

Benton Park School

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

A student's absence will have a serious impact on his or her attainment. He or she needs to know that every absence is noticed and appropriate action is always taken.

This Policy intends:-

to improve student attainment and achievement levels

Student attainment and achievement is enhanced by good attendance. Any absence leads to disjointed learning, missed learning experiences and may cause difficulties with relationships. It may also lead to a threat to the security of students or to opportunities for them to engage in anti-social behaviour.

The attendance of a student at school is central to meeting the agenda of Every Child Matters. Attendance is central to safeguarding.

Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the school, the parent/carer and partners in Education Leeds, the Police and Social Services. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school and it is the role of Education Leeds through its Attendance Service to ensure parents fulfil this responsibility.

The key leaders in Benton Park for maintaining and improving attendance and punctuality are the Head of Year(HOY), Attendance Officer(AO), Behaviour support and Inclusion Officers(BSIO), Health Officer(HO) and Form tutors(FT) in conjunction with Attendance Leader (SLT) and external support agencies. However **all staff** have a responsibility to ensure they deliver a motivating and relevant curriculum to all students and make them feel wanted and valued members of our community.

Role of the School

- To deliver a motivating, relevant, accessible curriculum to all students.
- To maintain high expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality; all students should be aware that their presence is appreciated and that their absence is noted.
- To collect and maintain accurate data on attendance and punctuality.
- To reward good attendance
- To use sympathetic re-integration strategies for long-term absentees.
- To provide parents/carers in good time with the necessary information to enable them to meet their obligations. This includes:
 - the times of the school day
 - school dates and holidays
 - school procedures relating to attendance and punctuality
 - school expectations regarding lateness

- o prompt communication of matters causing concern

Role of parents/ carers

Parents/carers have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. Consequently;

They should ensure the school has accurate residence and contact details

The school expects parents/carers communicate with the school giving a reason

- I. in advance of any absence e.g. by phone between 7.30 and 8.30am
- II. immediately following any unplanned absence (the next session) via the planner
- III. during any absence expected to last more than three days

Parents/carers who do not conform to the above will be contacted and requested to provide an explanation of their child's absence.

Non-compliance will be documented and information passed to the Schools Attendance Improvement Officer.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absence is where the school accepts there is good reason for absence. An authorised absence requires a written or telephone communication from the parent/carer. A student's own word cannot be taken as reason for absence. The school will attempt to make contact on the first and every successive day of absence unless word has been received from parents/carers about reasons for an extended absence. The school uses the electronic contacting system : Keep Kids Safe.

Students who return to school following an absence must have the appropriate section of their planner completed. Failure to do this will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence is any absence which does **not** fall into the following categories:

- a) Absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause
- b) An approved absence for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong
- c) There is no acceptable transport and the school is not within walking distance
- d) Situations where the school authorises absence e.g. work experience
- e) For information concerning holidays see section below.

HOLIDAYS

The school expects that parents will take their holidays during the approved school breaks. However, up to 10 days may be authorised in exceptional cases. No student is expected to be absent from school on holiday during September and such absences will not be authorised. Holidays will not be authorised for pupils with attendance on or below 90%. This approach is reflected in all documentation provided for new and existing students and forms part of the home-school agreement.

COLLECTION OF DATA

Registration

Electronic registration takes place at 8.35 and 1.45. Staff are responsible for the sending of registers on time via SIMS. All classrooms have a computer which is used for registration.

During Lessons

Registers are taken of all classes in the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Absence and lates are recorded electronically and the information is used by HOY, BSIO's and Form teachers in order to develop effective action strategies.

Use of data

The efficient and speedy collection of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. Data is required to monitor

Individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons

Patterns of lateness and absence especially in respect to:

- a) Tutor Groups and Year Groups
- b) Vulnerable groups e.g. .LAC, FSM
- c) Daily and Seasonal patterns
- d) Unauthorised absence and truancy

Responding to absence

There is a range of situations where the school needs to respond:

Unauthorised or unexplained absence of one day or more Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer via the Keep Kids Safe system

Unexplained absence of three days or more, when a child has not returned to school – Attendance Officer will follow up with a phone call to parent/carer. In the event of no contact being made the Attendance Officer should make vigorous attempts by all means possible to speak to the parent/carer or other family members. Failure to do so should be reported to the HOY and AIO. The AIO will arrange to visit the home. The Attendance Officer will continue to attempt to make contact and report daily to the HOY.

