

# Attendance Policy

Updated: April 2018  
To be reviewed: September 2019 (or as needed)

## Introduction:

Our mission statement sets out the school's aims to ensure that relationships within the school are positive and that a happy, caring and secure school environment is provided to raise the students' self-esteem and sense of achievement.

The students that we will be caring for will have had disruptions in their learning patterns. Our school believes that, in order to support its objective so that students fulfil their full potential both as learners and as valuable members of society, good attendance and excellent punctuality are prerequisites. This policy is designed to provide a framework to give students, their parents/carers and staff clear guidance of what is expected in terms of attendance and punctuality. The school values each student and is committed to providing all with a high standard of education, pastoral support and opportunities for learning in order that they can better enjoy the experiences, opportunities and rewards of adult life.

## Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote good attendance and excellent punctuality in students. Students, parents/carers and school staff should be mindful at all times that poor attendance and/or punctuality represent a great challenge to students' learning and also can impact adversely on the learning and behaviours of others. The school's objective is the removal of barriers to learning and to this end the clear and consistent implementation of school rules, policies and procedures by all staff is viewed as the best way to deliver this broad aim.

This policy supports the ethos, mission statement and vision of the school. It should be read in conjunction with other whole school policies, particularly those relating to for example positive behaviour management.

## Why regular attendance matters

Regular attendance at school – *which means attending on every day that a student is required to attend unless the school authorises absence (see below)* – is a key factor in enabling students to maximise their learning and improve their behaviour.

Lessons are planned to ensure progression & attainment in learning term on term and year on year. Progression means that the students learn by building on previous learning.

If a student has not accessed school through absence either for a period of time or by failing to attend for a day each week their learning pattern will be disrupted. This has consequences for the individual student's learning and also for the learning of others in the class.

In addition, absence has been shown to have an adverse effect on behaviour – not only in terms of a lengthy absence, requiring a student to re-familiarise herself with the expectations, rules, policies and procedures of the school, but the impact of absence on learning and the resulting frustration on the student's part can cause behaviour to deteriorate.

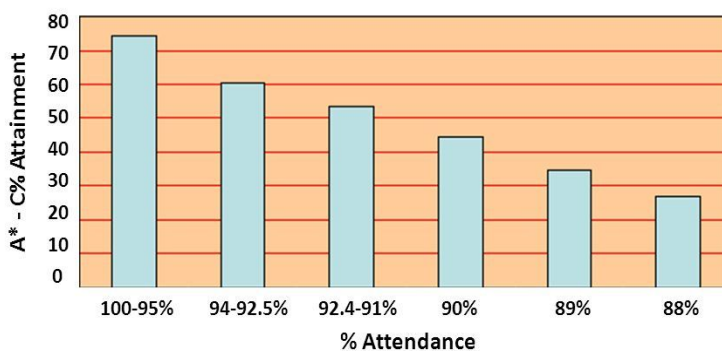
For these reasons, the school has high expectations of students that they will attend school in all cases. In addition, regular attendance is a matter of interest to employers in the future should the school be asked for a reference. It is also good practice for students to prove that they are reliable and they can take pride in this achievement.

## Why punctuality matters

Arriving part way through a school session is disruptive both to the late student and also to the class in general, including members of staff. The student's learning is compromised as they will have missed out on some of the lesson. The learning and concentration of others in the class may also be affected. Good standards of behaviour are also threatened by a student's

## Attendance & Attainment

### Chances of success at GCSE



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lateness – for example other students may resent the disruption of their learning, the student who is late may find it difficult to settle if they feel they have missed out on some of the lesson. Persistent lateness will have a serious adverse effect on a student's learning.

