



## Attendance Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects schools and local authorities:

- To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence.
- To parents and carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- To all pupils to be punctual to school and their lessons.

### **School Attendance - Statutory guidance and departmental advice- Department for Education (DfE) (September 2013)**

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. Penketh High School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Penketh High School values all students. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

### **Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive appropriate full time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Students are expected to continue in education or training for a further two years until the age of 18.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & Amendment 2013 requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### **Aims**

- To promote good attendance and punctuality to and within school amongst all students.
- To meet targets set by the Local Authority regarding attendance.
- To enable all students to have full access to the curriculum through regular attendance.
- To enable students to return to school after a period of absence with any necessary support.



## Parental Responsibilities

- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to educate their children and can be prosecuted if they do not meet this obligation.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child arrives to school promptly each day. (The school in loco-parentis, is responsible for the child from the start of the school day)
- Parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of absence if the school has not previously been informed between the hours of 7.00 a.m. and 8.45 a.m. and maintain daily contact should the absence continue
- Parents/carers must avoid taking holidays in school time and if they cannot do so must apply to the Principal for permission in advance
- Permission for absence due to holiday will only be granted in exceptional circumstances

## School's Responsibilities

- The school will enable all students to achieve their full potential and expect regular attendance to best prepare them for life after school.
- The school will report the pupil's attendance record each term on the Progress Review Reports.
- The school will inform parents in cases of known truancy.
- The school will inform parents on the first day of absence.
- In the case of absence due to prolonged illness the school will provide work in liaison with parents/carers.
- When the number or frequency of absences gives cause for concern or the attendance falls below 90% parents will be contacted by the school's Attendance Officer and the LA Attendance Team.
- Parents of pupils that arrive late to school will be informed by text message before 10:00am that day.
- Persistent lateness will be treated seriously and parents will be informed each time a pupil is late to school. Pupils that are late to school are expected to make up the time at lunchtime. Parents of pupils that are persistently late will be required to attend a meeting in school to discuss the issue and agree a way forward.

## Categories of Absence

**Authorised** – Parents have informed the school of the absence and the reason for it. This has been agreed as reasonable by the school. Reasonable reasons are listed below:

- Absence due to student illness for which a communication has been received from the parents
- Other authorised circumstances, e.g. bereavement, serious family crisis, emergency school closures etc.
- Any form of exclusion
- Family holiday for which leave has been granted due to exceptional circumstances only
- Medical (GP or hospital appointment or dental appointment for treatment) absent for the whole session only. Routine check-up appointments should be made for outside school hours wherever possible
- Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong
- Transport difficulty (if no alternative available)

**Unauthorised absence** is recorded when parents have not contacted the school or where the reason for the absence is inappropriate and not acceptable to the school, i.e.

- Sibling's school is closed
- Shopping



- Holidays during term time that have not been granted permission for exceptional circumstances by the Principal
- Parents/carers are expected to avoid making dental, medical or opticians appointments during the school day as these are available after hours and in holiday periods. Should an appointment in school hours be unavoidable students are expected to only be out of the school during the appointment time only and under no circumstances should a student be absent for a whole day. Please provide evidence for such appointments no later than 24 hours before.
- If an absence is likely to be prolonged, please contact the Pastoral team so arrangements can be made to send work home

## Approved Educational Activity off Site

- Receiving education off site or other than at the school where registered
- Approved sporting activity
- Work experience/placement
- Educational visit or placement (including college-link courses)

## Holidays

- From the 1st September 2013 the government has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 so as to remove Principals' right to authorise holidays in term time. This will take effect from 1st September 2013 and applies to all maintained schools and special schools not maintained by the Local Authority. Therefore from September 2013 holidays will not be authorised unless extreme circumstances. All holidays and appointments should be made outside of school time and should not impact on attendance.
- There are thirteen weeks available for family holidays during the year and holidays in school time are only allowed in exceptional circumstances
- In the case of an unavoidable holiday in term time, parents must ask permission from the Principal two weeks in advance explaining the circumstances behind the request
- If the school gives permission this will appear as an authorised absence on the child's records
- If the school does not consider the reason to be acceptable or there are a number of requests then this would be recorded as an **UNAUTHORISED** absence on the child's records. The parent/carer would be informed of this before the commencement of the holiday

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state;

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & Amendment 2013. This means that the child may lose their school place.

