



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Philosophy**

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.

As a School we seek to ensure that all of our students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which students, staff, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work together to provide mutual information, advice and support.

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

### **Aims**

- To maintain and maximise the attendance of students in line with current legislation and guidelines.
- To encourage academic achievement by good attendance and punctuality.
- To encourage and reinforce good attendance and punctuality as a preparation for good practice in life.
- To engage with parents and other agencies efficiently in achieving these aims.
- To use positive recognition of students' attendance achievements.

### **To achieve our aims we will:**

#### **Statutory/Administrative**

- Keep accurate and up to date attendance registers in line with current legislation.
- Use the Sims registration system.
- Record student registration details in line with the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendment 2013.
- Keep a school roll that is regularly updated

- Provide a range of strategies based on reward and intervention to deal with absenteeism. Persistent absenteeism will be dealt with by the EWO.
- Be responsible for data capture, report production and the administration of the procedures.
- Collate and analyse data to identify trends and enable action to be taken.

### **Religious Festivals**

The Headteacher will authorise one day for religious observance. This day must be set by the relevant religious body, which may vary within a religion.

### **Improving attendance**

Improving attendance is a shared responsibility between students, parents/carers and teachers. In meeting this objective the school will do the following:

#### 1. Attendance Monitoring

- Provide House groups with attendance targets.
- Promote the league table for all students to encourage good attendance.
- Monitor groups to identify trends and concerns e.g SEND, LAC students

#### 2. Preventative steps

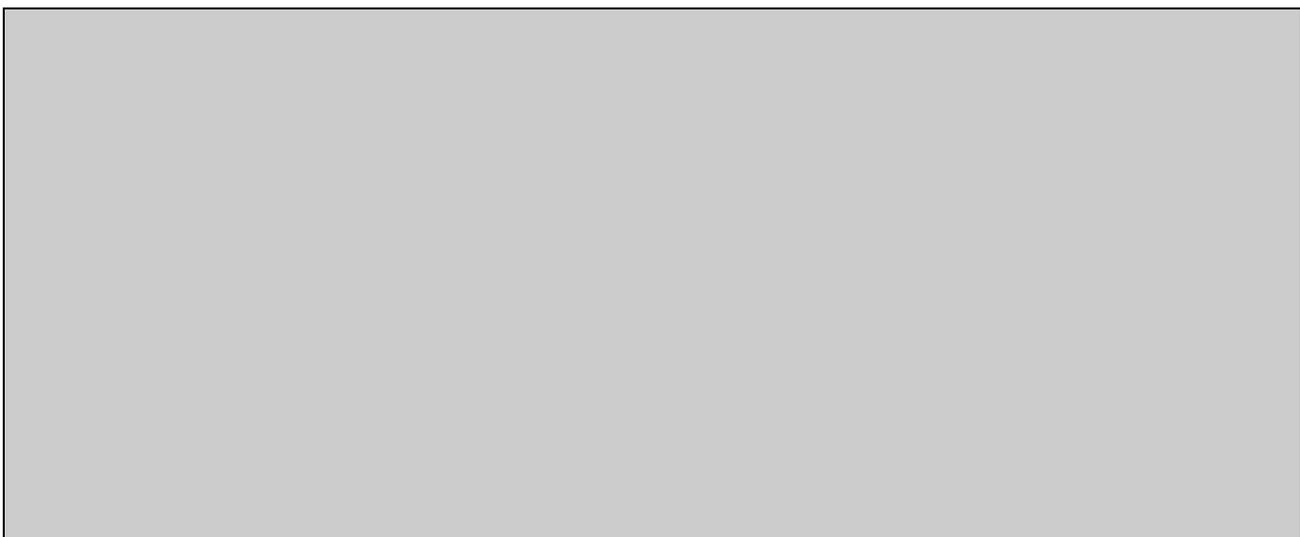
- House Support Assistants (HSAs) run detentions for poor punctuality and a system of early signing.
- Breakfast club, available to all students, encourages students to attend school on time.
- HSAs run Attendance Intervention Groups for students identified with low attendance
- House Leadership Teams work closely with the Education Welfare Service to achieve the best attendance from all students.

#### 3. Rewards and sanctions

- Weekly rewards are given to House Groups in assemblies with the best attendance.
- Celebration assemblies at the end of each half-term and term include a raffle opportunity to win a prize for those with 100% attendance
- Detentions are held for poor punctuality and Truancy cards can be given to students who are regularly late for lessons.
- Penalty Notices are issued to individuals' parents whose children could but won't improve their attendance.

#### 4. Support for Parents

- Texts are sent home after first registration to inform parents of their child's absence if information has not been provided by the parent
- House Parents, HSAs and House leadership teams identify poor attendance and address any concerns with parents.
- Parents with English as an Additional Language are communicated with in a variety of ways often by a native speaker. Attendance letters have been translated into Polish.
- HSAs conduct home visits in order to improve attendance of individual students.
- HSAs work with LA Early Help dept to support families in need of a variety of interventions including help to improve attendance.



### **Term Time Leave- Information for Parents**

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances and it is only for the Headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for any activities other than school.

#### **Leave of absence will not normally be authorised in the following circumstances:**

- Student's attendance is less than 97% in the previous 12 months
- During GCSE or other public examination years
- In years 10 and 11
- In a transition year
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other academic concerns such as poor punctuality, student's ability to catch up on the work missed etc
- If leave of absence has already been taken in the same school year

#### **We will also take into account the following:**

- The student's general absence/attendance record, e.g. Unauthorised absence
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Amount of time requested
- Age of the student
- Length of the proposed leave
- Student's ability to catch up on the work

- Student's educational needs
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity; and
- When the request was made

**Applications for Leave of absence**

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher by completing the school application form. A parent/adult with whom the child resides with must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

**If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply us with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school reception for us to copy.**

**Unauthorised Absence**

If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's school records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

**Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Headteacher's authorisation, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given.** Penalty Notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will need to pay the fine. From 1 September 2013 penalty notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days. Unpaid Penalty Notices will result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court.

The school makes the decision as to whether the request of leave should be granted or not and the Local Authority makes the decision to impose a penalty for this.

**Failure to return to school on the date expected**

If there is a reason which delays the student in returning to school the parent/guardian must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving unauthorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a student was unable to attend school.

**Roll Removal**

*A Student can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:*

- If you take your child on leave of absence which has been authorised by the school, but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absent from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return, then the school may remove your child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly.
- Or, if your child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence.

**Success Criteria**

- The Sims weekly and cumulative attendance will be reviewed against the targets of the year, regularly at the Punctuality and Attendance Review Meetings.
- The Lates figures will be reviewed at the Punctuality and Attendance Review Meetings.
- Success will be measured against the whole school target for attendance which will be set with the LA and shared with other agencies and governors.
- Measurement of these trends will be monitored using the Cumulative Attendance Trends (comparison of attendance and punctuality to the same period last year).
- Punctuality figures will be reviewed at the Attendance and Punctuality Review Meeting. Comparisons of Punctuality will be made with the same period in the year last year.

Approved by Governing Body of Ashcroft High School:	June 2017
Policy Review date:	September 2018
SLT staff responsible:	Mrs R Paul
Statutory Policy: Yes / No	Yes