



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Deanery Church of England High School  
and  
Sixth Form College**

September 2019

## **Rationale**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided for them at The Deanery in terms of sustained academic progress and social development. 'Every Day Matters' at The Deanery as the link between attendance and attainment is firmly established and well documented. Those students who attend more regularly tend to achieve better qualifications whilst those with poor attendance tend to achieve less.

## **Aim**

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in life at The Deanery

## **Objectives**

1. To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. To ensure that every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
3. To act early to address patterns of absence
4. To support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend regularly

## **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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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. Key aspects of these requirements are;

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 schools/Academies where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory age who is registered at a school/Academy 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).

## **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 8.30am

Parents can call on 01942 768801 or via the MyEd app. (Open App, tap to continue, select messaging, type in the box)

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

If the absence is for a period of three days or more or the student is part of an attendance monitoring group, the school will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

The school may perform a home visit to check on the authenticity of an illness, particularly if the student is part of an attendance monitoring group.

### **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 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 and should return afterwards

Parents must notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by phone on 01942 768801 and speak to the Attendance Officer or by via the MyEd app (Open App, tap to continue, select messaging, type in the box)

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4 Legislation and Guidance and in section 8 Authorised and Unauthorised absence

### **School Procedures**

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- a. Implement the Attendance Policy and inform parents
- b. Monitor and review the Attendance Policy annually
- c. Set and monitor attendance targets
- d. Implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- e. Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school's newsletter
- f. Support the Attendance Officer and Heads of Year on issues of non-attendance and internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions
- g. Report to the relevant children's agencies with concerns
- h. Report on attendance to Governors

Senior Progress Leaders (SPL) will:

- a. Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and events
- b. Monitor Year attendance, targets and record keeping.
- c. Implement the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- d. Support Heads of Year, the Attendance Officer and Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy remedying causes and applying sanctions
- e. Collaborate with the Attendance Officer and Heads of Year to regularly review attendance of the year group
- f. Look for patterns of absences and consider the impact of the curriculum upon attendance, alongside other possible causes
- g. Work with the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour and Student Welfare and the Attendance Officer, to create individual packages and re-integration plans, where appropriate
- h. Have an understanding of students who are persistent truants in their year group and support the attendance team to address this

Heads of Year (HOY) will:

- a. Monitor Year attendance targets and record keeping
- b. Implement the school's system of rewards and sanctions

- c. Report weekly attendance concerns to the relevant SPL
- d. Support SPL and tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions
- e. Collaborate with the Attendance Officer to regularly review attendance of the year group and provide support where needed
- f. Work with the Attendance Officer to monitor and mentor students to raise their attendance

Tutors will:

- a. Be a good role model for students
- b. Give attendance a high profile
- c. Praise students for arriving on time
- d. Discuss the reasons when students are late or absent without explanation
- e. Keep an accurate register
- f. Speak to students about their attendance
- g. Monitor and praise students who are above 96%
- h. Pass on any absence notes from parents to the Attendance Officer
- i. Promote the weekly attendance fixtures.

The Attendance Officer will:

- a. Oversee administration of the SIMS register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour and Student Welfare
- b. Keep parents and Heads of Year informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised
- c. Support the work of the Leadership Team, Senior Progress Leaders, Heads of Year and Tutors by:
  - providing regular attendance information required at each level
  - making home contact on the first day of absence
  - monitor attendance and punctuality, alerting Tutors and Leaders when concerns arise
  - ensuring high priority students are in school; if absent calling or visiting home to advise to report to the police as 'truancy as a concern' and calling the school with the incident number
  - home visits where necessary
  - updating CPOMS with relevant information
  - liaising with Senior Progress Leaders & Heads of Year to monitor the accuracy of record keeping
  - liaising with off-site provisions for attendance data
  - working with colleagues and parents to identify the causes of non-attendance
  - facilitating meetings with Senior Progress leaders, Local authority, Tutors and parents keeping records of the same
  - identify 'user defined' attendance groups, i.e. <90% and monitor their improvement

The Pastoral and Attendance Co-ordinator will:

- a. produce attendance and punctuality reports to the Attendance Officer to inform the first day of absence actions
- b. provide daily lates detention lists to Heads of Year
- c. maintain the SIMS register system, ensuring that the relevant and appropriate codes are entered
- d. send text messages to parents upon request of the Attendance Officer

Parents should:

- a. ensure that children leave for school on time, everyday
- b. Provide written explanation for children's absences from The Deanery
- c. Endeavour not to take children out of The Deanery during term time
- d. Notify the school as soon as problems arise with a child's attendance
- e. If no letter has been sent in advance, make contact with the school on the first morning that the child is absent

Year 7 - 11 students must:

- a. arrive before 8.45am each day
- b. be on time for lessons
- c. make sure that a note is sent into school from parents to explain any absences
- d. if late, but arriving before 9.10am, sign in at the attendance desk
- e. if later than 9.10am, seek out the Attendance Officer

- f. if leaving school early sign out at student reception.

