

## Student Attendance Policy and Guidance

### Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential for our students to maximise their progress. Irregular attendance disrupts the continuity of learning and undermines progress, achievement and attainment. All students are expected **by law** to attend school for 190 days per academic year. **The expectation nationally is for an individual to maintain a 95% or above attendance rate. It is the parent/carer's legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance and school strives to encourage the maximum possible attendance for each student.** The importance of attendance is stressed throughout school and regularly reinforced. Absences are investigated and where necessary home will be contacted and actions follow.

### Aims

To continuously improve overall attendance rates across school by:

- Highlighting and applying the school student attendance policy and guidance consistently.
- Ensuring good attendance maintains a high profile within school
- Linking good attendance to the school ethos of 'Learning and Achieving Together'.
- Monitoring progress against attendance targets by regularly analysing attendance data.
- Ensuring attendance is a feature for all associated with school including students, parents/carers, staff and Governors.
- To work with and offer advice, support, and guidance to parents/carers and students regarding attendance.
- Maintain positive and consistent communication with home.
- Implement a system that positively rewards good and improving attendance.
- Recognise the unique nature of our individual students and their circumstances.
- Maintain effective partnerships with other supportive services and agencies linked to attendance.

### Punctuality

The vast majority of our students arrive on LCC operated transport. A minority are independent travellers. School opens for students at 8.55am. Registration begins at 9.00am and closes at 9.15am. The main office must be notified of any students arriving after this time. Anyone arriving after registration closes, without good reason, will be marked as 'late' in the register, which is classed as an unauthorised absence (see below).

### Types of absence

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

An AUTHORISED absence is one where the absence is for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments, and an emergency or other unavoidable cause that unfortunately falls within school time.

An UNAUTHORISED absence is one which the school does not consider reasonable. This includes:

- Students being kept off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Unexplained absence

- Shopping
- Day trips or holidays which have not been agreed
- Holidays exceeding the amount of time agreed
- Reluctance to attend

#### Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a persistent absentee if they miss 20% or more of schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is deemed as causing 'significant damage to a child's education'. Monitoring absence regularly means PA can be identified quickly, investigated and action taken.

#### Absence Procedures:

##### **If your child is absent you must:**

Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence (preferably before 9.00am), a message may be sent in via the bus/taxi escort, but please contact school to confirm the reason for absence.

##### **If your child is absent we will:**

Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.

If the absence persists or there is a pattern to absences we will invite you to discuss this with senior staff to develop a plan of action. (In some cases senior staff may meet you within your home).

If an absence continues to become persistent absence without good reason formal letters will be sent to explain the legal framework and may result in the matter being referred to attendance officers of the local authority. This could eventually lead to court proceedings.

#### Leave of Absence/Holidays in Term Time

Regular attendance at school is vital and of such importance that any leave of absence requests will only be considered in light of this policy and statutory regulations.

There is **no** automatic right to take a child out of school during term time and any savings thought to be made will be offset by the cost to your child's education. Authorisation is entirely at the school's discretion. Holidays or leave during term time should not be booked until authorisation has been given. All applications should be made at least two weeks in advance using a 'Request for leave of absence' form available via the school office.

At the Headteachers discretion all requests for 'leave' may be authorised only in exceptional circumstances. **Each case will be considered on its individual merits, but it is up to parents to evidence why a request is exceptional.**

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of school or in excess of that agreed will be classed as unauthorised absence (see above).

Good practise indicates times when agreement for leave is **less likely** to be given:

- When a student has just started school and settling into the new school environment.
- Immediately before and during any examination or accredited test periods linked to qualifications or statutory testing.
- When attendance records already include a significant level of unauthorised absence.
- Where attendance records indicate poor attendance generally.
- If a leave of absence or holiday has been agreed previously in the same year.

#### Religious Absence

The school may authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival such as Eid, but no more than three days in any one school year.

### Conclusion

School has a duty to promote attendance and equally parents/carers have a duty to ensure their children attend. The school sets itself targets to continually aim to improve attendance. Throughout the year we monitor absence and punctuality and reports are scrutinised for patterns and persistent absence.

School is committed to working with parents/carers and students to ensure statutory regulations regarding attendance are met and that high levels of attendance are maintained.

**Revised for September 2017**