

# Aylestone School, Broadlands School and Withington School Federation

## Attendance Policy

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### Introduction

The Federation recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. It notes that for a small but significant number of students poor attendance is a direct cause of their social exclusion and underachievement. It is also concerned that students who are registered at either of the schools and fail to attend regularly are placing themselves at greater risk of either offending or of becoming the victims of offending by others. The Federation has set up robust safeguarding procedures to ensure that attendance of all students is monitored and interventions put in place as soon as concerns are raised. The Federation believes that students should attend regularly and punctually because this is where they develop, both academically and socially.

### Statutory duty of schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The Government expects that:

- Schools will promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence. Any attendance below 95% is a cause for concern (attendance that is consistently at 90% or below is classified as 'persistent absenteeism') and will be discussed with parents or carers as to how attendance can be improved.
- Schools will ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence, by working in partnership with parents.
- Parents and carers will perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly in accordance with the school's home/school agreement.
- All pupils will be punctual for their lessons.

The Federation is committed to improving levels of attendance and punctuality. It aims to do this by:-

- a) Promoting the value and importance of regular attendance.
- b) Reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism. (A child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 10 % or more).

In order to improve levels of attendance and punctuality the Federation will employ the following key strategies:-

- a) The provision of one-to-one support to individual pupils who experience difficulties in attending regularly, through attendance clinics and the wave system of support.
- b) The provision of consistent and equitable support to parents, ensuring, through an appropriate balance of assistance and insistence that all parents are able to meet their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance.

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- c) The development of effective multi-agency working practices in order to facilitate early intervention and the delivery of a seamless service.

In developing its policy and practice for promoting attendance the Federation will endeavour to ensure that the need to recognise the national context and central government priorities is balanced by the need to respond to the local context and particular priorities within Herefordshire.

## **Federation responsibilities**

The Federation is responsible for supporting the attendance of our pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance.

It is a legal requirement that the Federation will:-

- a) Be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year.
- b) Maintain attendance registers in accordance with the relevant regulations (we will also maintain a separate PA register and monitor PA as a discrete category of absenteeism).
- c) Accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness.
- d) Clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DfE.
- e) Submit termly absence returns through School Census and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence and include details of these in the Federation prospectuses and annual report to governors.
- f) Set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations;

The Federation will also take into account relevant guidance issued by the DfE and good practice identified by the Local Authority and will:

- a) Ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through parents' evenings, reports or through other media. Parents should be specifically reminded of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their student's regular and punctual attendance.
- b) Collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school.
- c) Provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration.
- d) Identify clear procedures and follow up all absence and lateness.
- e) Recognise the crucial importance of early intervention and provide appropriate strategies.
- f) Use SIMs In-Touch (Aylestone School) text messaging for every day of absence unless the school has been notified of longer term absence.

- g) Monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks and ensure that the parents of any post-registration truants are promptly informed and where necessary actively involved.
- h) Discuss attendance issues as part of the KS2-3 transition process.
- i) Identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism (including CAF where appropriate).
- j) Provide for a clear and unambiguous hierarchy of sanctions.
- k) Use attendance rewards which recognise pupils' attendance achievements. Attendance Competitions now forms an integral part of the Aylestone School's Reward Policy.
- l) Set up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services, such as the Local Authority's Education Legal Officer, Social Care, Police, Health, etc.
- m) Establish procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and pupils who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable.
- n) Identify an interesting, flexible and accessible curriculum which encourages regular attendance.
- o) Ensure that reasonable steps are taken by the Federation before a referral is made to the Local Authority and keep a record of these
- p) Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time. In line with current Governmental guidelines the Federation will no longer grant leave for term-time holidays. If a pupil is out of school and the absence has not been agreed, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The local authority will be notified and a Fixed Penalty Noticed will be issued. (An authorised leave of absence may be given in extenuating family circumstances, this is at the discretion of the Head Teacher).
- q) Liaise with the police and the Education Legal Officer when truancy sweeps are undertaken locally.
- r) Involve and identify a lead governor for attendance.
- s) The Assistant Head for Attendance and Behaviour has overall responsibility for attendance.

