

Attendance Policy

2018-2019

AIM

To improve levels of achievement by ensuring the levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school are within government guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents and referring schools of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the school.

THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

PROCEDURES

Senior Management Team:

- Monitor and review Attendance Policy termly.
- Set and monitor attendance targets.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions (student of the month).
- Ensure that parents and referring schools are aware of the attendance policy.
- Give attendance a high profile at tutorials/assemblies and school events.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.
- Meet with Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer regularly to review attendance.
- Assist attendance Officer with referrals to the Education Welfare Service.
- Ensure long term absentees and excluded pupils are provided with work.

- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.
- Keep an accurate register.
- All entries should be in ink (where electronic systems are not employed) and any corrections must be clearly distinguishable from the original entry. The register must be kept in school for at least three years.
- The record can be computerized so long as:
 - There is a print out at least once per year
- Any corrections are distinguishable
- When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or un-authorised absence'
 - Or: attending an approved educational activity — nature to be specified.
 - An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:
 - a) One taking place off the school premises
 - b) Approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head
 - c) Supervised by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head
 - d) Of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in Higher or Further Education.
 - e) Link courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their education
 - f) Off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school
 - g) Supervision (e.g. sick children being taught at home), or
 - h) Attending approved sporting activity.

Attendance Officer:

Oversee administration of the Register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.

Keep parents informed by:

- Providing regular attendance information.
- If a student has not arrived into school at their regular time then a phone call is made home to find out where the learner is. If there is no response from the parent/carer, the students emergency contact is called. A call log is always kept for any contact made with parents/carers/emergency contact.
- Phoning students on 1st Day Contact List and monitoring attendance and punctuality alerting Tutors and Year Team Leaders when concerns arise.
- Liaising with senior management to monitor accuracy of record keeping.
- Working with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance.
- Facilitating meetings with parents, EWO, teachers, mentors or any other professionals working with the learner.

Class Teachers:

- Be a good role model for students.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise students for arriving on time.

Parents:

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school.
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when children are ill or are going to be late and provide a reason.
- If no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school on the first morning child is absent.

Students:

- Arrive at 9.15am for registration every morning and 13.10pm for registration every afternoon.
- Be on time for lessons.
- Make sure to have a note from parents explaining any absences or tardiness.
- If need to leave early inform tutor at beginning of lesson
- Tell teachers if having any problems attending school.

Support Available:

- Attendance Reports (to combat lesson truancy).
- Attendance interviews and regular reviews.
- Meetings with Head of School, EWO and other external agencies to provide support for children and their parents.
- Re-integration programme on first morning back in school after long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- EWO involvement.

Rewards:

- Commendations.
- Half-termly, termly and annual certificates and letters home for individuals and form prizes for groups (student of the month).
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.

Sanctions:

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfill its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- Detention.
- Isolation
- EWO involvement and referral.
- Parenting Contracts

Penalty Notices issued by the school

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school issuing a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behavior Act 2003 (by Head teachers and deputy and assistant heads authorised by them).

Parenting orders or penalty notices can also be issued by the Education Welfare Service on behalf of the LEA.

Prosecution by the Education Welfare Service on behalf of the LEA.

CME:

- Phone calls are made daily when students don't attend school
- If non-attendance continues, letters are sent home.
- If parents don't respond within 10 days, then a risk assessment is completed for a home visit.
- If the risk assessment is successful, then the home visit will take place.
- Staff members complete home visits to find out the reason for absence.
- If staff members are unable to access the home or if the home visit raises concerns, then a referral is made to the LA/EWO.

Parent guides to these measures are available on www.direct.gov.uk/parents

Appendix 1: Example Letter 1

[INSERT DATE]

[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]

Dear [INSERT NAME],

Re: Attendance

According to our records, [STUDENT NAME] has recently been absent from school for [NO. OF DAYS] days. You will be aware that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school on the first day of a pupil's absence to explain the reasons why he/she is unable to attend school and an expected date when he/she should return.

I am therefore writing to you to give you an opportunity to explain the recent absences. Please complete the tear off slip below and return it to the school as soon as possible. Any absence that hasn't been explained within two weeks will be categorised as "Unauthorised" Absence.

If you wish to discuss this letter further, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Shaila Osman
Head of School

Please complete the slip and return to school as soon as possible.
Dates of unexplained absences: [INCLUDE DATES]

Explanation for the above dates of unexplained absence:

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Parent/Carer Signature..... Date.....

Appendix 2: Home Visit Form

Home Visit Report

Please use this form as a basis for a discussion between parents/carers and to record initial agreed actions. Please return this form to Kelly at reception.

* A copy of this report must be kept in the student's file and one sent to the home address.

Date of visit:		Child's Name:	
Parents/carers:		Child's DOB:	
Address:		Parent's tel. no/mobile	
LAC (Y/N):		Social Worker Name:	
Referring School:		Type of Concern:	

I. Initial Observations

What sort of communication occurred between the parents/carers and child before the home visit?

How did the parents engage with Just Learn staff?

How did the parents react to the concerns raised by Just Learn?

How did the student engage with Just Learn staff?

How did the student react to the concerns raised by Just Learn?

Additional support or services which may be needed for the student and parent/carer:

Appendix 3: Example Penalty Notice Letter

Our Ref: [INSERT REFERENCE]

[INSERT DATE]

[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]
[INSERT ADDRESS]

Dear [INSERT NAME]

PENALTY NOTICE – [INSERT] Year: [INSERT]

I have been notified that [INSERT NAME] attendance for the period of [INSERT DATES] was [INSERT %]. [INSERT NAME] absences are either without authorised permission or without a justifiable reason being given to Just Learn.

GOOD ATTENDANCE IS VITAL FOR [INSERT NAME] FUTURE

The reward for good attendance:

- The majority of good attendees will leave education with GCSEs, or a qualification that will help to support their future training and employment.

The cost of non-attendance:

- 2 in every 10 truants will leave education without a qualification.
- 2 in every 3 young people convicted in crime have been truants.
- Yearly attendance of less than 80% over the course of secondary education is the equivalent of at least one year's education, which will have a detrimental effect upon [INSERT NAME] future opportunities.

The government has introduced new powers for Local Authorities to issue Penalty Notices in cases where parent/carers do not take responsibility for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. **The Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £120.** I need to inform you that the level of [INSERT NAME] absence, if continued, will place you at risk of this penalty and/or prosecution in court. In the event of court action you could be fined up to £1000 and be subject to a Criminal Record.

I will commence formal monitoring of [INSERT NAME] attendance from [INSERT DATE] and will be in touch with you in due course. During the monitoring period any absence due to illness will not be authorised unless it is supported by appropriate medical evidence (please ask Just Learn for details). If you provide evidence of ill health in the form of a note from the medical health professional made in your child's planner, this must be endorsed using the practice stamp. If the stamp is not clear then a second stamp should be requested. Evidence should be presented within 3 days of the return to education after the absence.

If there has not been an improvement I will arrange for your details to be passed to the Senior Education Welfare Officer at Merton Local Authority who will issue a Penalty Notice to you on our behalf.

Yours sincerely

Shaila Osman
Head of School

Date of issue: October 2016

Review date: August 2017 – Appendices added (Letter 1, Home Visit Form, Penalty notice letter)

Review date: July 2018 – Amendment made to the academic year date

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