

# Attendance Policy



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Responsible Person: Michelle Needham

## Rationale:

More Than Ed's School Attendance Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with attendance.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the DFE Guidance on Attendance (November 2013) and the School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (January 2015)

The policy aims to make explicit the School's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that attendance concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the student's wellbeing.

## Overview:

- To explain that 10% absence means the equivalent of one day or more per fortnight across a full school year. The expected attendance is at least 92.9% (national average). Where attendance is as low as 90%, the school is to put additional targeted support in place, working with the local authority. (Para 131)
- Admission and attendance registers will be kept electronically (Para 281), and all entries in these registers will be preserved for 6 years. (Para 36)
- A data analysis will be undertaken and kept weekly, focusing on individual students or cohorts with attendance problems, in order to target improvement for those pupils who need it the most. (Para 45)
- The LA have the right to examine and take extracts of attendance registers from the school (Para 50), although they will not want as much information from independent schools as from maintained schools. (Para 51)
- The school will ensure that those missing school because of mental or physical ill health, or those with SEND, will be given extra support, by considering the individual needs of pupils. The school must alert the LA about any pupil who misses 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness, as they may need additional support from the LA. (Para 57)
- When the policy is due for review and update, the views of parents and pupils should be sought. (Para 30)
- In developing and implementing this policy, the school must consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Para 27)

As a school, we are aware of the link between attendance and good outcomes, and as our cohort have often found school attendance difficult, we implement a variety of strategies to ensure good attendance:

- Tutors collect and drop-off all students to and from home each day to encourage a smooth transition between home and school. We do not use taxis or minibuses to transport young students. Pick up is at 9.15am and registration closes at 9.45am.
- If a child is unable to attend, the parents will contact either the Headteacher, Karen Holmes on 07852699040, or the tutor who is due to collect the student that morning. The absence is then recorded on the Student Absence chat and recorded by Michelle Needham on the Attendance Register.

- As soon as a student is collected, a message is sent to the Senior Attendance Champion, Michelle Needham – 07764270679, who inputs the relevant attendance code.
- We ensure that parents/carers have daily contact with tutors on pickup and drop off. This allows them to discuss any concerns they have around attendance.
- Strategies will range from waiting in the car while the student feels calmer, if they are dysregulated, to teaching sessions at the home until the student feels confident enough to attend the school.
- Any attendance strategy is bespoke to the young person and their needs, and will include working with parents/carers, social workers, Local Authority, and any other agency involved around the child.
- Students leave school at 2.15pm and are transported home. The tutor will always ensure that the student is safely indoors or with an approved adult before leaving. Drop off will be then recorded on the Pick-up and Drop Off Chat on WhatsApp.
- If parents wish to make a request for a planned holiday, they will complete a holiday form. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made on a Leave of Absence Form to then be considered by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then decide whether, or not, this absence can be authorised.

## 1. **Aims:**

- To work with each learner as an individual and improve their attendance by removing barriers to learning.
  - On induction discussing individual plans which will improve attendance
  - All students transported to and from home by their key worker
  - Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and put interventions in place if patterns are beginning to emerge.
- To make the improvement of individual attendance a priority for all learners, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders.
  - By making sure that parents/carers are aware of the link between good attendance and good achievement.
  - By discussing attendance at relevant meetings including SLT and whole staff meetings.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
  - Data from the Attendance Register and contact from parents/carers will be examined weekly to ensure that learners at risk of becoming persistent non-attenders are quickly identified.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
  - Promote a positive working relationship right from induction.
  - Involve parents/carers in decisions.
  - Identify potential issues as early as possible, work in partnership with parents/carers to solve them.
  - All staff to understand that many parents/carers are doing their best, often under difficult circumstances however, good attendance is non-negotiable.
  - Parents to receive termly reports which include a printout of attendance.

- To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or an ingrained habit of low attendance at school.
  - Be sensitive and show understanding of the circumstances of individual learners.
  - Work in partnership with parents/carers involving them in decisions.
  - Set up regular meetings either at the school, home or via telephone to evaluate the pupil reintegration plan
  - Celebrate improvements and build confidence and self-esteem of the learner.

## 2. Registration

The school is statutorily required to take an attendance register twice daily. This will be managed electronically. This system will display present/absent using the national attendance codes, and reasons for absence in more detail. This will be input by the Senior Attendance Champion.