Only in exceptional circumstances will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be authorised.

It must be understood that the permission would be given at the discretion of the Principal.



## Monitoring

Form Tutors, The Attendance Team and Heads of House will regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils and discuss any concerns with parents. If attendance/punctuality continues to present a problem, they will involve the Director of Learning (Attendance) and the Local Authority Attendance Officer. Robust tracking systems are used to ensure student absence is quickly identified to enable staff to work closely with students and parent/carers to intervene effectively and efficiently.

## Reward System

As a way of encouraging good attendance, the Attendance Team will work with each Head of Year to monitor those students who achieve above 96 % attendance each half-term and reward students in Achievement Assemblies.

Students who have 100% attendance for the Academic Year will receive a certificate and an award at the end of the year in Achievement Assemblies. Other students may also be rewarded at the discretion of the Attendance team and the Head of Year, for example those with significantly improved attendance. All students will receive a certificate for their annual attendance according to their final attendance percentage.

- Bronze Attendance Award being (96-98% attendance)
- Silver Attendance Award being (98-99% attendance)
- Gold Attendance Award being (100% attendance)
- Platinum Attendance Award being 100% attendance for successive years.

The students will be also be rewarded with attendance bonus weeks as a means of raising attendance at times identified when it is likely to drop.

## Students with Attendance and Punctuality Concerns

Students with poor attendance/punctuality patterns will be placed on special report. The report will be monitored by the Form Tutor and any problems will be referred to the Head of Year.

Students with poor records will also be referred to the School Attendance Officer who will work and liaise with the LA Attendance Team. It is the role of this School Attendance Officer and the LA Attendance Team to become involved with the family. Pastoral Support Programmes may be put in place for some students.

In the case of students with poor attendance/punctuality records the following strategies may be considered:

- Special report
- Change of Form Group
- Change of Curriculum
- Involvement of the Attendance Officer
- Involvement of external services and providers.
- Involvement of Learning Mentors
- Involvement of Inclusion team

## Punctuality

It is important that students arrive promptly each day. Pupils who arrive after 8:45 will be marked as late. The Student will be issued with a late slip and expected to attend a late detention that break time. Should the student fail to complete the break detention, parents will be informed and the student expected to complete an after school 30 minute detention. Failure to complete the previous Sanction will be dealt with in line with the whole school Behaviour policy. Late arrival is registered on the system and a text message will be sent to parents. The number of minutes late will be recorded and totalled for information. Parents will be informed in writing if a pupil has arrived late to school on 3 occasions in a half term. Pupils will make up the time they have missed after school and will be monitored on report card for a period of 2 weeks. If pupils arrive late on a further 3 occasions in the same half term, parents will receive a second letter inviting



them to a meeting in school with the Attendance Team and Head of Year to discuss the reasons for lateness. Students arriving after 10:05 a.m. will be marked absent for the morning session. All students should obtain a mark in the register when they are present in school.

## Children in Care

The school will endeavour to ensure that these children achieve their academic potential, attend school regularly and are monitored closely. The school co-ordinator for Children in Care is the **Assistant Principal (Climate for Learning)** and could also be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & 2013 Amendment, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfers between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than 4 months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the local authority has failed to locate the student

Penketh High School will follow Warrington Borough Council's missing education protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Penketh High School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parent/carers
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a governor committee to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure there is a named person to lead on attendance within the school
- Ensure the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The school will:



- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with parents/carers and students
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences that encourages all students to attend and to achieve
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site are implemented.

Request that parents/carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance
- Contact the school, on a daily basis, if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow up this with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the head teacher in advance of booking the holiday

## **Support Systems**

Penketh High School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/Carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance record or behaviour in school eg bereavement, divorce/separation, and incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Penketh High School also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Time limited reduced timetables
- Reintegration support packages
- Reward systems



Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occur, Penketh High School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **Related Policies and Procedures**

- This policy to be read in conjunction with these other school policies and guidance:
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- E-Registration Policy
- School attendance - Statutory guidance and departmental advice. (DfE September 2013)

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