A pattern of absence, broken weeks, with parental notes, over a period of time –Attendance Officer to alert HOY, BSIO who will make contact with parent. If due to illness Health Officer will make initial enquiries.

Unexplained absence from lesson during a session: student given whole subject detention for truancy

Unexplained absence from a session: student given day in isolation area.

It is important that parents/carers are aware of absences and lateness and of their responsibility to account for all such events, and that all action taken is documented, often using SIMS behaviour record and the student planner.

Use of Rewards

The importance of good attendance and punctuality must be regularly promoted through tutor time, the curriculum and assemblies.

A variety of rewards should be given for consistently high attendance. These may vary according to the Key Stage involved.

Persistent absentees

Any student who is absent for more than 80% of teaching time falls into the category of Persistent Absentee. It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to identify the vulnerable students whose absences falls below 90% and to pass this information on to the HOY so appropriate action can be taken

Action will be taken:

Above 90%	by Attendance officer
Below 90%	by HOY/BSIO who will contact parent/carer to discuss situation
Below 85%	HOY will ensure referral is made to AIO and arrange Panel Meeting with student, AIO HOY and improvement plan agreed
Below 80%	Parent/carer interview with Senior Manager No improvement AIO initiates fixed penalty notice and possible court proceedings.

Reintegration

When long-term absentees return to school it is important that they are sympathetically treated by all staff.

HOY ensures a reintegration plan is drawn up.

New Students

Students commencing school in year 7

The importance of good attendance and punctuality is clearly expressed at the Parents' Introduction Evening and forms part of the learning contract between school and parents.

Primary school records and liaison should be used by the Head of Year 7 to identify potential poor attendees who should be targeted for close monitoring from the beginning of term.

In the case of Year 7 students as soon as any indicator of unsatisfactory attendance is triggered the parent/carers should be contacted and interviewed.

At the end of the first term students with attendance less than 90% and with more than four interrupted weeks (other than holidays) will be contacted and advice and help offered in order to improve attendance. This will then be repeated in April.

In-Year Admissions

Such students often present a challenge to the school. All these students need to be monitored over their first few weeks at school including attendance and punctuality. As part of an interview for prospective entry this review process needs to be clearly articulated as a support to the student and as a means of directly involving the parent/carer in the achievement of their child

Lateness

Persistent lateness is often a significant indicator of under achievement.

Students will be deemed to be late and recorded as such if they arrive after the am/pm registration has been completed.

Registers will be closed by staff at 8.43am and 2.00pm. Students who arrive after these times must collect a late pass from the school office.

Students who arrive after 9.15am or 2.00pm will be regarded as having been absent and consequently they will be required to provide an acknowledgement from their parent/carer. Time of arrival will be recorded in their planners and this must be signed and acknowledged by the parent/carer. If there is no acknowledgment the parent/carer will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.

Lateness to school or lateness to lessons must be acted upon and parents made fully aware of the school's expectations concerning punctuality.

Dealing with lateness to school is a Year Team's responsibility

Dealing with lateness to particular lessons is the Subject teachers /Curriculum Leaders responsibility.

Persistent lateness to school and lessons , identified by SIMS reports and highlighted by the Attendance Officer should be dealt with by the Year team through monitoring, conversations, parental involvement and ultimately whole school detentions.

The appropriate sanctions and rewards to encourage attendance and punctuality are part of the Positive Behaviour Strategy (SLF).

Roles Checklist

Sessions 1 to 5 Subject teacher

- Take a register and send it within the first 10 minutes of the lesson and to recognise that session 5 is counted as pm registration and the duty is therefore a legal one
- Update and resend the register as late students arrive and to add the number of minutes late to the student's record

All Subject Teachers

- Benton Park acknowledges that the role of the subject teacher is vital in reinforcing good attendance and punctuality habits.
- Subject teachers should greet students at the door at the beginning of a lesson.
- Take a register and send it within the first 10 minutes of the lesson and to update it for late students.
- Follow up poor punctuality, absences and trancies through conversations with students, making it clear that their absence is always noticed and it will have consequences for their attainment.
- Reinforce good attendance and punctuality through praise ,rewards and sanctions as appropriate in line with the guidance in the SLF framework.

