



## **Attendance Policy**

**Date of Review:** Jan 2024

**Reviewed by:** A Hayer

**Approved by Headteacher:** Yes

**Frequency of Review:** Annually

**Date of Next Review:** Jan 2025

# Attendance Policy

*"Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best school will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and, in some cases, it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour." (DfE)*

Our main aim for our Attendance Policy & Relationships policies is to ensure our pupils are safe and feel a sense of belonging in our school community.

## 1. Our mission

- Barr's Hill School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.
- It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students.
- Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance
- If there are barriers which affect a student's attendance we will work in partnership with our families, students and external agencies to investigate, identify and support our families and students as much as possible, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

## 2. Aims:

### Government expectations:

### Our school will:

- Encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence.
- Acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance and improvements in attendance
- Ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- Promote good attendance including persistent absence
- Act early to address patterns of absence

### Parents will:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their child(ren) attends school regularly
- Ensure all absences are reported to the school as early as possible for each day their child(ren) is absent

### All students will:

- Be punctual to school and their lessons
- Be encouraged to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality (above 96%)
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism
- Be acknowledged for excellent and improved attendance

### In addition, the school will:

- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued.
- Communicate regularly with parents/carers about their child's attendance, absences and punctuality

- Work with parents/carers to remove any barriers which may affect a child's attendance and punctuality
- Work with all members of the school team plus any relevant outside agencies to develop and maintain the whole school attendance policy.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance
- Ensure staff take registers accurately and timely
- Regularly share information to parents/carers and students informing them of attendance, absences and punctuality
- We will ensure regular evaluation of attendance policy and procedures by the school Leadership Team and the School Governor

### **3. Procedures**

The school is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students who are on the school's admission roll with the accurate attendance code.

- Registration occurs each morning and begins at 8.45am and ends at 9.10am. Students not in their tutor rooms at 8.45am will receive a late mark and a detention will be set for the pupil on the same day. Persistent lateness will result in the length of the detention increasing. Morning registers close at 9.10am.
- Subject teachers are responsible for ensuring an accurate register is taken during every lesson within the first 10 minutes of the lesson
- Students will be reminded about the importance of punctuality and lateness results in sanctions being set
- First day contact between parents and school will be made by phone call, followed up by a text message and can also be followed up by a home visit.
- Staff are supplied with clear guidance on what is authorised and unauthorised absence following DfE guidelines.
- Any emerging attendance concern/problem within a Hub will be discussed and action planned within the fortnightly targeted attendance meeting. Here further action is decided upon involving both internal and external agencies.

#### **3.1 Leave of Absence**

The Headteacher will not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The Head teacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance (at least a week before it commences) and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Coventry City Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 (1) of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis by the Headteacher and the decision shared with parents/carers.

#### **3.2 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.

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make 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. If medical appointments take place in the morning, students are expected to come into school after the appointment, unless there is a medical reason that prevents this. If a child does not return to school and there is not a medical reason for their absence the remainder of the day will be marked as unauthorised.

### **3.3 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives to school late will be marked as late using a L code. Pupils will be issued with a detention on the same day unless the parent/carer informs the school of an exceptional reason for the lateness or any reason beyond the control of the pupil or parent/carer.

Pupils who are persistently late without any justified reason will be marked as U on the register and this will be counted as an unauthorised absence and further action taking place.

### **3.4 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.

Pastoral Leaders for each Hub will make phone calls and/or text each morning to ascertain reasons for the absences which are marked as a N. Vulnerable/SEND pupil will be prioritised when making phone calls. When contact is made N codes should be changed to the appropriate code and a note recorded on SIMS. In instances where contact has not been made a note should be added to SIMS. If contact has not been made for a vulnerable student Pastoral Leaders should inform the Hub Director and the Safeguarding team (if necessary) and a home visit completed.

Home visits take place every day with Hubs prioritising SEND/vulnerable students first to offer support to the family if required.

If any safeguarding concerns arise as a result of any of these communications; Hub staff should report this immediately to the DSL via CPOMS.

