

Wrotham School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to state the principles by which we encourage excellent attendance and punctuality, set out the responsibilities of all members of the school community in ensuring this, establish the legal framework and to lay out the School's response to poor attendance.

Poor attendance is closely linked to poor progress and attainment and this underpins the schools strong focus on ensuring attendance is high and that no child unnecessarily misses out on education.

Content

This policy contains a statement of our principles and a further definition of the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in improving attendance and punctuality. The school targets 96% attendance as a whole school and students and parents should be aiming for 100% attendance except in unavoidable circumstances of illness or bereavement.

Process

The Attendance and Punctuality Policy should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy.

Responsibilities

The leadership Team, Progress Leaders and Progress Tutors are responsible for managing the drive for improvement in attendance and punctuality, setting targets in discussion with the Headteacher and reporting progress to Governors. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole community and detail of this is contained in Appendix 2

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy will be the responsibility of the Governor's Behaviour and Safeguarding team.

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team Date: September 2017

Review Date: September 2018

Attendance Policy

Principles

At Wrotham School we demand the highest level of attendance and punctuality from every student. Regular and ongoing attendance will provide the opportunity for each student to develop their full potential during their time at school. The school governors, parents, all staff and students must do all in their power to ensure this objective is achieved in line with the legal framework governing attendance and punctuality.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, fulltime education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 further states that: ***“The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.”***

Although there is no legal framework for Post 16 attendance and punctuality Wrotham School students are expected to have an exemplary record of attendance in order to support their learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- review the Attendance Policy annually
- monitor its implementation
- monitor progress against School targets
- monitor for issues of Equal Opportunity

The Headteacher will:

- line Manage the Attendance Officer
- set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process
- monitor progress
- oversee the attendance arrangements
- support the Attendance Officer with issues of inadequate registering
- arrange and/or oversee appropriate training for staff

The Leadership team, will:

- work with the Progress Team to ensure the efficient running of the system
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence
- make periodic checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence

- inform the Headteacher of the progress of the attendance targets
- advise the Headteacher on any strategies that could be initiated or improved
- determine (in collaboration with the Attendance Officer) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested by a letter or email, or absences for which the school have not been notified
- notify parents that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence. Parents will be notified through the policy and by directing parents to the policy when a letter is sent
- initiate with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance
- receive regular updates from Attendance Officer on intervention requested from outside agencies
- liaise with local IYFA panels, outside agencies and the police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school
- make a termly report with statistics to the governing body

Progress Leaders will:

- have responsibility for meeting attendance targets for their allocated year group(s)
- hold weekly meetings with Progress Tutors in which attendance is a standing agenda item
- ensure that all student absences are tracked by their progress tutors through conversations and checking SIMs for entries by the Attendance Officer
- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering through learning walks
- hold to account any tutors who are not registering in line with policy and arrange training where appropriate
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up with the Attendance Officer
- contact parents over student absences when there is cause for concern
- liaise with the Assistant Headteacher, Student Development, to review patterns of attendance/punctuality and agree appropriate strategies
- Promote excellent attendance through a range of strategies agreed with the Assistant Headteacher

Progress Tutors will:

- follow the Attendance Flowchart to ensure a consistent approach to absence
- ensure that students are registered accurately by 8.40am
- ensure that they know the reason for student absence
- follow up cases of unaccounted for absence
- keep the Progress Leader and Attendance Officer informed of any signs of suspected truancy
- inform the Progress Leader and Attendance Officer of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences and lateness
- check attendance data weekly and make students aware of their attendance percentages

Teaching staff will:

- inform the Attendance Officer of the names of students who are absent without notification
- be responsible for the accurate official registration of students at the beginning of each lesson, using SIMS Lesson Monitor
- welcome any student with long term absence back into the classroom without question – with any questions being addressed to the Attendance Officer

Students are required to:

- attend regularly and ensure their attendance remains at 100% throughout the school year
- miss school only in exceptional circumstances
- arrive to school in time to register with their Progress Tutor at 8.30.
- arrive promptly to each lesson

Parents are:

- responsible for ensuring that his/her child attends school regularly and punctually in accordance with their legal obligations;
- to make any request for leave of absence by writing to the Attendance Officer who will then consult with the Assistant Head/Headteacher
- to ring school on first day of absence;
- to provide a note to cover any absence and medical evidence when there is a prolonged period of absence or the Attendance Officer is concerned about patterns of absence;
- to plan holidays outside of term time;
- to attend Attendance Management meetings organised by School and/or outside agency.

Attendance Officer is required to:

- enter attendance/absence data into SIMS using Lesson Monitor
- prepare attendance records for Assistant Headteacher, in liaison with school Data Manager
- prepare reports for Progress Teams
- contact parent/guardian on first day of absence through Keep Kids Safe
- call parents/carers of Pupil Premium students on every day of absence and keep log
- support targeted students
- keep parents informed of attendance concerns through regular letters and/or phone calls
- hold meetings with parents when attendance is not improving
- escalate meeting to leadership team when required
- Seek the support of the School Liaison Officer when interventions have not succeeded

SENCO:

- supports students on the SEN register who have regular patterns of non-attendance
- works with the Attendance Officer and Progress Teams to ensure Pupil Premium attendance targets are met across all year groups
- is involved in any reintegration programme where deemed necessary.