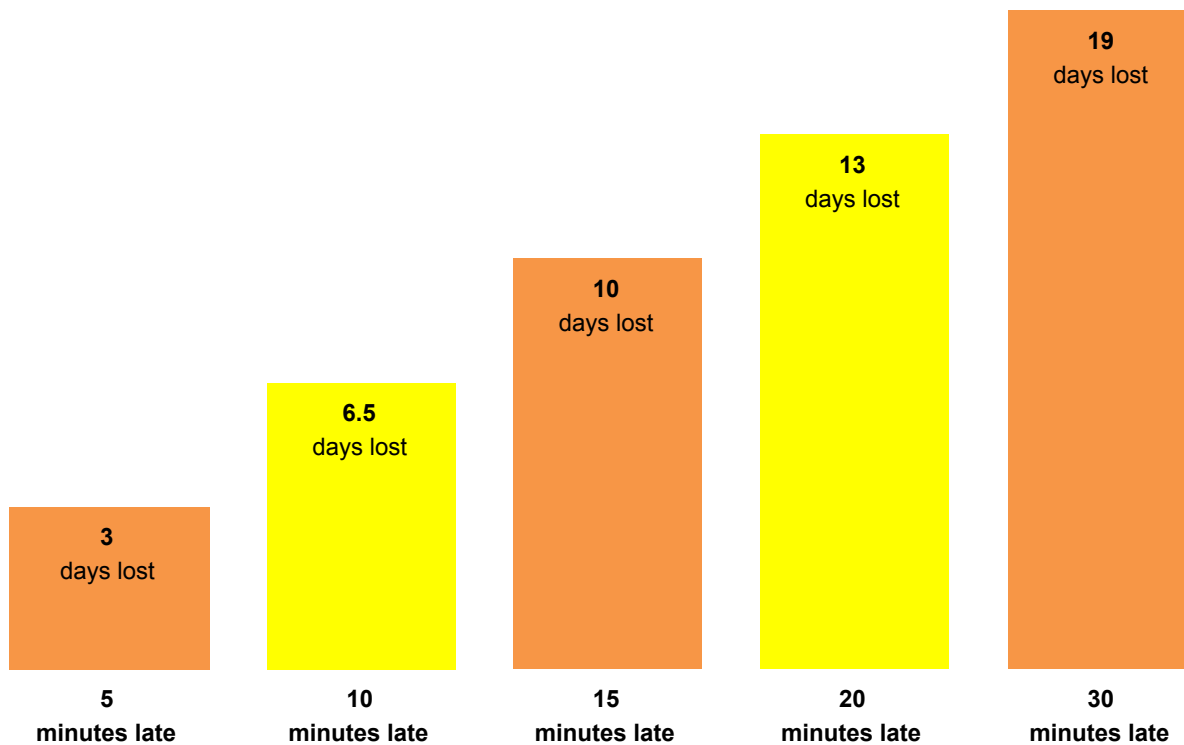
Again, the school has high expectations of its students. Good punctuality is valued highly by future employers. Demonstrating the maturity to get to school on time each day is another way students can prove that they are reliable.

**Good time keeping means....**

**.... Making sure your child is at school (on time!) and ready to learn!**

**Did you know? – being 15 minutes late each day (over a full academic year) is the same as missing two weeks of school!**

**Lost minutes = Lost learning**



**Every school day counts – but every minute is equally important!**

## Full time timetable at PHOENIXPLACE

PHOENIXPLACE is committed to working towards inclusion of all students accessing a full or part time timetable. The school does, however, recognise that, on occasions, an individual student's needs are not best met in this way.

Full time timetabling at the school involves students being on site during term time between the following hours:

Monday - Friday **8.45 am - 2.30 pm (except Tuesday, finish at 2.00pm)**

Breakfast club is available from **8.45 am - 9.05 am**

*Any changes to this timetable will be notified in writing to parents/carers.*

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## Shortened/reduced timetables

From time to time, the school will enter into agreements with students, parents/carers of students whose needs are not best met by a full time timetable, for example, those who are at risk of permanent exclusion owing to their behaviour. These arrangements are designed to be short term in nature and subject to regular reviews.

## College and work placements

Key stage 4 students are given the opportunity to access college courses (where appropriate) and on-going work experience as complements to their education within school.

College and work placements are designed to empower students and to further equip them with skills that are transferable into the future world of work.

College and work placements are coordinated by staff with responsibility for ensuring attendance and punctuality at colleges or in the workplace. Non-attendance or poor punctuality at college or work placement is dealt with as non-attendance at school. If there is a reason for a student's non-attendance, parents/carers should contact the school before **8.30 am** or as soon as practicable on the first day of any non-attendance and then on each subsequent day the student cannot attend. Poor attendance and punctuality may result in this privilege being withdrawn.

