



Attendance Policy

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| Date approved: | 22 March 2017 |
| Review cycle/date: | Annually, March 2018 |
| Party responsible: | Student Committee |
| Linked Policies: | Behaviour & Exclusions Policy, Preventing and Tackling Bullying Policy, Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy |

Principles

It is our aim to secure high attendance to meet our overall goals. The attendance policy will reflect the school's ethos and values in the sense that students will feel an affection for their school and will look forward to attending each day.

Clear, high expectations about regular attendance as well as rewards and incentives form the basis of the school's attendance policy. Good attendance will reward students with a good grasp of learning, strong friendships and less work to catch up on. Students with 100% attendance are celebrated and given certificates and other rewards. Student-specific rewards are given on an individual basis for students with improving attendance.

Attendance at school ensures that students keep up to date with their studies and have full access to activities and opportunities that will enhance their education.

Students are encouraged to arrive punctually at school and all related activities so that they do not do miss any learning or disrupt the learning of others. The school adheres to national legislation on keeping an accurate attendance register.

As a school we aim for each student to have at least 97% attendance in order to prevent a 'learning gap' caused by persistent absence.

If a student's attendance falls below 90%, they are categorized as a "persistent absentee" and any absence is marked as unauthorized unless the absence is supported by medical evidence e.g. prescription, letter from doctor...

Duties of the parents

Parents or carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered.

What the school expects of parents and carers:

- Requests for their child to have a planned absence from school should be in exceptional circumstances only.

- To provide a reason for any period of absence on the first day of absence. For students with below 90% attendance, provide medical support for absence e.g. letter from doctor, prescription...
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and support agencies to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- To only take family holidays during school holiday periods.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as periods of national exams and testing.

Illness and medical/dental appointments

The Department of Education say that schools should encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours and that where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. To the extent that this is possible, appointments should be made either during the school holidays or at the start or end of the day so that they can attend as much school as possible.

The school require medical evidence to support illness for students whose attendance is below 90%.

Ensuring high attendance

The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Heads of House and the Headteacher are specifically responsible for attendance, supported by the support team led by the office manager.

In general, requests for holidays during term time will not be approved due to the potential impact on students' achievement. The Headteacher may, in exceptional circumstances, approve requests for holidays. If approval is given it will be on the basis that the student will undertake an extended learning project or other school work during the time away from school.

To ensure high attendance is maintained the school will:

- Contact the parent/carer of any child who is absent on the morning of the absence (if the parent/carer has not already contacted the school on that day).
- Audit attendance every half term and send letters of concern to parents and carers. These have two stages.
 - Stage 1 where attendance drops below 95% a letter of concern is sent to parents/carer.
 - Stage 2 where attendance drops below 90% a letter is sent inviting parents to an attendance meeting with the Headteacher. The letter is followed by a call ensuring that it has been received and confirming the parents/carers' ability to attend the meeting.
- Formal attendance meetings are arranged with parents if attendance drops below 90%. In the first instance, this is with the Headteacher (or his/her delegate).

- If attendance fails to improve a further meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged and this may, at their discretion, be a panel meeting with the Headteacher and an ‘Attendance Officer’ from the Local Authority. *(LA provides support to schools through their Attendance Manager. The Attendance Manager is the enforcement agent of the LA and, as well as providing guidance and support through its officers, may instigate a fixed penalty notice or indeed take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.)*
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- During the course of this meeting the Headteacher and Attendance officer will decide whether or not to instigate a LA formal attendance review. If this is instigated the LA attendance officer will notify the parent/carer in writing that a formal attendance review is taking place. The child’s attendance is then monitored for the next 15 days. If the child fails to attend school during that period the LA will take the first of its legal steps (usually a fixed penalty notice).
- The school works in partnership with health professionals and the locality team, youth support officers and other agencies to ensure parents and children are given the support they need to overcome difficulties that affect attendance and punctuality.

In the case of children who are missing school for a long period of time and parents have not engaged with the school, the school will follow the flowchart in the Appendix as issued by Dorset Local Authority.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored both day to day and more strategically.

1. Ongoing monitoring:

- daily and weekly monitoring and analysis of attendance records. (i.e. what is the impact of the policy on poor attenders?)

2. Strategic:

- formal evaluation of attendance records and report to governing body
- annual student questionnaire
- annual parent questionnaire

The governing body will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Appendix