Form Tutors

- Promote a culture of attendance and punctuality.
- Have the first conversations with students whose absence, poor punctuality and truancy record causes any concern. Provide friendly advice and encouragement and to make any relevant party aware of possibly extenuating or concerning circumstances.
- Require students to provide written explanation for absence via their planner or other means.
- Update SIMS with reasons for absence.

- Every two weeks go through current attendance data with each student whose attendance is falling below 95%.
- Contact parents by letter or telephone on matters of concern re attendance and punctuality.
- Inform HOY of causes for concern.
- Implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance within tutor group.

Attendance Officer(AO)

- Process daily SIMS information and parental messages
- Liaise with form/subject teachers re absence and punctuality.
- Oversee first/second day calls – using Keep Kids Safe
- Make contact with Parents/Carers of students with 3 day unexplained absence.
- Provide fortnightly attendance and punctuality reports to all HOY and Attendance Leader.

Follow up unexplained absences with a letter.

- Attend link meetings with year teams to work through students who are a concern and decide action to be taken.

Head Of Year/ Behaviour Support and Inclusion Officers (BSIOs)

- Analyse information on attendance and punctuality looking for possible concerns.
- Monitor all students in the vulnerable attendance category. (90% and below).
- Make phone calls home and follow up with letters where attendance is a concern and log all actions taken.
- Send out positive attendance messages e.g. Assembly,
- Keep the link between attendance and attainment firmly in the minds of staff, parent/carer and students.
- Liaise with the AO to identify students causing concern and to communicate all action to the Attendance Leader(SLT).
- Interview students and parents re unsatisfactory attendance/behaviour and agree improvement strategies.
- Arrange/attend reviews in school.
- Liaise with AIO re advanced action.

The Head of Year should discuss with the Attendance Leader (SLT)

- Statistics for each Tutor Group to highlight trends.
- Details of students undergoing attendance related casework.
- Details of AIO liaison indicating all referrals and reasons and all outcomes.

Attendance Leader(SLT)

- Monitor and evaluate Year Team's response to attendance, poor punctuality and truancy
- Monitor whole school attendance.
- Review and evaluate school's attendance policy.
- Monitor and evaluate work of school's attendance officer and AIO.
- Report periodically to the Senior Management Team and Governors.

The Attendance Improvement Officer(AIO)

Much of Education Leeds' responsibilities to the school in the area of attendance is currently with the Attendance and Behaviour Service. The Attendance Improvement Officer provides an important bridge between home and school, by working with families to try to establish any underlying reasons for poor attendance and punctuality and providing strategies to deal with them. It is appropriate therefore that AIO's are brought in at the stage where Head of Year / parent discussions at school have not led to any significant improvement in attendance at school or such discussions cannot be initiated.

Consequently

- The AIO should liaise regularly with Attendance officer and check monitor serious attendance issues
- Set up Welfare meetings for students with an inappropriate number of broken weeks
- Make home visits for assessment of attendance problems
- Liaise with other agencies e.g. Parent Support Advisor; Social Care; Housing etc - to gather information and formulate action plans
- Discuss proposed action plans with Year Teams , Attendance Leader and parents to agree the way forward
- Liaise with other agencies, school staff and parents in following through the action plans
- Work with families and pupils on agreed plan (this may sometimes involve working with an individual pupil or group of pupils within the school setting on issues which are affecting school attendance)

- Discussion of action plans with home tutors if assigned in the action plan for improving attendance (normally this will be where a pupil is school phobic)
- Writing reports on individual attendance cases
- Maintain records on school attendance problems
- Prepare evidence for court action including application for education supervision
- **Advice School on the action to be taken re pupils deemed missing from education**

Updated by Attendance Leader SLT :June 2010

To be submitted to Governing Body for ratification :