Truancy

- Students who truant from lessons and/or school are marked as an unauthorised absence
- A student is deemed to be truanting when they are not where they are expected to be, as shown by their timetable, and does not have permission to be elsewhere
- Parents are informed
- Students are placed in Senior Leadership detention (SLT detention) which is held on a Wednesday from 3.15 – 4.15.

Punctuality

- It is important to make the distinction between a late that occurs during the official registration period and a late that occurs after the official registration period. The registration period covers the time between 8.30 and 8.55 am during the morning session and 12.15 and 1.15 pm during the afternoon session.
- Students that arrive late during the registration period should go directly to the classroom. Progress Tutors should record this late on SIMS Lesson Monitor. Students who arrive late outside the registration period should sign in at Reception.
- The Receptionist will enter the appropriate late marks
- If a student is late twice in one week they will be issued with an after school detention by the Progress Team

Signing Out

There should be a record of all students on site. Outside of the arrangements described above, all students should sign out if they are leaving the school site. They should sign out at reception (years 7-11) and the Sixth Form Study Centre (years 12 and 13), producing with an exit pass from the Attendance Officer.

Long Term Medical Absence

When a student is absent because of long term illness a Health Care Plan will need to be initiated by the First Aid Coordinator, Mrs James. This will provide a structure for the student to be reintegrated back into the classroom. A Health Care Plan can only be completed once diagnosis is confirmed and prognosis given by the medical team supporting the student. Where the student needs the support of the Home Education and Reintegration Service (HERS) this will be sought/referred to by the medical professional responsible for the student's case. The school will take the lead role in planning and reviewing the student's provision in conjunction with HERS.

Leave of Absence

Wrotham can grant leave of absence in very exceptional cases. Should you wish to apply for leave of absence, a letter should be written to the Attendance Officer who will liaise with the

Headteacher. Parents/Carers will be advised of the outcome by email and/or letter. Should parents/carers wish to appeal this decision, this should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher.

Holidays in School Time

- from September 2013, the Government has legislated that no holidays will be authorised in term time
- holidays not agreed by the school, but taken, are unauthorised absences and shown in the register by code G
- if parents take their children on holiday during term time, we will request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty notice (FPN)

Fixed Penalty Notices

The school will issue and administer penalty notices in collaboration with the Local Authority Enforcement Officer, providing that such requests are made using the Penalty Notice Request form.

The penalty is £120 and reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. This is per parent, per child. Failure to pay may result in prosecution where on conviction you would be liable to a fine of up to £1000. A penalty notice can be issued for 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 school days) during any 100 possible school sessions (50 days). These do not need to be consecutive days.

- Penalty notices may be issued where it is determined that to do so would be an effective and appropriate addition to ongoing casework with a student and their parent. The Headteacher will be informed if this action is taken
- where feasible, parents should be warned of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued
- where holiday is taken in term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued

Rewards and Incentives

It is important that there is a reward system that recognises student achievement in these areas and promotes the explanation of regular, punctual attendance.

Rewards that will be used are:

- Achievement certificates in assemblies each term
- Recognition by Progress Leader and SLT in assembly
- Students with 100% attendance for the year will have a Gold Attendance Certificate presented at the start of the new academic year
- Students with 99-99.9% attendance for the year will have a Silver Attendance Certificate presented at start of the new academic year.
- Students with 97-98.9% attendance will have a Bronze Attendance Certificate presented at the start of the new academic year.

- A draw is held three times yearly in which students with 100% attendance have the opportunity to win an award
- Individual awards programmes will be arranged by the Progress Teams and Attendance Officer to encourage increased attendance from key student groups

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING ATTENDANCE

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 further states that: "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law." An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The student was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The student was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student/parent belongs

Failure to comply may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court where on conviction each parent would be liable to a fine up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

The Act also places a legal obligation on:

- The LA to provide and enforce attendance
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA (or the CMES) of a child's absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- The governing body to make sure that school registers are kept, one for attendance and one for admissions.

Post 16 Attendance and Punctuality Statement

Attendance and Registration

- Attendance at all lessons is compulsory. Students are expected to arrive promptly at the start of lessons.
- It is never acceptable to miss a lesson without informing the school in the way set out below. If your attendance is poor, this may jeopardise your future on your course and poor attendance will be regarded as a problem which will be discussed with parents.
- Examples of acceptable reasons for absence from lessons include: illness (which renders you incapable of attending school), driving test, Open Day visit if authorised by Director of Sixth Form.
- Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence from lessons include: driving lessons, part-time employment, working on homework or medical appointments which could be attended outside of lesson time.
- Students must attend morning registration every morning.

How to report absence

If you are away from school, you should telephone the absence line on the first day you are away to report the reason for your absence. If you are likely to be away for some time, you should inform the Sixth Form Study Supervisor, Mrs Cheval, so that work can be sent home for you.

Holidays during term time

Permission to take holiday during term time must always be sought before booking a holiday. Permission will only be granted if parents make a written request to The Director of Sixth Form stating the reasons why they want their son/daughter to miss school during the period in question and it is approved.

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