

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019 – 2022

1. Introduction

Our school policy on attendance contributes to our school ethos, which values good attendance and punctuality whilst helping to maintain our present low levels of unauthorised absence and lateness. Good attendance and punctuality are essential for learning, as well as preparing pupils for the time keeping discipline of adult life.

2. Aims

- To promote high levels of attendance and punctuality
- To identify and manage pupils when attendance and/or punctuality give cause for concern
- To provide procedures for noting absences and appropriate follow-up
- To identify any significant bias in attendance patterns of identified groups
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

3. Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act of 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice each day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Schools also have a statutory duty under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to produce attendance targets.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance matters. Form/class tutors provide the main contact with pupils and they are in a position to recognise patterns of absence and to refer cases of concern to the school attendance officer.
- Pupil Progress Co-ordinators (PPCs) will be involved in cases where the form/class tutor has referred cases of concern.
- The School Attendance Officer (SAO) will be responsible for monitoring absences and liaising with the

Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

- The AIO can visit if required to discuss pupils of concern, and liaise with the SAO to check registers and discuss steps to move forward. Further visits can be made if referrals are made that require specific attention. The Deputy Headteacher and/or Headteacher are consulted if necessary.

- The AIO will contact parents/carers of pupils who fall below our expected level of attendance and where additional intervention may be required to improve the level of attendance.

- Parents/carers must inform the school and provide a reason, on the first day of absence, if their child is unable to attend and then each day for any subsequent days of absence.

Parents/carers must notify the school by 10:00am on each day of absence. Failure to do so by this time may result in the school carrying out a welfare check.

- The school admin team will telephone parents/carers after 10am on each day of absence if they have not received a reason for absence by this time. In the event of a reason for absence not being received and the parents/carers cannot be contacted by telephone, the office staff will then send an email and text message to all listed contacts requesting that they telephone the school by 12pm to update them on the reason for absence, otherwise, the school may carry out a welfare check.

- Should parents fail to notify the school office of the absence by 12pm, the school may attempt to carry out a welfare check with help from the local authority or police if necessary.

- Attendance statistics are produced at the end of each half term for the whole school, each year group, tutor group and individual pupils. The SAO keeps weekly records to monitor whole school attendance and persistent absence.

- The school will report to parents annually in respect of their child's attendance.

Excellent attendance and punctuality is celebrated in school assemblies and the school is looking for new ways to reward pupils who consistently demonstrate outstanding attendance to school.

5. Registers

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 require schools to keep an admissions register that records personal details of every pupil at the school, plus an attendance register that records every pupil's morning and afternoon attendance.

Attendance registers are legal documents, which may be required as evidence in court cases. Where a pupil fails to attend regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the AIO and the school fail to secure a return to regular attendance, legal action will be taken by the County Council. A complaint may be laid against the parents/carers in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for.

- We have since changed our registration times for the afternoon with KS2 registering at 1.30pm and KS3 at 2.20pm in line with their switched lunch time starts.

- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational

activity. Absence marks should indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

- When calling the register, the appropriate mark/symbol (Appendix D) should be placed against each pupil's name on the electronic sheet. Gaps must not be left so that entries can be made later.
- When the reason for a pupil's absence is unknown this is marked with N. Once the reason is established the mark is changed to the appropriate code. There should be no 'N' marks left on the system.
- Absences and school closures known in advance will be entered, whenever possible, by the school admin staff prior to the relevant date.
- Manual entries will be transferred to computer records daily.
- Regular inspection of pupil, group and year records will be calculated from the computer records.

6. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is defined as absence, which has been authorised by the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. Parents/carers may not authorise absence. It is automatically granted to pupils who are absent from school for reasons of sickness, attending medical appointments, sitting external tests or examinations or whose parents/ carers have requested and been given leave of absence for any other reason. All other absence is deemed to be unauthorised.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as absence without authorisation from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. If a pupil is believed to be absent without authorisation but without the complicity of the parents/carers, the parents/carers will be consulted.

On the 15th cumulative session of unauthorised absence, parents/carers can be charged a penalty notice of £60 (per parent/carer, per child) if paid within the first 21 days, £120 (per parent/carer per child) thereafter, regardless of % attendance.

8. Holidays in Term Time

The conditions under which leave of absence for term-time holidays may be granted are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so. If leave is granted, Headteachers should determine the number of days a child can be away from school.