## **Responsibilities of parents**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their child attend the Federated schools regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their students stay at school once they have registered.

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their child. Parents should:-

- a) Take an active interest in their child's school life and work.
- b) Attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- c) Ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time.

- d) Be aware of letters from the Federated schools which their child brings home.
- e) Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- f) Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance. If a child is persistently absent due to illness, the school may ask for medical evidence in order to authorise future illnesses. Failure to do so may result in unauthorised absence.
- g) Always notify the school as soon as possible on the first morning of any absence.
- h) Confirm this in writing when the child returns to school.
- i) Avoid booking family holidays during term-time. In such cases a referral will be made to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice issued.
- j) Discuss with the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

### **Policy and arrangements for supporting the attendance of other vulnerable groups**

The federation will support the attendance of any group of students who may be vulnerable. Such groups might include:

- a) Students from families under stress.
- b) Pregnant school girls and teenage mothers.
- c) Students transferring school.
- d) Students entering school outside the normal year of entry.

## **Pupils' responsibilities**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly they should speak to their class teacher or learning mentor.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

## **Governors' responsibilities**

The Governing Body will oversee, support and challenge the leadership team in ensuring excellent attendance with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils at the school.

## **Attendance policy - roles and responsibilities**

### **Update July 2018**

#### **Aylestone School**

##### **Wave 1 100% - 90% (Form Tutor)**

- Each week the Form Tutor will receive an Attendance Tracker form which will show the students current attendance, and will also show their predicted attendance if they were to be present for 100% of their remaining time in that academic year.
- A key focus area within Wave 1 is to move students to 95%+ attendance.
- Form tutors will monitor pupils who are late to school and will use Punctuality reports , and the A and C system as appropriate to encourage students to arrive at form and school on time.
- Any communication into school from parents will be forwarded to the form tutor.
- Absence letters will be signed on receipt by form tutor and passed on to the GO for coding, and then filing in student files.
- FT's will collect in holiday request forms from their tutor group, and pass them onto the AC for recommendations (The school can no longer authorise leave of absence for a family holiday)

##### **Wave 2 80% - 89% (Achievement Coordinator)**

- The AC is to have discussions with students about their attendance and how it can be improved.
- Special assemblies to be held for all whose attendance patterns are of cause for concern.
- AC to analyse regularly produced data on unauthorized absence and organise the issue of standard letters at threshold levels of UA.
- A key focus area within Wave 2 is to move students to 90%+ attendance.
- Any communication into school from parents will be forwarded to the Achievement Coordinator.
- Attendance must be a regular agenda item on AC weekly meetings to discuss who/why/when and strategies to improve attendance.
- AC to reward both improved attendance and consistently good attendance.
- Routinely liaise with Attendance Officer regarding referrals to the Local Authority for Penalty Notice Warnings, and Penalty Notices- Fixed Penalty.

#### **Subject Leaders**

- Attendance, including lateness to school and truancy from lessons, must be a regular agenda item on departmental meetings to discuss who/why/when and strategies to improve attendance.
- Subject Leader to inform AC of students with attendance issues in a particular subject.

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- Poor attendance should be identified and parents/carers should be contacted by Subject Leader (after consultation with AC).
- Issue subject attendance reports to students whose attendance/punctuality is poor.
- Truancy from part of a lesson or a whole lesson should be punished by a C2 Faculty Detention, each separate subject records each incident.
- All work missed should be made available and completed by the student.

