

# Colyton Grammar School

## ATTENDANCE

### PRINCIPLES

This policy aims to ensure consistent practice which encourages the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance helps students to make good progress and enjoy learning. Therefore, the school expects that the policy is adhered to by all involved. We take a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance; it is the joint responsibility of parents, students and staff. We endeavour to work with students and parents to ensure that any problems or circumstances which may lead to poor attendance are addressed. The school is expected to reach minimum standards and be accountable for investigating absence and will therefore take a robust approach to attendance as a whole.

Attendance rates are generally good, but there may be some students for whom the data indicates unacceptable absence. Constant striving for improvement is part of the school's ethos.

The school is required by law to record and publish rates of absence to include unauthorised absence. It is therefore imperative that registers are accurately marked and unexplained absences are investigated.

### PRACTICE

#### Daily Routines

Parents are reminded of daily routines annually.

Students should be in their tutor rooms by the 8.50am registration bell. Registration and assembly are key parts of the school day. A warning bell sounds at 8.45am. Tutors and students should be in form rooms ready to register at 8.50am, when a second bell will ring. Registration closes at 8.55am. Students arriving at or after 8.55am must sign in using the automated screen in Reception, including a valid reason, then proceed to registration or assembly. The register will be marked with "L" which will allow staff to recognise those students who have missed important information, or have issues with punctuality. Students arriving after 8.55am due to a late bus will be given the code "Y". This will allow monitoring of any aspect of tutor time or assembly the student has missed and also to monitor buses' punctuality. "Y" will not count as a 'late' on students' records. Students arriving after the close of registration and after the start of period 1, without an acceptable reason, will be coded as "U" indicating an unauthorised absence.

If leaving school premises before the end of the school day, students must always sign out using the automated screen in Reception and include a valid reason, even if permission has already been granted.

In the event of illness in school no student is permitted to sign out without first seeking permission from the relevant member of staff, usually Mrs MacLean, in Resources, who will inform relevant Heads of Sector, form tutors and others involved in monitoring attendance.

Parents should notify school of the reason for an absence before 9.30am. Parents who do not contact the school will be contacted as part of 'first day calling'. Parents are expected to contact the school for each day of absence.

#### Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Absence for the following reasons is authorised but patterns of absence will be monitored and investigated if necessary:

- Illness. Following 10 school days of illness a request for medical evidence will be made before any further illness absence can be authorised
- Medical appointments. Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Except for very rare occasions there is no need for any student to take a whole day

off school for an appointment. Parents must show the appointment card or hospital letter to the school. Information must be provided in advance of the appointment whenever possible. Sixth Form students who do not wish parents to know about an appointment must provide advance notification. If no notification is received, parents will be asked to confirm the appointment and Sixth Form students will need to bring proof (e.g. an appointment card or hospital letter)

- Funerals: advance notice is required in writing or email/phone call
- External examinations (e.g. dance, music, drama etc.): L5 form required (permission subject to satisfactory attendance). Parents are advised where possible to organise external examinations outside of school time. Where this is not possible, students must attend school, for part of the day. Parents must show exam entry to the school. Information must be provided in advance of the examination whenever possible.
- University Visits (subject to Sixth Form guidelines being followed): authorisation granted on receipt of completed forms
- Study Leave, set by the school, is “authorised”, however it does affect attendance levels. Students must attend unless they have been specifically granted study leave

The law states that the Headteacher can authorise absence in exceptional circumstances, and that this must be sought in advance of the proposed absence using the L5 form. Examples of Unauthorised Absence are:

- A satisfactory explanation of absence has not been provided after the period specified above
- Truancy
- Staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives
- Birthdays (of the student or a relative)
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Attending concerts or having days out to attend local events
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about by letter, email or phone call and approved
- Holiday during term time

Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

### **Recording and Responding to Absence**

When a child is absent, the code “N” is used initially by the teacher. This code will be changed to an “I” if and when the child has been certified ill by the parent, or a medical professional, should this have been requested. Parents are asked to wait for 10 days after an absence before querying any code. After this time, if an absence is still unresolved, an email or letter is sent requesting a reason for absence. If an acceptable reason has not been received five working days after the emails have been issued, the “N” code (unexplained absence) will be changed to “O” (unauthorised absence). The appropriate SLT member will investigate unauthorised absence and advise the Headteacher. Should it be necessary, the Headteacher will consult with the school’s EWO. This can involve speaking to the parents, investigating the case, requiring improved attendance and, in some circumstances, prosecution.

Attendance percentages are monitored closely over the academic year and the expectation is that students will achieve a percentage level of 97% equating to about six days absence a year. We recognise that some students, for legitimate reasons, will not achieve this figure. Attendance reports for all students will be produced half termly.

## Persistent Absence/Suspicious Absence

### Staged approach to attendance concerns

Stage	Threshold Attendance	Action
1	<95%	Tutor phone call to parents to offer support
2	<93%	"Amber" Attendance letter sent home (HOY Approved)
3	<90%	"Red" Attendance letter, HOY organises meeting with parent , possible attendance contract, EWO informed
4	<90% no improvement	EWO Intervention

- The Head of Year responsible for oversight will use absence data to monitor attendance. Where there is either persistent absence or where a pattern of absence gives rise to concern the matter will be investigated further by a member of SLT.
- If a member of staff has reason to suspect that an absence could be truancy then the matter must be referred to the SLT member who will contact parents/home as soon as possible and refer to the Headteacher where necessary.
- Where a student's overall attendance falls below 93% threshold the parents will be contacted by letter to offer support, and outlining the implications of low attendance.
- Where a student's overall attendance continues to decline and falls below 90% threshold the parents will receive a second letter outlining the implications of persistent absence.

## Sixth Form

Year 12 and Year 13 students are role models for the rest of the school. As such, they are expected to play a full and integral part in school life, including following the same rules of punctuality and attendance as the rest of the school. Students must remain in school at all times and not leave early or arrive late. Sixth formers are expected to attend school each day. If a student has a study period for the last lesson of the day they sign in using the automated screen in Reception between 15:15 and 15:35. The Sixth Form Contract specifies this requirement. Students will be warned that they may be removed from the Sixth Form register where:

absence without satisfactory explanation exceeds 10%

If there is an inadequate response after a warning letter the matter must be referred to the Headteacher.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Trustees

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the trustees will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance

- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children, and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets
- take time to review attendance issues as they arise
- ensure that the school is implementing effective recording and organisation of data, including for children who are educated off-site
- understand how to analyse attendance data, including for vulnerable groups, and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- use data to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future
- ensure that data is used within the school to measure the impact of strategies used to improve attendance.

## **SLT**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- actively promote the importance of excellent attendance to students and their parents
- develop positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance which is beneficial for their own progress
- coordinate with the trustees to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness annually
- ensure all staff understand the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure the school complies with government legislation on attendance
- nominate or appoint a senior leader to be responsible for the oversight of attendance policy and practice
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance matters
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- work closely with the EWO and other agencies where necessary to improve attendance where required
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- ensure that the local authority is informed in a timely manner if students cease to attend.

## **Students**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that students:

- understand that regular attendance is imperative to ensuring they reach their learning potential academically *and* socially
- talk to their tutor or other member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties which might impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons punctually ready to learn, with the appropriate equipment
- bring notes and requested information promptly
- follow precisely school procedure if they arrive late

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

The school recognises that there may be times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends. The Headteacher will authorise what he considers reasonable absence on these occasions. Parents will be aware of these dates and must submit to the school a written request in advance.

No other equality issues have been identified.

## **Conclusion**

Clear expectations clear procedures and careful monitoring should ensure optimum attendance.