In addition, contact will be made on the same day for students with a social worker or a support plan such as Early Help, where there are significant vulnerabilities, such as domestic violence. If further absence exists, the DSL may follow procedures for reporting pupils as CME (Child Missing in Education) if it is unclear where the child is during this period of absence from school and/or contact from home has not been successful. A child must be considered CME and reported to CME@coventry.gov.uk if they are absent for 10 consecutive days, without any successful contact made between the school and home.

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## **4. Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Term-time absence**

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and must be submitted at least one week before.

Term time holidays, other than exceptional reasons, will not be authorised and parents are likely to be fined.

Legal action may also be taken against parents where students are regularly absent from school. Penalty Notices will be considered following prior warning and attempts to support. Where students are regularly absent, the Hub team will attempt to support the student and parent/carer to remove any barriers, if possible.

### **4.2 Legal Sanctions**

Schools can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents for unauthorised absence of their child. Hub teams will track any patterns of absence to avoid persistent absenteeism (attendance below 90%).

If a parent/carer is issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice they will receive a monitoring period for their child, whereby their child should be in school during this 4 week period. If the monitoring period is failed, a £60 fine is issued and must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

## **Persistent Absenteeism**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90% at any time during their school life. Absence at this level is detrimental to a child's education and impacts their progress. The school may decide that medical evidence, for instance: Doctor's note, is required to prove illness is legitimate in certain circumstances.

All students whose attendance has fallen to 85% or are at risk of moving towards the PA will be monitored rigorously through the Hubs attendance trackers.

Support and actions towards all PA students are automatically reviewed on at least a weekly basis. Daily contact with parents/carers will be made to encourage attendance and Hub teams will work with families to remove any barriers to attendance.

## **5. Supporting and re-integrating students on long term absence**

Hubs will work with Student Services to ensure, if necessary, 'catch up' provision is in place for a pupil after long term absence.

Students who have been absent long term and who need to catch up on school work may spend a negotiated amount of time in Student Services, or in a HUB, doing work set by Subject Leaders. Some students returning after long term absence will be considered for an alternative curriculum involving fewer subjects and maybe some study time in Student Services until they are able to integrate fully into the mainstream curriculum.

## **6. Leadership and Management**

### **The role of the Head teacher/Governors**

- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented and regularly updated
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils in particular 'hard to reach' and PA
- Approves Fixed Penalty Notices and other legal action required for absenteeism

### **Role of the Assistant Head teacher responsible for Attendance**

- Advise on and implement whole school strategies for improving attendance
- Monitor attendance data, analyse data in order to identify patterns, set targets, support and inform policy and practice.
- Hold regular meetings with HUB teams to ensure every child's attendance is 96% or above
- Meet and support Hub teams to discuss strategies for pupils below 96% to prevent persistent absenteeism
- Identify attendance target groups.
- Monitor whole school attendance rewards and initiatives
- Ensure that all relevant staff are fully trained in procedures that relate to attendance
- Liaise with SENCo and DSL to identify students who would benefit from a referral to the Extended School Non-Attendance Advisory Panel

### **HUB Leaders:**

- Ensure early intervention is in place to support students and families
- Meet with HUB teams on a weekly basis to discuss attendance issues
- Monitor HUB Attendance and support with strategies to improve poor attendance and celebrate good/improved attendance
- Regularly meet with Assistant Head teacher responsible for attendance to identify key pupils who would benefit from further strategies being implemented
- Monitor attendance for every child in their year group using the trackers
- End of every day ensure all registers are up to date, accurate and there are no N codes
- Promote excellent attendance via tutor time and through rewards,
- Meet with parents/carers if there are attendance concerns
- Ensure students complete sanctions for lateness and reward students who have excellent attendance and whose attendance is improving