### **Wave 3 (Assistant Head Teacher for Attendance and Behaviour, and the School Attendance Officer)**

- Priority in terms of resources should be given to those students between 70% - 79% attendance to moving them to 80%+ attendance.
- Any communication into school from parents will be discussed as part of the Student Services weekly meeting. Names for this meeting will be collected from the SLT/AC meetings.
- Request to contact pupil's medical GP if absence due to repeated illness
- Persistent absence due to illness will require medical evidence. Without this future absences may not be authorised.
- Invite parents in to school for a meeting if attendance continues to fall. Review attendance after 4 weeks
- CAF may be initiated for students whose attendance has not improved after an attendance meeting.
- Analyse attendance of students who attend Breakfast Club where appropriate and review this provision following the 6 weekly review of attendance at Breakfast Club at Student Services meetings
- Report to Student Services weekly meeting on attendance interventions for vulnerable groups and identify students who need support within Student Services.
- Meet with students 1 to 1 to discuss reasons for absences.
- Produce information for the newsletters to all parents explaining the importance of attendance.
- AHT to routinely liaise with Attendance officer regarding referrals for Penalty Notice Warnings and Penalty Notices.
- The Attendance Officer will Print off Attendance letters at agreed thresholds and distribute to FT/AC/AHT for signing and produce weekly official registers ( herringbone charts) for all FT's to check attendance with their forms
- Daily attendance calls to be made home when a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided by the parents/ carers.
- Produce weekly attendance summary for SLT meeting.

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## Rewards

The school will continue to reward good and improving attendance. The school will also include Attendance as one of the House Competitions.

Attendance now forms one of the criteria for the Aylestone's Special Achievement Awards, and it also forms part of the Passport to the Prom criteria at Aylestone.

## Unexplained absences

Summary information will be sent from the SIMS manager to Form Tutors and Achievement Co-ordinators who will then investigate and find reasons for the absences.

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify the school of the reasons for absence. When reasons for not forthcoming, the school will investigate and unauthorise the absence until valid reasons are given.

Authorising absences – AHT will authorise absences on behalf of the Headteacher.

## P.A. status

A P.A. school is a school where the 5% of students have less than 90% attendance. A P.A. student depends on the total number of sessions missed each half term:

- 7 sessions by the end of the first half term
- 14 sessions by the end of the second half term
- 20 sessions by the end of the third half term
- 24 sessions by the end of the fourth half term
- 31 sessions by the end of the fifth half term.
- 38 sessions by the end of the sixth half term.

Our PA status includes all **authorised** and unauthorised absences. All unexplained absences from school are coded with an N in the first instance, and then coded appropriately in the next 2 weeks. A code of **O** is used if it is a confirmed unauthorised absence. All of the students that are **ill**, have **medical appointments(M)** during school time, **funeral (C)**, **FTE(E)**, **late** - after the registers are closed – **U** Code, or similar.

The only codes that give us a positive percentage are:

- / - Present,
- L- Late before registers close
- B - Educated elsewhere, (ie at a PRU/home- a written agreement signed by the parents must have been put in place)
- D - Dual registered,
- P – Approved sporting activity,
- R – Religious observance,
- V – Educational visit or trip,
- W – Work experience
- T- Traveller

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J- Interview

C - Other authorised circumstances- this code need to have an explanatory note added in SIMS and covers those strange one off events

## Protocol for sending students home

The school has a duty of care to all students and this extends to allowing them to go home in times of medical, mental or physical distress. It is extremely important that we ensure their safety at all times. In most instances we will be sending our most vulnerable students home and we therefore need to ensure their safety as best we can. The following procedures have been set up in order to minimise any threats to their safety in this situation.

If a student has to be sent home (this should be a last resort in most cases) the following procedures must be followed:

1. Contact the FT/ SENCO/AC/DSO to ensure the student will not be at risk.
2. Contact parents/carers and ask them to come and collect their child.
3. Record this information and give it to the Student Services Administrator for filing in the students files.
4. If parents are going to collect their son/daughter then they need to be supervised within Student Services/or an appropriate member of staff, until parents arrive.
5. In circumstances where parents/carers cannot collect their children, then the school should ask for their permission to send them home.
6. All medical cases should be recorded in the medical log.

## Child missing in education

When pupils leave the school and no information has been received by the school regarding their new placement and parents/carers are unable to be contacted, the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority. The child will be considered to be a **Child Missing in Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate, which will include liaising with Social Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child. By giving the school details of the child's new school and location, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.