Year 12 - 13 students must:

- a. arrive five minutes before their first lesson of the day
- b. be on time for lessons
- c. swipe in upon arrival and out upon exiting
- d. arrive before 8.45am every Friday for assembly
- e. Lower 6<sup>th</sup> will begin A2 courses immediately after the AS examinations
- f. provide medical evidence when requested

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Granting approval for term-time absence, the Headteacher 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 occasions when it is unavoidable to arrange an appointment other than during the school day, or an event that is compulsory and that its timing is not within the control of the family such as a religious event.

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 and must be requested in good time before the event.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- o Illness and medical/dental appointments, as explained in sections 5 & 6.
- o 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
- o 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 on this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### **Rewards and Interventions for Attendance**

The 'Every Day Matters' flowchart in the appendix details the level of support at The Deanery for attendance.

#### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

Assemblies – the school will use assemblies to raise the profile of attendance, 'Every Day Matters' and its impact upon achievement. Students will be publically recognised, celebrated and rewarded for having above regular attendance.

School News, Website and Social Media – the school will raise the profile of attendance and its 'Every Day Matters' programme. We will publicise our strategies used to tackle absence and poor punctuality.

Rewards – students will be rewarded for regular attendance through letters of praise and qualification to attend reward trips and events such as the School Prom. However, the most valuable reward will be their achievement in relation to their peers.

Breakfast Club – students who are invited to attend due to being disadvantaged or vulnerable can attend Breakfast Club before school and receive a free breakfast. This will ensure that our most vulnerable have a good start to their day.

Attendance and Punctuality Triage Desk – pupil entrance will be staffed by SLT and the Attendance team between 8.40am and 9.10am to challenge poor punctuality and sanction students.

Any pupil who arrives after 8.45am will receive a break time detention. Exceptions will only be granted to those pupils who have provided the school with prior evidence of a medical appointment.

Any pupil who arrives after 8.45am on two or more occasions in the same week will receive an after school detention.

### **Legal Sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their 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 issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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.

Sixth Form students are not eligible for legal sanctions, however failure to meet regular attendance criteria can lead to attendance contracts and/or removal from the course

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

## Appendix

### Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfES guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	An authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	The pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	The pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	The 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	The 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	A pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	The 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## 'Every Day Matters' Approach

Our Target is 100% attendance for all students at The Deanery with 98% regarded 'regular attendance'. Falling below that is not in line with our expectations.

Persistent Absence (PA) is defined for any child with an absence of 10% or greater.

Attendance maintenance Focus

Student identified by HOY and Tutor for positive rewards

Positive Letter sent home

HOY invite student on School trip and reward visits

**STAGE 1**  
**Attendance**

100%

Student is encouraged by tutor and the importance of regular attendance

HOY invites student on reward trips and visits

Student attends regularly

Attendance officer monitors to ensure that attendance does not drop below 98%

**STAGE 2**  
**Attendance**

98-100%

Parent, Student and Attendance Officer sign an attendance contract with clear targets

HOY continues to support. Attendance improves to at least 96%

Attendance Officer will monitor and confirm all absences through home visits

Barriers to attendance are identified and a supportive action plan is put into place to raise attendance

Attendance falls below 98% and Parent may be into school to discuss with the attendance officer

**STAGE 3**  
**Attendance**

Concern

<98%

A further 20-day review is commenced after an initial successful 20 days – this process can continue if the family engage and attendance continues to rise

Parent fails to attend Stage 4 Review with SLT or student fails to attend during 20-day review

Parent invited to meet with Assistant Headteacher to arrange a panel interview to assess the current situation and advise family of possible legal procedures.

**STAGE 4**  
**Attendance**

<90%

Family do not engage or 20-day review fails leads to Fixed Penalty/ Court Prosecution

Parent fails to attend Stage 4 Review with SLT or student fails to attend during 20-day review

Attendance Officer sends Stage 4 letter including the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice

Student placed on 20 days review