal process
- To issue Penalty Notice fines when the warning period of time is complete
- To support and undertake all legal proceedings in respect of students whose attendance is persistently low and damaging to their education

The Role of Parents/Carers

- Mutual co-operation between school and parents is a key factor in encouraging good punctuality, attendance and addressing any issues that may arise. The school will stress to parents the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Legally, parents are responsible for their child's attendance at school up to the age of leaving school at the end of compulsory school years
- Ensuring that their child attends school and is punctual. To ensure that the child is not taken out of school unless absolutely necessary
- Notifying the school on the first day of absence and each following day of absence
- Providing an explanation for all absences
- Informing the school at the earliest opportunity if circumstances other than illness are preventing a student from attending
Completing the 'Special Leave of Absence' form, at least two weeks prior to the leave being asked for

Students

To raise student awareness of the necessity of good attendance and punctuality all students will be encouraged to monitor their own attendance by recording their weekly and cumulative attendance. Consistently good attendance and punctuality will be celebrated. All students will set targets for their attendance on a weekly basis. Students who improve by reaching their targets will be rewarded.

Rewards

- In promoting good attendance, all students maintaining 100% attendance will publicly receive certificates and trophies at the end of each term/year
- Key Stage Achievement Leaders will publish and present awards in assemblies for the tutor group with the highest attendance each week
- An IRIS reward will be given, by the tutor, for each full days attendance
- All students with 100% attendance will be placed in a prize draw for an item such as a Kindle, at the end of the academic year.
- All year 11 students who have 100% attendance for the academic year will receive a free ticket for the prom
All students with exceptional attendance (97% and above) will be entered into a prize draw for a £50 gift voucher at the end of the academic year

Response to Absence

Registration

The school is legally bound to register students at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session (period 4). All teachers and support staff will follow the attendance registration guidelines as set out in this policy.

Post registration truancy

To discourage post registration truancy a register will be taken in all lessons. The Pastoral Managers together with the Attendance and Welfare Manager will, at frequent intervals, check all lessons across their Year group to monitor students showing as absent to lesson after being marked present. The Pastoral Manager should maintain a record of these truancy checks. Each time a register is taken the teacher will have on view the student's attendance mark for the previous period.

The School Attendance Panel

- The School Attendance Panel may be implemented to invite parents into School to discuss concerns regarding their child's attendance. Students with below 90% attendance and ten or more sessions of un-authorised absence in the previous five weeks are targeted. The School attendance panel gives families the opportunity to work with the school in improving their child's attendance before the school feels that prosecution procedures are necessary.
- The School Attendance Panel consists of the Assistant Principal, a Governor, the Key Stage Achievement Leader and the Attendance Manager. Six week inclusive attendance targets are set for individual students and their progress reviewed after six and finally twelve weeks. If targets are met then prosecution is not necessary

Support for Students

Heanor Gate Science College recognises the need to support students during and after long term absence of any kind.

With this in mind the school will:

- Endeavour to arrange to give full support to home tuition when applicable
- Consider all strategies, to encourage the return of students to school. This may include negotiated timetables and/or use of the Inclusion Unit to promote gradual reintegration
- Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within tutor groups and lessons in which students are welcomed back into school
- Encourage parents to be actively involved in re-entry programmes. This may entail special procedures for students who do not attend regularly

Attendance registration guidelines:

- Form tutors are expected to take a morning registration by 9am
- Teachers are expected to take a class register at the beginning of every lesson
- If a student is not present in the room they must be registered absent

Punctuality

- If a student arrives late to registration or class the absent mark should be over written with L (late). The register must then be re-sent.
- If a student arrives late (after registration) they should first report to student reception to sign in. Following this, they should make their way directly to their next lesson. They will be issued with a slip to identify that they have registered with Student Reception. If they do not arrive with the slip then staff should send them to Student Reception to sign in properly
- If a student arrives more than five minutes late to a lesson then a detention will be set by the teacher. Persistent lateness to school or to lesson will be picked up by the Pastoral Manager or Key Stage Achievement Leader
- Parents/Carers are regularly be informed about persistent lateness.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The Government has made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1 September 2013. These state that Principals may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Principal who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

Examples of occasions when leave of absence may be granted:

- A close family wedding that cannot be taken during a holiday period
- Relative seriously ill
- Parent in active service
- Funeral

Parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child which may result in a fixed penalty notice. Fixed penalty fines are sent to each parent of each child that is taken out of school.

The Attendance Working Party

The attendance working party will meet annually in order to review and update the School Attendance Policy in line with local and national initiatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal, Assistant Head Pastoral, Key Stage Achievement Leaders and Attendance Officer will monitor the implementation of the policy. The Principal will give regular attendance reports to governors throughout the year and a summative report at the end of the year.