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**Attendance Policy**

**Recommended by: Principal / Damian Belshaw**

**Recommendation Date: 30 September 2022**

**Ratified by:**  **LAGB**

**Signed:** **T. Forty**

**Position on the Board: Acting Chair of LAGB**

**Ratification Date: 5 October 2022**

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**Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School): School / WHHS**

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# 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made) (and [2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/regulation/2/made), [2011](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made), [2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made), [2016](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html) amendments)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school
* Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

* Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
* Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
* Works with Heads of Year to tackle persistent absence
* Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues, including unannounced home visits
* Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class Teacher and Form Tutors

Class teachers and Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to SIMs (electronic reporting system).

3.5 School Office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

# 4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at AM Tutor time, at the start of every lesson and during PM Tutor time. It will mark whether every student is:

* Present
* Attending an approved off-site educational activity
* Absent
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

* The original entry
* The amended entry
* The reason for the amendment
* The date on which the amendment was made
* The name and position of the person who made the amendment

*See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.*

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

* Students must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.
* The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.00pm and will be kept open until 2.30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

To report an absence from school, parents/carers must contact school daily to report absence, this contact is to be made via our parental communication system Weduc; if you wish to discuss the absence, please contact Reception.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student’s parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student’s parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. To notify school of appointments, parents/carers can do so via Weduc or by contacting school reception.

Upon collection from school, students must be collected by a named contact; we will not allow students to make their own way home to attend appointments.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student’s parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

* Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
* After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)
* If students arrive after the register has been taken they should sign in at Reception.
* In Years 7-11, students who arrive after 8.50 am receive a break-time detention on the same day, carried out on a rota by a Head of Year, unless their parents have contacted Reception with a good reason for late arrival.
* Failure to attend a break detention will result in an after school 30 minute detention.
* Two or more lates in a week will result in an SLT detention, which takes place for 60 minutes on a Friday after school.
* In Years 12-13 all lateness is managed by the Head of Sixth Form and will be sanctioned accordingly.
* Persistent latecomers have letters sent home and are discussed with the Head of Year with regard to further action, which may include being placed on attendance and punctuality report or having a personal punctuality improvement plan created.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, through telephone calls, unannounced home visits and letters
* Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not
* Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

# School attendance is reported to parents/carers termly via progress data sheets; parents/carers can also access attendance live via Weduc

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal’s discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

* Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
* Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’/carers religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
* Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes– this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

# 5.1.1 Other reasons for extended absence and requests for leave in term time

**5.1.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

All staff are trained and made aware about possible reasons for extended absence from school. One of these could be Female genital mutilation (FGM), which is a form of child abuse common to some African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities in the UK. The age at which girls are subject to FGM varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood. Victims are usually aged between four and ten, primary school age. It is illegal in the UK to subject a child to female genital mutilation (FGM) or to take a child abroad to undergo the procedure – Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk of or has undergone FGM or forced marriage will result in a child protection referral under school procedures to the Designated Senior Person in the first instance and then to Children’s Social Care Services and/or the Child Protection Team, West Midlands Police Service. Records of all incidents will be kept following the same procedure as for all other child protection concerns in school in line with current policy.

**Please note that teachers and members of staff with teaching responsibilities have a specific legal duty to act with regards to concerns about female genital mutilation and must personally report to the police a disclosure that FGM has been carried out, in addition to liaising with the DSL/Children’s social care.**

# 5.1.3 Children Missing in Education (CME)

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. This is why we will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at school. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) the school has:

* Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
* Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
* Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take students off-roll when they:
  + leave school to be home educated
  + move away from the school’s location
  + are permanently excluded

We will ensure that students who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority. When a student leaves the school, we will record the name of the student’s new school and their expected start date.

Further information can be found can be found in ‘Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities’ – September 2016

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

* When the parent/carer fails to report an absence two days in a row, and staff are unable to make contact on the phone, a home visit is carried out, where possible.
* Unauthorised absences are followed up by either a phone call or a letter home.
* Persistent absence is reported to the Head of Year for further action, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer for further intervention.
* A student with persistent absence concerns, will have missed 10% of the school days available
* Students will be spoken to about their attendance by the Attendance Officer, Form Tutor, Head of Year and will be monitored.
* When attendance continues to fall, the school sends a letter home inviting parent/carer for a meeting.

# Education Investigation Service (EIS):

The school uses the statutory EIS provision to respond to significant ‘Unauthorised’ absence concerns. There is a ‘tiered’ system of interventions, leading up to legal proceedings, to protect the student’s educational development.

The school can also make use of additional Education Investigation Officer time to support cases where attendance becomes a serious concern but may not have reached the criteria for statutory Local Authority intervention, particularly in cases where children are deemed missing in education.

Attendance below 90% may result in a referral to the Education Investigation Service and an Education Investigation Officer may make a home visit.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

* The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
* One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
* Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

# 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

# To celebrate success the following methods will be used to promote good attendance:

* Students to receive rewards (including certificates)
* Celebration assemblies
* Entered in for prize draws

# 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis.

A student’s parent/carer is expected to inform the school via Weduc in the morning by 8.30am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents/Carers must inform school via Weduc by 8.30am for each day your child is absent from school, explaining the reason why.

* If a student’s absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.
* If a student’s absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.
* The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Board.

The school Attendance Officer monitors and stores attendance data for internal purposes to:

* Track the attendance of individuals
* Identify whether or not there maybe particular groups of children who are causing concern
* Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of support or intervention

# 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

# 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

* Child protection and safeguarding policy
* Behaviour policy

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### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **/** | Present (am) | Student is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Student is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Student arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **J** | Interview | Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Student is on a work experience placement |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Student is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Student is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Student arrived at school after the register closed |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody |
| **Z** | Student not on admission register | Register set up but student has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

### Appendix 2: Student and Parent Expectations Poster

### U:\Attendance\Annual School Attendance - The Facts.jpg

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