



OLDFIELD SCHOOL

Attendance (Students) and Registration Policy

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Oldfield School regards regular attendance by students as essential if they are to benefit fully from the curriculum. It is also a legal requirement for those of compulsory school age. Responsibility for achieving the target of 96% for attendance is shared between parents and the school.
- 1.2 **Parents** must ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually and stays at school. Section 444 further states that: "*The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.*" Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 also states that: "*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability.*" Although there is no legal framework for Post 16 attendance and punctuality it is expected that all Oldfield students will have an exemplary record of attendance in order to support their learning.
- 1.3 **The school** must support attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance, and must publish its rates for absence. The school will work with parents and students to maximise attendance. This helps to foster positive relationships, high self-esteem, continuity of study and high achievement.

2. Procedures and Implementation

- 2.1 The tutor monitors attendance twice daily by being responsible for the registration of their tutor group.
- 2.2 Subject teachers register students in their lessons using Lesson Monitor and send concerns to the tutor. The tutor alerts the Head of House if there are problems who in turn alerts the Educational Welfare Officer if necessary.

3. Expectations of attendance

- 3.1 The Home School Agreement states the school's commitment to monitor carefully each student's attendance and give parents early warning of problems.
- 3.2 In accepting the school's Agreement, parents demonstrate their commitment to

ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually in accordance with the school's attendance policy and authorise his/her absence only when absolutely necessary.

- 3.3 The Headteacher informs parents of students of compulsory school age that they are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school. Parents are advised that they should inform school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence occurring. When the child is ill, they should inform the school of the nature of the illness. School will continue to monitor this absence until the child returns to school. On return, written confirmation of the reasons for absence should be provided.

4. Authorising Absence

- 4.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**.

- 4.2 **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes (doctor's authorisation may be required).

- 4.3 **Unauthorised absences** are those which are not considered reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy from a whole session
- children who arrive after registration has closed
- taking unauthorised holidays
- absences that have not been properly explained

- 4.4 Parents are expected to contact school and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties remain, the school may offer parents a formal meeting to discuss their child's attendance or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer.

- 4.5 **BY LAW ONLY THE SCHOOL CAN AUTHORISE ABSENCE, NOT PARENTS**

5. Holidays during Term Time

- 5.1 Oldfield School can only grant a leave of absence for family holidays during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. Leave of absence must be applied for **before** the holiday and the decision to authorise absence for holiday rests entirely with the school and is not a right. In responding to requests the school will underline the importance of regular attendance to the child's learning. Parents will be informed in writing of the school's decision.

- 5.2 If parents take their children on holiday in term time and leave of absence has not been granted, following the school's request, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. The Penalty Notice imposes a fine of up to £120 per parent per child.

- 5.3 Any sessions of education missed during the academic year due to holiday will be followed up with a warning letter notifying parents that any further absence taken due to holiday in term time could result in the School requesting that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice.
- 5.4 Holidays agreed by the school are authorised absences and shown by code H in the register.
- 5.5 Holidays not agreed by the school, but taken, are unauthorised absences and shown in the register by code G in the register.
- 5.6 Parents will be reminded regularly that it is not an automatic right to take holidays in term time.
- 5.7 Where a request for a leave of absence has been made by a parent with whom the child resides, any estranged parent with parental responsibility will be advised of the request for leave. The school will not become involved in disputes between parents over permissions surrounding the request. If the parent on receipt of the notification does not agree with the absence then he/she may put in writing to the Headteacher notification to that effect. This will be given consideration should a Penalty Notice be requested for the absence.

6. Monitoring of low attenders

- 6.1 The red card notification scheme is put in place for students with attendance concerns and a member of school staff will alert parents daily of their child's absence and seek reasons for absence. The tutor receives a red card for identified students, if any of these students are absent on a particular day, the cards are given to a designated member of staff who then contacts home.

7. Sanctions for unauthorised absence

- 7.1 Cases of non-attendance are dealt with by the Head of House in accordance with our attendance procedures. School procedures for non-attendance include - letters home, attending INSET days, 'on report' system and late detentions held on Friday after school. Persistent non-attendance can lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and attendance at a school attendance meeting. Persistent non-attendance could also resort in legal action.

8. Fixed Penalty Notices

8.1 What is a Penalty Notice?

- Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice does not require an appearance in Court but still aims to secure an improvement in attendance.

8.2 **How much will it be?**

- The fixed Penalty Notice will be £60 – if payment is made within 21 days. £120 – if paid after this but within 28 days.
- They are issued by post, to the parents/carers home address.