## Registration procedures

Registers will be taken at the beginning of each session. Students not on site when the register is taken will be marked as absent and will be marked as late if they arrive later. Students who arrive after registers have closed must report to the school office.

## Monitoring

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored weekly by SLT. Data will be collated weekly and reviewed by a member of the Senior or Middle Leadership Team. Regular information regarding attendance levels is provided to the school's panel.

## Target setting

The school wants its students to take responsibility for their own feelings, thoughts, actions and behaviours. As part of this broad aim, the school considers that students should accept responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality and tutors will meet with each student termly to set targets for attendance and punctuality.

Parents/carers will be informed of these targets and also of student progress in meeting their targets.

The school sets itself targets in terms of attendance and punctuality and targets set with student input are designed to support these.

## Home-School Agreement

The home-school agreement which the school, students and their parents/carers enter into at the beginning of a student's school career and which is renewed at the beginning of each subsequent academic year includes an agreement by students to come to school on each day that they are required to, to arrive punctually and in the correct uniform.

Parents/carers agree to ensure that students keep to this agreement.

## Preventative Strategies

The school employs a number of strategies to try to prevent poor attendance and lateness. These include (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- well planned, differentiated, stimulating lessons in a broad and balanced curriculum to encourage learning and a willingness to learn
- strong student/tutor relationships so that students can raise any issues which may adversely affect attendance and/or punctuality before the problem arises
- access to a team of staff dedicated to breaking down barriers to learning both inside and outside school – of which poor attendance and lateness are recognised as major barriers
- close partnership working with parents/carers and students to ensure that all parties are aware of the school's expectations and their rights and responsibilities
- a school ethos that values each student

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- rewards for and incentives towards excellent attendance and punctuality
- monitoring attendance and lateness to pick up any emerging patterns
- breakfast club
- Education Welfare Service

The school considers that in delivering its aims and objectives, it can only succeed in partnership with students and their parents/carers. The school recognises the central role parents/carers play in encouraging students to attend school regularly and on time. Support of parents/carers is essential if the school is to succeed in raising levels of attendance and punctuality. To equip parents/carers to provide this support the school will contact parents/carers regularly to keep them informed about student progress generally and issues regarding attendance and punctuality in particular. How the school will do this is set out later in the policy.

Should parents/carers wish to discuss the school's policy on attendance and punctuality or any other aspect of the school policy they are welcome to contact the school and home visits can be arranged if required.

## Partnership with referring authorities

We aim to work in partnership with referring authorities with regards to student punctuality and attendance. As well as our own record keeping systems we will upload data and information for each individual student to referring authority attendance systems where applicable.

## Reporting absence

Parents/carers are required to contact the school by telephone before **8.30am** on every day of absence.

If no telephone call is received, once registration is closed, parents/carers of students who are absent will be contacted by telephone by the Office Manager by 9.45am. It is imperative for this system to be effective that parents/carers ensure that the school has an up to date contact number. If no reason has been given, this will be entered as an unauthorised absence.

### **Authorised absence is**

*Absence from school that has been authorised by the school. It is the school only and not parents/carers that can authorise absence. The absence will be authorised in the case of e.g. bonafide illness, attendance at medical or dental appointments and in other circumstances. Should the school need to exclude a student for a fixed term, the absence is, of course, authorised. If parents/carers are aware of a forthcoming appointment they should inform the school in writing as soon as possible in order that the school can authorise the absence. In other cases, parents/carers must telephone the school on the first day and subsequent days of the absence. If parents/carers do not have access to a telephone a signed note must accompany the student on their return to school.*

### **Unauthorised absence is**

*Any absence from school that the school has not authorised. This will include when a student is truanting from school and when a student has attended school, but subsequently has absconded – i.e. has left the school site without permission. This also includes where a parent/carer has not provided the school with a reason, whether written or communicated via telephone of a planned or unplanned absence.*

## Following up unauthorised absences

If no satisfactory reason for an absence is given – either through a telephone call from a student's parent/carer or as a result of first day calling, the school follows up absences with staged letters and/or home visit.

