



Attendance Policy for Knutsford Academy and Cheshire Studio School

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by senior managers and the full governing body.

Policy lead:	Chris Leigh
Last review date:	September 2021
Next review date:	September 2022

LEGISLATION

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 either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence". Therefore regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable students to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 - For the purposes of Education Law the definition 'parental responsibility' lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

Purpose

- To promote good attendance and punctuality through a clear framework of expectations in terms of attendance that is accepted by parents/carers, students, staff and Governors.
- To engage the support of parents/carers in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good electronic records of attendance through school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where unauthorised absence is confirmed or suspected.
- To monitor closely students with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents/carers and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement
- To recognise and reward good attendance

Introduction

We recognise the link between attendance, academic qualifications gained, choices in life and success in the future. We aim to ensure the highest levels of attendance and punctuality, in order that all students can take full advantage of the education provided to achieve and *exceed* their own potential. Irregular attendance undermines these opportunities and may place students at risk.

Procedure

Students are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for the absence.

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a Court of Law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the DfE. One school day is marked as two sessions - a.m. and p.m.

The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (start of Period 4). On each occasion we must record whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to other exceptional circumstances.

First Day Contact

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible, through the absence hotline and on every day of absence thereafter.

If no contact is achieved from parent/carer on their child's first day of absence we will contact home by telephone. If there is no reply then we will leave a voice mail and send an email. On the second day of any absence the Form Tutor will monitor the absence and make contact home as appropriate.

Coding of Absence

Although it is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify school of any absence it is at our discretion how this absence is coded in relation to authorised or unauthorised absence.

Absence due to Illness

Any medical absences in excess of 7 days per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence can take the form of either a dated GP/Nurse appointment card, a dated note from the GP/Nurse written in the student's planner, a compliment slip signed and dated by the GP/Nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness.

Parents/carer's should be aware that ten or more unauthorised absences over a term may result in them receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. (See below)

Unauthorised Absence – Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents/carers should be aware that the school may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

Lateness and Punctuality

Registers are taken at 8.45am and 1pm (1.20pm on Tuesdays). Any student arriving during morning registration but before registers close (9.30am) will be coded as an 'L'. Any student arriving late on two or more occasions a week will be given a demerit. Three demerits for whatever reason in one week will result in close monitoring (e.g. report card) by the Head of Year. A subsequent meeting with parents may take place.

Students who arrive after the close of registers will be coded a 'U' – unauthorised absence - following lateness.

Parents/carers should be aware that we may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

Leave of Absence

In line with the amendments made in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any parent/carer wishing to request Leave of Absence for their son/daughter should complete a Request for Leave of Absence Form available from both Bexton Road and Westfield Drive Offices as well as from the Knutsford Multi Academy Trust website. Completed forms should be sent for consideration to the Assistant Head (Pastoral).

It should be noted that if any application is declined and a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised day's absence occurs, then the school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

We believe students who achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded. This serves two purposes:

It provides students with positive reinforcement

It provides other students with motivation to improve their attendance and it recognises that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself.

The Head of Year will take responsibility for arranging celebration/praise assemblies for attendance on a termly basis. The positive message of the value of regular attendance is always to the forefront of assemblies and meetings with parents/carers. At the end of each term letters will be sent to parents/carers of students who achieved 100% attendance over the course of the term.

Strategies to address Poor Attendance

The attendance of all our students is monitored regularly. If there are concerns regarding attendance parent/carers will be notified by letter.

If attendance does not improve then it is likely that parents/carers will be invited for a meeting to discuss the poor attendance/punctuality with a view to resolving the situation. There will then be a Review Meeting, approximately four weeks later.

At the end of that time, if the attendance has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, it is likely that the parent/carer will be sent a Formal Warning Letter (in line with Local Authority requirements).

Should the attendance still not improve and further unauthorised absences occur, details will be passed to the Local Authority who may decide to arrange a Court Assessment Meeting with parents/carers and a decision will then be made regarding whether a prosecution is appropriate.

However, we work closely with Education Welfare Consultants and other outside agencies as well as the Local Authority in an effort to improve attendance without the need for any legal intervention.

Those students who have attendance of 90% and below are categorised as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.). We will be actively targeting this cohort of students during this academic year and may suggest appropriate interventions/support to raise the attendance of these students.

Long Term Absence

Student Support is responsible for supporting students with long term absence. They will complete a Medical Needs Form to access appropriate support and if necessary, home tuition for the student. Heads of Year will liaise on a regular basis with Student Support to promote the achievement and reintegration of students with long term absence.

What Parents/Helpers can do to help

- Let school know as soon as a student is absent
- Send in a note when the student returns to school
- Try to avoid making appointments during term time or normal school hours
- Do not allow the student to stay off school unless it is unavoidable

What parents can do if they are worried about their child's attendance

- Talk to your child, it may be a simple reason
- Talk to the student's Form Tutor

- Talk to the student's Head of Year
- Request a meeting with the Education Welfare Consultants working at Knutsford Academy
- Contact the Local Authority's Attendance and Children out of Education Service

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review the Policy

This policy is monitored as a matter of course by those responsible for its day-to-day operation. Attendance data and trends are analysed regularly to identify trends and patterns and initiate appropriate responses.

COVID-19 Addendum to Attendance Policy of Knutsford Academy and Cheshire Studio School

Please be assured that Knutsford Academy and Cheshire Studio School will continue to work closely with parents/carers and students regarding the ongoing Covid-19 situation.

The link below will lead you to all current information regarding the day to day arrangements in school with regard to Covid-19:

<https://3vywr6huwat37ur611ljft8-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Reopening-Guide-for-Parents-Updated-28th-August.pdf>

Knutsford Multi Academy Trust follow current advice from the Government and Local Authority (Cheshire East) regarding this matter, see attached links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/covid-19/guidance-on-responding-to-potential-covid-19-cases-in-schools.pdf>

Should you have any queries regarding the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) at clh@knutsfordacademy.org.uk