



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Good attendance is vital if students are to achieve their full potential

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular and punctual attendance for their child/children.

Any absences disrupt learning. There is a direct link between good attendance and high attainment: students do their best when they attend school regularly. This maximises the impact of the teaching and learning that students experience at the College.

Post 16 Colleges and prospective employers also view good attendance and punctuality as significant indicators of positive attitudes to learning and they request such information in post 16 applications.

Facts: 'Good' attendance is defined nationally as 95% or above. A day at school equals 2 sessions and there are 380 sessions in each academic year. 95% attendance equates to 10 days absence during the school year and 90% attendance equates to 20 days (i.e. 4 weeks absence)

The College has a system of rewards for good attendance, which includes 100% certificates per term and for the academic year. Year teams also have reward schemes pertinent to their year group. Achievements are recognised in College Assemblies and within tutor groups.

Student Well-being

The College will follow up any concerns that parents/ carers may pass on to us that may be affecting a student's attitude to, or feeling of well-being in, school. The pastoral teams will help students to reintegrate back into school after periods of absence for long-term illness or other individual circumstances. It is important, therefore, that parents/carers make us aware as soon as possible of any situations which may have a direct effect on the students' attendance or well-being.

Attendance Procedures

The College has various strategies in place to encourage good attendance and to monitor overall attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

- students are registered electronically at the start of the school morning (8.50am) by form tutors and at the start of the afternoon session (2.10pm) by the class teacher
- students should be punctual to school and to individual lessons
- students who arrive after these times are recorded as being late on the register and the situation is monitored by the form tutor and the head of year
- students who arrive after the registers have been taken are marked with a 'U' code, which signifies an absence for the whole session (am or pm)
- parents/ carers will be informed of any concerns about a lack of punctuality to school
- parents/carers should inform the College of the reason for any absence. We would request that an absence is reported by telephone to Mrs Phipps, the Attendance Assistant (01954 288762) on **each** morning of any absence
- Mrs Phipps makes first-day contact via a phone call to enquire about any unreported absences
- parents/ carers should provide medical notes for on-going illness. In cases where a prolonged absence is necessary the school will liaise with parents/carers to support students' well-being and achievement
- Each half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- Parents are asked to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where these are unavoidable, staff at the College should be made aware prior to the appointment taking place. A 'present' mark may still be awarded if the student attends for as much of the session as possible.

Attendance: data and monitoring

Attendance and punctuality is monitored by form tutors, heads of year, pastoral assistants, the Attendance Officer, the Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance and the Education Welfare Officer.

- individual student data will be used to quickly identify patterns of absence which cause concern
- contact will be made with parents/carers to raise awareness of falling attendance; this may be by letter or phone call according to the individual situation
- details of a student's attendance and punctuality will be given to parents at the various reporting stages throughout the academic year
- absenteeism is monitored closely and heads of year and form tutors receive a weekly bulletin about students for whom no reason for absence has been given. The deputy with responsibility for overseeing attendance also receives this information
- The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 85% over the school year. This adds up to missing almost half a term. These are called "persistent absentees" (PA) by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.
- students who are persistently absent will be placed on the persistent absenteeism register and this will trigger higher levels of intervention according to individual cases.
- Where there is significant absenteeism the College will seek advice and request follow-up from the Education Welfare Service. This may involve the College arranging a Parenting Contract Meeting or referring on to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- In extreme cases or poor attendance the Education Welfare Officer may initiate legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their legal responsibility to get their child to school.

Requesting leave of absence, including holidays

- ***Please note: requests for a term-time holiday is NOT a parental right. A letter or email form home does not automatically make an absence valid, justified or authorised.***
- The Department for Education (DFE) has issued strict guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences.
- Any requests for leave of absence must be sought from the Headteacher. Such requests may only be granted if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
- Students can collect a Leave of Absence form from Student Services. This form should be returned to Student Services at least two weeks in advance of the requested leave of absence.
- The College will not authorise holidays retrospectively
- If leave is taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'. Parents/ carers may then be subject to a warning from the College, receive a Penalty notice or face prosecution in court.
- Penalty notice (per parent, per child).

When paid within 21 days - £60

When paid after 21 days but before 28 days - £120. Any decision to impose a penalty notice will only be taken after consultation between the College and the Education Welfare Officer

Authorised Absences

Valid or justified absences fall into the following categories:

- (i) a student is ill or receiving medical attention;
- (ii) days of religious observance; the College must be notified in advance;
- (iii) absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness);

In cases where unforeseen events may necessitate absence from College, professional discretion will be used to determine whether the absence can be authorised.

Other routinely approved absences include:

- approved sporting activities;
- school trips and visits;
- work experience;
- other approved educational activities (AEA).



Unauthorised absences

Absences are deemed to be unauthorised if:

- there is no letter or acceptable explanation given by parents/ carers
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the authorised categories above
- leave of absence has not been granted by the Headteacher

Summary

- Regular and consistent attendance is an essential element for effective learning and achievement.
- Good attendance is a significant indicator of positive attitudes to learning and to school.
- It is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure that their child/ren attend(s) school regularly and that they are punctual.
- Failure to attend may be an indication that there is a well-being or safeguarding issue; the College has a responsibility to follow up any concerns raised, or any perceived concerns, as to why a student has poor attendance and/or is often late to school.
- The best way to support and encourage good attendance and punctuality for each child is to establish a close working partnership between home and school.