The attendance register should only be altered:

- Where a learner's name has been legally changed
- Where an unexplained absence has been explained
- If an error has been discovered.
- Any alterations will be recorded on CPOMS with reasons for the change.

## 3. Absences

### 3.1 First Day Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents/carers must let the school know ASAP. This information will be placed on the register when it has been received. If the learner is on a CP or CIN plan or we have concerns about the welfare of the child, then the visit will take place on day 1 of the absence. Every case of absence is examined and safeguarding is paramount.

If a learner is absent and we have been unable to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence, then the school may perform a home visit or contact relevant Social Worker etc for information.

### 3.2 Authorised Absence

Every absence (am/pm) will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. This will be confirmed using the National Attendance Codes.

The following are **classified as authorised absence**:

I – Illness.

M – Attending medical/dental appointment.

C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

R – Religious observance.

E – Suspended or permanently excluded.

T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes.

S – Study leave.

C1 – Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

J1 – Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

C2 – Pupil is absent from school for part of the week (on a part-time timetable) – then also use the code for the reason why absent.

The following are **NOT classified as absences**:

B – An offsite educational activity.

K – Alternative provision arranged by the LA.

L – Late arrival before the register is closed (during the 30 mins 'grace' period).

P – Approved sporting activity.

V – Attending an educational visit or trip.

W – Work experience.

### **3.3 Unauthorised Absence**

'Unauthorised Absence' is a period of absence which the school does not consider reasonable and no leave of absence has been issued. This may include events such as:

The following are **classified as unauthorised absence**:

G – Holiday not granted by the school.

N – Reason for absence not yet established.

O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

U – Arrived in school after the register closed (after 30 mins 'grace' period).

A parent can offer an explanation for their child's absence, but the law clearly states that it is the Head teacher's decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent for an absence is justified. For pupils on non-attendance procedure stage 2 onwards absence will only be authorised when evidence can be provided.

### **3.3 Not Possible Attendance**

The following are **classified as 'not a possible attendance'**:

D – Dual registration, so attending another school where registered.

X – Pupils of non-compulsory school age absent when they are not timetabled to attend (e.g. EYFS).

Q – Lack of access arrangements by LA.

Y1 – Transport normally provided not being available.

Y2 – Widespread disruption to travel.

Y3 – Part of school premises being closed.

Y4 – Whole school site being unexpectedly closed.

Y5 – Pupil is in criminal justice detention.

Y6 – Public health guidance or law not to attend.

Y7 – Any other unavoidable cause [this includes absence due to non-payment of fees (reason stated in accompanying field)].

The following codes are **not collected for statistical purposes**:

Z – Prospective pupil not on admission register.

# - Planned whole school closure (holidays).

### **3.4 Holiday Absence**

Holidays in term time are classified as unauthorised and marked on the register as **G**. This should not change unless it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and only under exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised. Parents must complete a Holiday/Planned Absence Form prior to their child being absent, and the Headteacher must either approve or refuse to authorise the absence.

### **3.5 Long-term Absence**

If there is a long-term absence for medical reasons where external tuition has been put in place, for example hospital schooling a **B** should be marked on the register. If a child has been in hospital and discharged under medical supervision, work packs should be provided for the learner for up to two weeks. If the learner has not returned to school a member of the Senior Leadership Team should complete a home visit and discuss the appropriate intervention which needs to take place.

## **5. Children Missing from Education**

A learner going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where learners go missing on repeated occasions.

More Than Ed School follows DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and work closely with the Local Authority.

Where a learner has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and responsible steps\* have been taken by More Than Ed School to establish the whereabouts without success, the DSL will contact Doncaster's Children Missing Education Team on 01302 735311 and email [childrenmissingeducation@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@doncaster.gov.uk)

Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visit where safe to do so
- Enquires through friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the family
- Request a Police Welfare Check (after 5 days)
- All contacts and outcomes should be recorded on CPOMS

The Attendance Team will then work with the school and make reasonable efforts to try and identify the child's current whereabouts or destination. If the child is not found, the Attendance Team will complete a Child Missing From Education form (CME). The child's name will be entered onto the Children Missing from Education Register, which is held centrally in accordance with the LA Children Missing from Education Procedural Guidance.

After four school weeks (20 school days) should such efforts prove to be unsuccessful and confirmation has been received from the Attendance Team that they are aware of the Child, they can be removed from roll.