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Student Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

Our School aims to:

- Maintain the student's academic progress and enable them to return to mainstream.
- Education/ Encourage good attendance by ensuring that the student is offered a relevant and appropriate curriculum.
- Make all students feel valued and to help them develop self-esteem/ challenge non-attendance by the first day response system and following a staged approach to poor attendance.
- Achieve target attendance for all individual students of 100%.

Our School is a place of learning and is expected to meet the short-term needs of students experiencing serious social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The students will be from one of these categories: -

- on placement with the aim of reintegration into their home school
- on long fixed term exclusion with the aim of returning to the home school,
- on long fixed term exclusion and are seeking a place in a new school,
- permanently excluded
- in receipt of tuition for medical needs
- on placement with alternative providers
- awaiting assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan

Many students who are referred to these provisions have experienced poor levels of attendance in their mainstream school. This could be because of regular absence or because of frequent exclusions or maybe a combination of the two. Students can have a poor attitude to school and this can affect their level of attendance. Students often have a more difficult journey to the school or alternative provision than their previous journey to their home school and this can have an effect on their level of attendance.

Attendance matters to everyone. Non-attendance affects not only the individual child and their family but it has a significant effect on educational progress, and the wider community. Regular attendance matters to employers because it influences young people's expectations of work.

Irregular attendance leads to poorer personal, social and life skills and has been shown to be linked to a lower likelihood of obtaining a job and of remaining in long-term employment.

Non-attendance exposes children to risks and dangers, sometimes with costly or even tragic results for themselves or others.

All students accessing provision through the school will be dual registered on referral from the school at which they are mainly registered.

This will include students in offsite as well as students accessing provision through the quality assured alternative education providers by the school team.

This will entail subsidiary registration on the role of either with the main school recording as D on Pupil Asset for the days that the students are attending offsite provision.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Principles

- In line with the School Vision, Mission and Values, students will be arranged into teaching groups to ensure that all are provided with differentiated and quality learning experiences and materials to ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Students with learning difficulties and those who need special support received this support in a sensitive way within the learning environment in which they are placed.
- Students will be expected to attend for the nationally recommended time of 25 hours a week. In exceptional circumstances an individual timetable of attendance may be negotiated through a Supportive part-time timetable. This will be on a time limited basis only and under regular review. The Local Authority will be informed of any part-time timetables arranged.
- Staff / Providers will contact parents on each day that a student is absent, unless we have had prior notification that the student will be absent on a particular day. In order for this to be effective we need to ensure we have up to date information, including daytime contact numbers, email addresses and mobile numbers.
- Schools will be informed regularly of their student's attendance. Schools are able to telephone and obtain the morning attendance if required from 10.30am daily.
- Some students are solely registered on the role of the school. In these cases where attendance is a concern our Education Welfare Service would advise and support with the case and progress to prosecution where appropriate.

- The School emphasises the importance of partnership between the School and parents/guardians/carers, who will be invited to enter into agreement with the School to support the concept of partnership.
- Where students are accruing an unacceptable number of unauthorised absences, a warning letter will be sent advising parents / carers that unless there is an immediate improvement they are likely to incur a Penalty Notice which will be issued by the Local Authority in accordance with legislation.
- Acceptable reasons for absence and appropriate recording of both attendance and non-attendance are included in the 2014 DfE guidance Advice on School attendance.
- The School has a links with EWO who will work with cohorts of young people who receive their provision within the school.
- All staff will follow the school's Attendance Action Plan which outlines a timely response to non-attendance and directs supportive measures to help attendance improve. (Appendix 1)

4. Procedures to support positive attendance

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register and all students must be placed on this register. The register will close at 10am each morning.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made.

Attendance is one of the topics covered at the planning /referral meeting, keyworker meetings, and the review meetings.

At the planning / referral meeting the parents will be given a Parent/Carer Policy booklet explaining the first day response system and our consequences policy through the adoption of Parenting Contracts and Penalty Notices.

Students will be reimbursed their bus fares for travel to the school and home on production of the relevant tickets. In exceptional cases of financial hardship the manager will investigate the possibility of reimbursing the parent/carer. Students on Alternative Provision will be allocated a bus pass if appropriate.

Daily manual registers are completed by administration staff at the start and end of each day, who enters the attendance information into the MIS. Alternative Providers send attendance twice a day to the our administrator and in addition a weekly composite register is provided to the school.

Thirty minutes after the designated start of the day the homes of students who have not arrived will be contacted by phone unless there has been prior contact.

Where students are dually registered, schools are notified of the student's attendance weekly via e-mail and are able to telephone and obtain the morning attendance if required from 10.30am daily.

If we have a concern regarding a student's attendance, the parent or guardian may be requested to attend a meeting with the unit/provider. The purpose for the meeting will be to identify any difficulties and explore how to improve the level of attendance. A parenting contract may be offered to support attendance. (See Appendix 1 for Attendance Action Plan).