## New first day calling procedure - in accordance to new government legislation

- Parents/carers must provide the school with **at least three phone numbers** for different adults for emergency contact so we can ascertain child's safety
- First day calling will start from 9.30am
- If by 10.15am, there is no answer and child's whereabouts unknown, school will conduct a home visit
- If the school still cannot get an answer we will refer immediately to children's services / MASH / Police and request a welfare call.
- If we can see child inside a house avoiding our knock, we will not refer - unless we think the children are at risk of significant harm, however attendance target meeting will be organised

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## Poor attendance procedure

A standard letter is sent to parents/carers of students who have several unauthorised absences recorded in a given week or whose attendance falls below 90%. The purpose of the letter is to ask for information, which may result in the absence being recorded as authorised by the school (as would be the case where there is a bona fide illness) whilst reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibilities.

Failure to respond to this letter and/or persistent unauthorised absence by a student will result in further letters being sent and ultimately, should no satisfactory explanation be received, a referral to Education Welfare may have to be made.

It should be stressed that the school recognises and values the contributions parents/carers make in helping the school towards its aim of encouraging students to achieve their potential. The school believes that its partnership with students and their parents/carers lies at the heart of any success in breaking down barriers to learning, empowering students through learning, enabling them to fulfil their potential and going beyond previous expectations. In putting in place procedures to follow up absences the school is responding to its legal obligations and by promoting higher levels of attendance in seeking to maximise students' learning.

## Breakfast

The school runs a breakfast club for students between **9.15am and 9.35am** each school day. Students are encouraged to attend the club daily as to do so would ensure excellent punctuality/attendance and gives students and staff an opportunity to meet in a less formal way and offers a nutritious start to the school day.

## Punctuality week

In each term one week will be designated "Punctuality Week". The intention of these weeks is to provide a specific focus on punctuality. This is not to say that punctuality is not important all the year round, but rather by having a focus this enables students whose punctuality may not have been good in the past to have a "fresh start" whilst celebrating and rewarding the achievement of students with excellent punctuality.

Certificates and other rewards (in line with the school's positive behaviour management policy) will be awarded for excellent and improved punctuality.

## Holidays during term time

The school discourages parents/carers from taking holidays during the school terms. However, the school recognises that a blanket ban may not be appropriate in all cases and that some flexibility is needed to meet students' needs, those of their parents/carers and the students' right to an education. Parents/carers are asked to request permission in writing from the Head of the school no later than 2 weeks before the date on which any holiday or other proposed absence is hoped to start in order that the Head of school can consider the request, and if consent is given, a pack of work can be supplied so that any holiday has minimum disruption to the student's education.

## Legal Requirements

There are a number of legal requirements about students' attendance at school. In summary these include requirements that:

- the LEA **must** offer educational provision for all school age children
- the school **must** keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and the school **must** also report students to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than two weeks
- the EWS helps parents/carers, schools and the LEA meet their statutory obligations on school attendance
- parents/carers **must** ensure that their children are educated which means that they must ensure that the student in their care attends school regularly.

## Information for students and parents/carers

Students are given information about the school's expectations as to attendance and punctuality in a number of ways:

- as part of the induction process
- during conferencing by staff, including tutors, during re-integration conferencing etc
- through target setting with members of the tutor team

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Clear communication so that students know what the school's requirements and high expectations of them in terms of attendance and punctuality are imperative if the school is to achieve its objectives of increasing levels of attendance and eliminating avoidable lateness.

Information about students' levels of attendance and punctuality, together with information about targets and progress towards attaining targets is provided each term to parents/carers. The annual reports, which are provided to parents/carers at the end of the summer term, include information about attendance levels.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the tutor team if they have any concerns about attendance and punctuality issues. In addition, support is available from the EWS. The EWS can provide advice and support to parents/carers who are finding it difficult ensuring a student's attendance at school or good punctuality.

## **Equal opportunities**

In implementing this policy, as when implementing all school rules, policies and procedures, staff will ensure equality of opportunity for all by having regard to race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation and special educational needs. The school's commitment to equal opportunities will be set out further in the Equal Opportunities Policy.