8.3 Penalty Notices may be used in to tackle unauthorised absence in the following circumstances:

- Where the parent/carer has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation, especially where the absence will lead to the child missing public examinations i.e. GCSEs.
- Where following a truancy sweep, enquires show that the school has recorded the pupil's absence for that session as unauthorised.
- In cases where pupils are persistently late for school after register has closed.
- In cases where a pupil's parents/carers fail to work with the school to improve attendance.

8.4 Penalty Notices may be issued to any or all parents/carers as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

8.5 Parents/carers will not be issued with more than 2 separate Penalty Notices per child in any twelve-month period.

8.6 Oldfield School does not take the decision to instigate legal action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to its enforcement powers. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that these powers will be used if this will help in securing a child's education.

8.7 **A Warning is Given**

- Parents should receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which tells them the extent of their child's absences and gives them 15 school days in which to effect and improvement. In that time their child must have no unauthorised absences from school. In some circumstances a Penalty Notice may be issued without a warning being issued.
- There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

8.8 There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

9. **Registration of Attendance**

9.1 Registration is taken by the tutor twice daily. Registration is taken at 8.30am. Any student arriving after this is required to sign the late form in reception. Any student arriving after 9.00am when the register is closed will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the session. Registration is also taken at 1.05pm. Any student who arrives after the session has closed at 1.15pm will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the session. Tutors

keep track of individual attendance rates, monitor reasons for absence through the Contact Book, and notify Heads of House when attendance causes concern.

9.2 The Office maintains a record of late arrivals and those leaving school during the day which is displayed for tutors to check and updates lesson monitor on SIMS.

- L - before 9 am
- U - after 9 am

9.3 To detect truancy, lesson monitor on SIMS is used by teachers, who refer any queries to the tutor/main office. The main office will notify the parent/guardian if a student's absence to a lesson is unexplained.

9.4 Once an absence has been marked as authorised in the register, it cannot be changed without a comment attached providing justification, this is important because it can be used, for example, in evidence to a court.

9.5 The blue register wallet must be returned at the end of both registration times to the main office every day.

9.6 Registers and monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of the tutors in the first instance. Tutors will ask students within their tutor group for letters explaining absence, look for patterns of absence or poor attendance. In addition they will comment on regular good attendance. If tutors have problems in obtaining letters authorising absences or are concerned about any aspect of attendance they should discuss this with their Head of House.

10. Encouraging good attendance

10.1 The importance of good attendance and punctuality is emphasised in the newsletter and in the tutorial programme, through regular feedback on their attendance, and recognition for good attendance in the form of awards from the Head of House termly.

- Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates are awarded each term.
- A board to celebrate attendance is updated termly.
- All students achieving Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates are awarded House points (25, 20, 25) entered into a lottery with a gift voucher as a prize.
- Annually the top 2 students in each House are presented with a special attendance award and prize.

10.2 Students have a self check on attendance in the contact book.

11. Discouraging avoidable absence

11.1 At the beginning of the academic year, attendance information from the previous year for each year and House group is reviewed.

11.2 Students are taught that every absence requires a valid reason, and rigorous monitoring takes place. Tutors ensure that evidence supporting the authorisation of absence is recorded, and refer cases causing concern to Heads of House.

- 11.3 Students whose attendance falls below 96% are identified and monitored. If the absences are authorised and medical, if appropriate, an individual support plan will be put in place.
- 11.4 If a student's attendance continues to decline to 93% the tutor discusses this with their tutee and closely monitors their attendance.
- 11.5 If the attendance drops further to 91% parents are informed by letter and reasons for absence are required and medical evidence will be requested. The Head of House closely monitors attendance.
- 11.6 If this attendance does not improve or remains at 91% a school attendance meeting is called with parents and school staff and consent to contact the GP is sought. A referral to the Educational Welfare Officer would be considered.
- 11.7 If attendance drops to 90% or below a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer.

12. Sixth Form Attendance

- 12.1 While students over the age of 16 are not included in the school's statutory responsibilities, the school recognises a need to support older students in achieving good attendance. Registration and internal monitoring systems mirror those for the compulsory school-age group. Parents are notified when tutor or teacher has a concern about attendance. Places in the Sixth form can be withdrawn if a student's attendance falls below 90%.

13. Study Leave

- 13.1 Study leave will only ever be granted to students in Year 11 who are about to sit public examinations as the school recognises that all students have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. However, there will always be alternative provision in school for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.
- 13.2 Year 11 students who are granted study leave should be marked on the attendance register as authorised absence using code S. No other attendance code is suitable for the purpose of study leave. Year 11 students who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly.