### **Pastoral Leaders**

- Work with form tutors to identify and take action if there is an individual attendance concern: all unexplained absences to be followed up.
- To regularly share pupils attendance with parents/carers
- To ensure that all registers are up to date and there are no N codes
- Meet with parents if there are attendance concerns and put in place attendance contracts, if required
- Investigate causes of absence and plan strategies with tutors, parents and Hub Director
- To promote good school attendance by setting targets and reward 'good/improved attendance'
- To ensure that students who are absent for an extended period of time will have an appropriate re-integration back into school upon their return.
- To work with the safeguarding team to ensure that Early Help referrals are opened as necessary to support children in attending school regularly and on time
- Ensure pupils who are late are issued with a detention and this is completed
- Have learning conversations with pupils who are struggling with attendance and punctuality issues
- Ensure tracker is up to date every week with a child's attendance
- To liaise with the DSL for Child Protection as necessary.
- Identify any patterns of absence to HL and to the Assistant Headteacher lead for attendance

### **Role of the Form Tutor/class teacher**

- As the first point of contact with students, tutors are crucial in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Tutors/class teachers to ensure registers are completed within the first 10 minutes
- Identify any patterns in a student's attendance/punctuality
- Attendance figures discussed with tutor group on a weekly basis
- Ensure that pupils update their student planner
- Report to the Pastoral Leader all students whose attendance/punctuality is raising cause for concern.

### **Role of the Parent Carer:**

Section 444(1) of the EDUCATION ACT 1996 states that 'IF a child of compulsory school age who is registered student at a school fails to attend school regularly at the school the parent is guilty of an offence'.

- Parent/person with parental responsibility has a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends the school regularly and on time.
- Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school time.
- Parents DO NOT have an automatic right to take their child out of the school for a holiday or any other period of extended leave during term time
- Contact the school each morning of absence and if possible indicate day of return.
- Only the school within the context of the law can authorise absence this does not oblige the school to accept the reason for the absence
- All unexplained absences will be investigated and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns
- Attend meetings about their child's attendance; support the school in responding to concerns regarding attendance and work with the relevant Hub team to help improve their child's attendance/punctuality
- Parents who fail to fulfil their responsibility can expect legal action: this may include Penalty Notices/Fast Track to Prosecution/Parenting Orders

## **Students**

- All students are expected to be on the school site by 8.40am appropriately prepared for the day
- At 8.45am students should be in their registration room
- Students who arrive after 8.45am must report to student reception: their time of arrival at school will be recorded by the member of staff on duty and the inventory system
- All students late will attend a same day detention
- Students are expected to remain in school all day and will not be allowed to leave the school site without permission
- Poor punctuality is not acceptable: students who consistently arrive late for the school day disrupt learning and miss out on valuable teaching time.
- Truancy from the school is taken very seriously and parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity. Students who truant from lessons will be expected to make up the time they have missed

## **Role of the Local Authority:**

- To meet regularly with the Assistant Head teacher for Attendance to examine the effectiveness of attendance interventions.
- To communicate regularly with the Pastoral Leaders to ensure Early Help Referrals and other intervention are in place.
- To support in home visits when required.
- To work with the school and families to create family support plans as necessary.
- To support the school in ensuring legal cases are taken forward as necessary.



## 7. Our approach to monitoring attendance

### Wave 1:

- Tutors monitor attendance of their tutees daily.
- On return from absence Hub teams speak to pupils and identify any barriers or support the student may need
- Pastoral Leads monitor the attendance of their year group and identify any pattern/trends
- Any student marked as unauthorised is followed up on their return to school
- Home visits are completed daily to help/support families if required
- Pastoral Leads identify students who are at risk of dropping below 90%
- Early intervention is put in place by Hub teams

### Wave 2: Attendance drops below 96%

- Pastoral Leaders issue an attendance concern letter – reminding parents/carers of the importance of attendance and the impact on their child's progress
- Pastoral Leader meets pupil to discuss any barriers the school can help and support with

### Wave 3: Attendance drops below 93%

- Pastoral Leader issues stage 1 – explaining attendance as continued to decrease and has not improved and the parent is at risk of being issued a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Parent meeting to take place with hub team to investigate if any support can be put in place

### Wave 4: Attendance drops to 90%

- A follow up parent/carer meeting and a behaviour contract put in place to ensure hub, parent/carer and pupil agree to next steps in improving the pupil's attendance
- Attendance contract to be reviewed every 2 weeks until pupil's attendance increases to 93%

In cases where pupil's attendance continues to decrease and pupils are absent for periods of 10 sessions, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued via the LA and a monitoring period will be issued.