The Headteacher will consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer

provided advanced notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

All requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a term-time holiday should be submitted by the parent to the Headteacher via email, no less than three weeks before the commencement of the absence, except where exceptional circumstances determine that this time scale cannot be met.

Holidays taken without the approval of the Headteacher may result in the school taking additional action, particularly if the absence level of the pupil falls to a level that gives cause for concern or the pattern of absences gives cause for concern. Additional action may include: meeting with parents/carers, intervention of the Attendance Improvement Officer, imposing of a Fixed Penalty.

9. Lateness

Lateness (before the register has closed) is defined as any arrival to registration after the register has been taken.

Morning session starts: 8.50 am

Afternoon session starts: 1.30 pm for KS3 and 2:20 pm for KS2

Lateness (after the register has closed) is defined as any arrival at school after 9.15am without a suitable reason. This will incur an unauthorised absence mark.

Repeated absences at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late and the register has closed and the parent/carer provides a satisfactory explanation then the pupil will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late and the register has closed and the parent/carer does not provide a satisfactory explanation then the pupil will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site will be recorded by the school admin team and the computer record adjusted accordingly.

10. Low Attendance

The flow chart and accompanying actions on Appendix A will be followed in the event of low attendance.

11. Poor Punctuality (see Appendix B and C Flow Charts)

When 5 late marks are incurred **before** the register closes, this will result in a reflection time for the pupil which will be organised by their tutor with support from the SAO. Further instances of lateness will follow the Flow Chart (Appendix B).

Every 5 late marks incurred **after** the register closes will result in the SAO organising reflection time for the pupil. The SAO will contact parents/carers to organise a meeting at school to discuss next steps and ways to support in order to see improvement in punctuality.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and ratified by the Senior Leadership Team and the Curriculum and Achievement Committee every three years or prior to this date in conjunction with updates received from Hertfordshire County Council, Department of Education or any other professional organisation responsible for advising the education sector.

Governance

Chair Person /

Headteacher

Signature Ratification Date

Curriculum & Achievement Committee

This policy will be reviewed by the end of the Autumn Term 2021.

Appendix A – Low Attendance Flow Chart

Letter 1 – will be sent if attendance falls below expected levels



Letter 2 – will be sent if there is no improvement in attendance levels Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the School Attendance Officer.



Letter 3 – a Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent if there are any further sessions of unauthorised absence following a 'Letter 2' being sent.

If fifteen sessions of unauthorised absence are reached or exceeded, the School will pursue action in the form of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice in line with guidance from the Local Authority.

Appendix B – Punctuality Flow Chart (Before Register closes)

Pupil accrues 3 late marks before register closes

Tutor informs pupil of their repeated lateness and warns them of reflection time being issued at next step.



Pupil accrues 5 late marks before register closes

Tutor organises for reflection time to be issued. Discuss reasons for lateness and ways to improve moving forward.



Pupil accrues further 2 late marks before register closes

Tutor organises for reflection time to be issued with support from the School Attendance Officer. Parents/carers contacted by School Attendance Officer to update and discuss ways to support an improvement.



The above step will be repeated should the need arise. Every further 2 late marks accrued by pupil results in reflection time being given by SAO and parents/carers being contacted.

Appendix C – Punctuality Flow Chart (After Register closes)

Pupil accrues 3 late marks after register closes

Parents/carers are contacted by SAO to raise concern.



Pupil accrues 5 late marks after register closes

Parents/carers are contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss next steps and how best to support an improvement moving forward. Pupil is issued a suitable reflection time with SAO.



Pupil accrues further 2 late marks after register closes

Further lateness after the register has closed will continue to be recorded as unauthorised absence. Parents/carers will be contacted again by the SAO who will refer the case to the AIO at the Local Authority.



Every additional late mark **after** the register has closed will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

Once **15 sessions** of unauthorised absence has been accrued, the School will pursue action in the form of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice in line with guidance from the Local Authority.

Appendix D – Registration Codes

/ Present AM

\ Present PM

L Late (before register closes)

U Late (after register closes)

N Absent (no reason yet provided)

M Medical (Doctor / Dentist)

H Annual family holiday (agreed)

G Annual family holiday (not agreed)

C Other authorised absence

I Illness

V Educational visit

P Sporting activity (Approved)

E Excluded from school

O Unauthorised absence

B Educated off site

R Religious observance

D Dual registration

Y Enforced school closure

T Traveller absence