Official registers will be retained for a minimum of three years from the end of the academic year for which they are relevant.

4.a Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible. Information will be given to parents about how to notify the provision of an unplanned absence during their initial planning meeting.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.b Medical or Dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an unauthorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.c Lateness and Punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closes will be marked as late using the appropriate code (L) A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent using the appropriate code (U). Each base has its own system of rewards and sanctions to respond to lateness and punctuality. This information will form part of the induction process.

4.d Following up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding. Action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. (See Attendance Action Plan – Appendix 1)

4.e Reporting attendance to schools

This will be done by school admin staff who will collate attendance from all allocated provision on a twice-daily basis and inform school attendance leads for their information and school attendance recording.

Individual student registration certificates will be printed off MIS and provided to school upon request.

Safeguarding responsibility although joint, primarily will lie with TIME on the days that the students are due to attend Alternative Provision.

4.f Reporting to Parents

Parents will receive a termly written report including their child's attendance record. Attendance will also form part of the reporting to parents at any meetings they attend regarding their child including termly review meetings.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for long term absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teachers discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and Medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

6. Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Where student attendance on entry or during the stay in our provision falls below the nationally identified P.A. level of 90% Parenting Contracts leading to possible Penalty Notices will be considered and implemented for individual students unless there are clear reasons why this would not be advisable. This is a supportive strategy where parents will also be offered access to Triple P Parenting sessions where available. Parenting Contracts can also be used in evidence in legal sanctions relating to non-school attendance to progress Penalty Notices or prosecution where appropriate.

If issued with a Penalty Notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the head teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for Promoting and Monitoring Attendance

TIME follows an attendance strategy to ensure all absence is followed up in a consistent and robust manner in the interests of promoting good attendance and safeguarding all students.

Each base has its own system of rewards and sanctions to respond to lateness and punctuality.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health by 9.30am and provide updates as necessary for longer periods of absence. If parents do not make contact school will make contact via telephone, text or with a home visit.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reason for this.

If after contacting parents a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be considered as a persistent absentee. Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistic releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

TIME collects and stores attendance data in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.a The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.b The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the School and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices where necessary.

8.c The DSL

The DSL of each unit:

- Monitors attendance data at the teaching base and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.d Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

8.e Administrative Staff

Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it onto the school CPOMS system, in addition to electronically recording the attendance information provided by the class teacher onto MIS. When 3 days of unauthorised absence are noted the teacher in charge or key worker will be alerted via CPOMS so a home visit can be made.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher. At every review the policy will be shared with the Governing Board.

10. Links with other policies

- Safeguarding policy
- Data protection
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1

TIME Attendance Action Plan September 2022

Day 1

- FDR (First Day Response) telephone call - if no answer send a text/email.
- Log contact including reason for absence on CPOMS and code register accordingly. (NB 'X' for covid related absence)

Day 2

- As day 1 (unless safeguarding concerns*)

Day 3

- If still no response to FDR, seek authorisation from Teacher in Charge for a home visit. Leave **calling card** if no answer.
- Send **letter 1** within 24 hours (planned home visit, including time and date of the visit) – email preferable
- Log all activity on CPOMS, attaching copy of letter 1.
- DAY 3 ABSENCE SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED BY ADMIN INPUTTING MIS AND TEACHER IN CHARGE ALERTED

1st planned home visit (NB ensure Home Visit risk assessment procedures followed)

- Make every attempt to see the student, offer support to help attendance improve
- If you have any concerns arrange a time and place to meet, preferably in a teaching base
- Send **letter 2** within 24 hours, including time, date, place of meeting and invite any interested professionals (school, social worker etc)

Meeting (as per letter 2)

- Complete **Attendance Support Plan/Medical Needs Support Plan/NIROFTE papers** – invite EWS to support if available
- Offer any relevant support
- Consider if EHAT should be initiated (seek advice from Jillian Fairclough or Teacher in Charge if uncertain)

If meeting 1 not attended

- Send **letter 3** within 24 hours giving time, date and place for **meeting 2** (to be arranged within 5 working days)
- Teacher in Charge to seek advice from EWO – is a referral to EWS appropriate at this point or follow EWS advice.

If meeting 2 not attended

- Complete **CPOMS** and alert Leanne Halsall.
- Jillian Fairclough and DSL will advise on next steps, seeking advice from EWO if necessary

IMPORTANT NOTES

Until the child is seen continue with unannounced visits, leaving calling cards.

*Start to make unplanned visits immediately if you have any safeguarding concerns.

Telephone calls, texts, emails, letters sent and visits should be recorded on CPOMS.

See if you can undertake joint visits with another partner agency that maybe working with the family.

If child has not been seen for 2 weeks leave a calling card informing parent/carer that a safeguarding referral will be made to social care and the police will be contacted. Advise managing director and the designated safeguarding lead if this is the case.

You will have a chronology and a graduated response to evidence how you have tried to address non-attendance.

All documents noted in bold are available on g-drive.