14. Child Performers

- 14.1 The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 on leave of absence do not affect the section that allows the parent of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. Section 2 of Regulation 7 still enables a head teacher to grant leave of absence for a student to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.

14.2 Parents of a child performer must first obtain a local authority licence before a child can take part in a performance.

14.3 Requests for absence for a child performer which has the support of a local authority licence will be individually assessed by the head teacher and will be supported as long as this will not have a negative effect on the student's education.

15. Monitoring levels of attendance and evaluating performance

15.1 Responsibilities

15.2 Tutor

- ensures that register information is kept accurate and up-to-date to the legal requirement;
- takes register each morning and afternoon at 8.30am and 1.05pm;
- collects written evidence to support authorisation of absence (collects written notes, updates registers and files notes in students files);
- investigates cases of unexplained absence from registration or lessons, contacting parents as agreed with Head of House;
- regularly monitors attendance rate and punctuality of individuals in group, notifying Head of House of any students causing concern;
- reports on attendance to parents at least once a year;
- passes on any red cards as necessary to the designated member of staff who contacts parents.

15.3 Head of House

- oversees overall year attendance;
- identifies poor attenders (below the target of 96%) and takes remedial action, in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and Assistant Headteacher; Pastoral;
- takes action regarding truancy and punctuality.
- monitors registers weekly noting cases of unexplained absence. Where appropriate, names are passed on to the designated person who follows up these absences by contacting parents by telephone. Letters will be sent to parents asking for reasons for absence and to arrange school attendance meetings.

15.4 Assistant Headteacher : Pastoral

- takes responsibility for monitoring the overall levels of attendance in relation to local and national averages, and reviewing strategies for achieving good attendance. The Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral relies on the Head of House's comment on the tutor group attendance breakdown, who in turn speaks with the tutor if there is a significant drop in levels, who in turn investigates and reports back to the Head of House. He or she also reviews the data on whole-school attendance collected termly, and agrees annual targets for attendance with LT link manager and link governor.
- identifies those students who are low attenders at primary school before their

arrival into Year 7. These students are monitored regularly by tutor and Head of House and attendance problems addressed promptly.

- deals with issues of inadequate registering and arrange appropriate training for staff.
- determines (in collaboration with the Headteacher and Head of House) whether to authorise any proposed absences.
- initiates with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance;

15.5 Teaching staff

- informs the (Head of House) of the names of students who are absent without notification;
- are responsible for the accurate official registration of students at the beginning of each lesson
- welcomes any student with long term absence back into the classroom without question.

15.6 Education Welfare Officer

- identifies students whose attendance is causing concern by monitoring data and inspecting registers;
- holds regular timetabled meetings with Heads of House, Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral.
- agrees with the Heads of House action plans to improve attendance of identified students, and contributes to the delivery of these by interviewing students, making home visits or giving formal written warnings to parents, and participating in school attendance meetings in conjunction with the Heads of Houses
- acts on referrals made by the school.

15.7 Parents

- ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- provide a note to cover any known absence;
- must inform the school in advance if seeking authorisation for absence.

15.8 Students

- are responsible for making sure that their attendance is maintained at the highest possible level;
- are responsible for being present at registration punctually;
- are responsible for ensuring that they receive their attendance mark and for bringing notes to school regarding absence;
- who are late must sign in.

15.9 Additional support that may be used

- Pastoral Support Worker
- School Nurse
- Off the Record
- Referral to outside agencies e.g. CAHMS, Social Services, 117, Parenting Support, Young Carers, SARI, Black Families Support.

16. Monitoring

- Registers are completed electronically on SIMS giving prompt access to attendance statistics.
- A member of staff may make a telephone call to check on absence.
- The policy is monitored through the systematic review of procedures and the publishing of attendance figures annually.
- The school attendance is monitored by the DfE, three times a year by means of a census.

17. Evaluation

- All Heads of House discuss matters relating to students' attendance with the Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral fortnightly.
- The Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral, with the Heads of House, agrees targets for school attendance which are annually reviewed.
- An annual evaluation exercise is undertaken to compare outcomes with those for previous years and with national data. It also assesses our success in different year groups and House groups.
- The Governing Body receives, as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors, data regarding attendance for their evaluation.

- This policy will be approved by SLT every two years.
- Date when policy was last approved: 12th November 2014
- Date when next review is due: November 2016