Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

Policy statement

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the whole college community in maintaining high levels of attendance. The principles have been agreed with all secondary schools in this area.

Statement of principle

- The college aims to provide a safe and secure environment where students can enjoy their education and feel valued, safe and secure.

- The college will work with students, parents and the pupil entitlement: investigation team to ensure policy and procedure supports a consistently high level of attendance.

- The college expects all students to be at college, and in class, on time and prepared for their lessons.

- Good attendance means at least 96%.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

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
Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Attendance Policy

1. Roles and Responsibilities

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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and makes referrals for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
The headteacher is responsible for approving holiday absence requests
The headteacher may delegate these duties to other staff as appropriate

The attendance officer is responsible for:
- first day contact and informing Heads of Year (HoYs) of reasons for absence
- monitoring and ensuring speedy and accurate processing of registration procedures (registers/absence reports etc.)
- producing attendance letters for unexplained absences at weekly intervals
- producing attendance statistics and reports on request (internally or outside agencies)
- compiling whole school attendance data monthly
- signing in students who are late

The form tutor is responsible for:
- marking the electronic register accurately
- in cases of absence the form tutor has the first line of responsibility in raising concern about a student's attendance
- reading all letters of explanation concerning absence and making the correct insertion in the register
- discussing attendance procedures, absences and issues with members of the tutor group, notifying the attendance officer/HOY / Assistant Head of Year (AHOY) after unexplained absence if concerns need to be raised.

The head of year with the assistance of the assistant head of year is responsible for:
- checking any suspected truancy
- employing a range of early intervention/preventative strategies and work with disaffected students
- working with students, parents, form tutors, Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and other agencies to introduce and support strategies for maintaining high levels of attendance
- in the case of long-term medical absence, notifying staff about the expected absence and supporting the effective reintegration of the student on their return to school

- liaising with parents, heads of faculty and teaching staff and outside agencies where appropriate to ensure that appropriate support for learning is given

Subject teachers are responsible for:
- recording attendance of students at the start of every lesson
- reporting any students unexplained absence during the day to the attendance officer
- supporting students who are working remotely

Parents are responsible for:
- ensuring their son/daughter comes to college on time in uniform and with all the equipment they need
- informing college of any absence by telephone or in writing

2. Recording attendance

Attendance register
By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil 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 annex 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.40 am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken
- at **8.45 am** and will be kept open until **9.05 am**.
The register for the second session will be taken at:
- the start of period 4 KS3 **1.00 pm** and will be kept open until 1.10 pm
- the start of period 4 KS4 at **12.25 pm** and will be kept open until 12.35 pm

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked late, using the appropriate code, but absent for registration and any lessons missed which will be classed as an unauthorized absence.

Repeated lateness to school will result in Year or SLT detentions and may lead to further consequences if the issue persists. It could also contribute to a Fixed Penalty Notice if the lateness affects lesson time.

3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence (for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health) by **8.45 am** or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or to ensure safeguarding practices are followed the school may ask parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence
Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please contact the attendance officer in advance of the appointment by email or phone or letter so she can code the register correctly and be aware that your son/daughter may need to sign in or out.

Approval for term-time absence

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a reason that prevents the leave of absence being taken during normal holiday times and where the timings are out of the parent/carer's control.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

- Study leave is not granted by default. Students in year 11 will be expected to continue to attend school and lessons or study rooms until May half term.

Unauthorised holidays (coded G) may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absences of 10 or more sessions may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice or referral to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team.

4. Following up absence
The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

5. Legal sanctions
Schools refer to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team parents when there is an unauthorised absence of a child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to refer to the local authority ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This 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 pupil 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to do this on **each day** of absence.

If a pupil's absence goes below **93%,** we will notify parents, if attendance remains a concern parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the poor attendance.
If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an the Pupil Entitlement Investigation team by completing a referral.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.
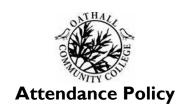
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Annex 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day