Attendance and Absence Policy & Procedure

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Date of first implementation:	January 2014
Date of last review:	July 2017
Date of next review:	July 2018

This policy and procedure document links with and is supported by the following other policy and procedure document:

- Conduct Policy & Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy & Procedure
- Teaching and Learning Policy

Principles of the Policy

It is widely acknowledged that attendance has a direct impact upon achievement, success and welfare. Strong evidence shows that where any individual pupils' attendance percentage is below 96% it will have a detrimental effect on their achievement, becoming increasingly damaging as their attendance percentage becomes lower. It can also impact upon welfare and standards of conduct, where a pupil's low attendance leads to them falling behind in their learning and subsequently to further disengaging from learning when in school. Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement and the school carrying out its function in safeguarding the welfare of children. Whether absence is due to term-time holidays, dubious illnesses or truancy, not being present at school disadvantages children.

Therefore, there is a moral imperative to focus on persistent absentees, because this is a group of young people who are unlikely to attain well at school, unlikely to stay on in education after the age of 16, and significantly more likely to engage in self-harming activities and anti-social behaviour. By focusing on good attendance we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes for pupils.

The promotion of a strong triangular relationship between the pupils, their homes and the school, and involving partner agencies, is important in reducing persistent absenteeism. Offering our pupils an exciting curriculum and ensuring that school is a safe and enjoyable place are equally important aspects. In this way we hope that the school environment and ethos will foster a coherent and effective approach to tackling the problem of persistent absenteeism.

Registering Attendance

This is the responsibility of the classroom teacher and the following procedures must be followed.

Statutory Registration (including morning and afternoon registration)

- Registers are to be marked using SIMS within 10 minutes of the start of each period.
- Pupils present should be given a "/" mark (present for that session).
- Pupils not present in the lesson should be marked with an "N" (No reason yet supplied for absence).
- Pupils who arrive late should be given an "L" mark and the number of minutes late recorded.
- Pupils who arrive substantially later (i.e. 5 minutes) than the rest of the group (without good reason) are deemed to be presenting negative conduct that is detrimental to learning and should be issued a "C1 – Late to Lesson".
- Paper registers should only be marked when there is no possible alternative (e.g. for cover lessons) and these should be returned promptly to the School Office unless another arrangement has been made.

Pupils Who Arrive Late to School

- All pupils are to be on site at the point of the school bell being rung at 8:45am[1] so that they can be at their first lesson for a prompt start.
- If a pupil arrives after 8:50am then they are to be sent to their relevant Key Stage Office and be signed in as "L" and issued a "C2 – Late to School".
- If a pupil arrives after 9:10am then they are to be sent to their relevant Key Stage Office and be signed in as "U" (Late after close of registration) and issued a "C2 – Late to School".
- If pupils are late owing to the bus service not being on time, then the pupil is to be given a "/" mark (present for that session).
- Any students that are late to school are to receive a "C2 – Late to School" consequence on their SIMS record, and are to attend a "Late to School Detention".

Pupils of Non-Statutory School Age

- It has been agreed that the above procedures will be adopted for registration across the school.

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[1] For the purpose of a "Late Gate" strategy then any pupils arriving on site after the school bell will be considered as late.

DEALING WITH ABSENCE

AUTHORISED ABSENCES

- These are sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical appointments or compassionate reasons.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- These are sessions away from school where there is no good reason offered or where leave of absence has not been approved.
- In line with the 2013 amendments to the School Attendance Order Education Act 1996, "Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Therefore, leaves of absence taken during term time will be unauthorised, unless the Head Teacher chooses to authorise them in exceptional circumstances, on application by letter from the parent/carer in advance of the leave. For further details, please see the Cheshire East guide to "Taking children on holiday during term time" – http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/taking-children-on-holiday-during-term-time.pdf
- Teaching staff should mark unexplained absence with an "N" whether or not they consider it to be authorised or unauthorised.

RECORDING AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- This is the responsibility of the Senior SSSO, supported by the SSSOs.
- Absences can be authorised by the Senior SSSO/SSSOs using the appropriate statutory codes.
- Absence due to illness requires either a telephone call or letter from a parent. A doctor's note may be requested if the illness is severe or long term and/or particularly when attendance is already below 92%.
- Absence compassionate leave should be authorised only if requested in writing by the parent/carer and approved by the Senior Leadership Team member to whom that responsibility has been delegated.
- Any holidays taken during term time are unauthorised – please see above.
- Absences may also be authorised by the Senior SSSO/SSSOs using first day calls. (First day calls are text messages/telephone calls to the parent /carer made on the first day of absence by the Senior SSSO/SSSOs).
- Where possible, all absences for statutory registration periods should be cleared by the end of the day or if this is not practicable at the very least by the end of the week in which the absence has occurred with any "N" marks being replaced by the appropriate statutory code.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

- Monitoring of pupils' attendance and initial intervention through communication with parents is responsibility of the Form Tutor, supported by year team leaders and Key Stage Managers.
- Interventions made are to be recorded within SIMS – for guidance on the recording of interventions members of staff should look to the "Guide to Using SIMS for Recording Rewards, Behaviour & Interventions @ TS" which is held on the school network.
- At the point that management of low attendance is taken on by leaders of year teams, pupils and parents will be fully aware of the intervention already made and therefore be prepared to actively work together in order to support a return to good attendance.
- For the purpose of attendance monitoring and action, any figure below 96% is considered as "poor attendance". Any attendance below this level can lead to legal action being taken – please see our school website for further details.
- Attendance below 93% is considered particularly worrying and any attendance under 90% has a higher chance of triggering legal action.
- Concerns about a pupil's attendance should be discussed at the year team weekly meetings and then communicated by the year team leaders to the Key Stage Support Managers and Senior SSSO where referrals to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) are required.
- The Key Stage Support Managers and Senior SSSO, in conjunction with the EWO, should keep the year team leaders and relevant Form Tutors up to date so they can continue to be involved in the monitoring and intervention of pupils in their care.

- Should any student not attend for an extended period of consecutive days their parents/guardians will have a meeting arranged in school in order to plan for the continuation of learning and return to school.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

- The member of the Senior Leadership Team that has been delegated the overall responsibility of managing attendance is the Deputy Headteacher – Raising Standards, working with the Assistant Headteacher – Lower School.
- It is essential that the Senior Leadership Team keep a watching brief over attendance as good attendance plays such an important part in ensuring the continued success of all pupils.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Rewarding positive conduct is an important part of encouraging self-esteem, safety & wellbeing and pride and therefore should be applied to encouraging good attendance.
- Pupils will receive house points in accordance with the school's rewards system on a half-termly basis.
- Pupils with 100% attendance will be given a certificate and invited to an assembly with the Headteacher at the end of each half-term.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about school attendance and absence can be found on the school and Cheshire East websites:

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/education_welfare_service/school_attendance.aspx