



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy adapted from (if applicable): N/A

**Governing Body Sub-committee**

Name: Student Matters, Equality and Community  
Date approved: 11 October 2018

**Full Governing Body**

Date approved: N/A

This policy is for Parents/Carers, staff students and Governors.

## **Belper School Attendance Policy Statement**

At Belper School we know that good attendance is crucial to the future educational success of our students. Nationally, good attendance is defined as school attendance above 95% and students who fall below this level will not be able to fulfil their education potential. It is our mission to ensure that every student has access to a high quality education and the opportunity to engage positively with the school. It is important to us that all students are able to enjoy a feeling of belonging to their class and school community. Good attendance can only promote this.

- Of the students who miss less than 4% of school, 73% achieve 5 GCSEs grade 9-4 including English and Maths
- Of the students who miss between 10 – 20% of school only 35% manage to achieve 5 GCSEs grade 9-4 including English and Maths
- Of the students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 GCSEs grade 9-4 including English and Maths

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy with which staff, students and parents, the local community and the Educational Welfare Service work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and school will liaise with parents and outside agencies to support this. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. This policy states the school's focus and with it, the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Appendix 1 outlines the school's attendance procedures.

The Government defines good attendance as being above 95%

The Government defines a 'persistent absentee' student as one whose attendance is below 90%

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Students**

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To arrive at school by 8.35a.m and 12.55 p.m. ready to learn
- To attend registration promptly for both morning and afternoon sessions

#### **Parents**

- To ensure that your child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and ready to learn. **Regular attendance is a legal requirement.**
- To notify the school of absence by 8.40 a.m. on the day your child is ill
- To take family holidays in the school holiday period
- To book routine medical and dental appointments out of school time
- To provide up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility. **If the details change then the school must be informed as soon as possible.**

### **Tutors**

- To keep an accurate attendance register.
- To praise students for punctuality and good attendance.
- To play their part in the monitoring of students absence and act as a point of contact for a parent who is concerned about their child's health/attendance.
- To liaise with the Attendance Manager as appropriate around reasons for student absence

### **Head of Year**

- To maintain an overview of the attendance of students in their year group
- To liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and Attendance Manager around the attendance of their year group
- To monitor attendance and arrange for the parent to be informed when their child has dropped below 95% attendance
- To be a point of contact (along with the tutor) and offer appropriate support around improving the attendance
- To praise students for punctuality and good attendance

### **Attendance Team**

In Belper School there are support staff who play a key role in the monitoring and promoting of good attendance. One of these is the Attendance Manager, who maintains oversight of student attendance for Y7-11; the other is the First Day Response Officer, who monitors student absence on a day-to day basis.

- To monitor the accurate keeping of attendance registers
- To ensure that all student absences are correctly logged on the attendance registers (in conjunction with the tutor)
- To meet with Heads of Year and Student Service Manager around the monitoring of student attendance
- To be the main point of contact for external agencies in relation to school attendance

### **Student Service Manager**

- To lead the Heads of Year and Attendance Team around the monitoring of, and interventions with students whose attendance falls below 95%
- To report to School Governors and the Leadership Group on all matter pertaining to school attendance



## **Leave of Absence**

The school follows Government guidelines around 'Leave of Absence Request during Term Time'. Information relating to these guidelines can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Please refer to the following procedures for more detail on this subject

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Procedures**

#### **Attendance and Illness**

There are two types of school absence

- authorised where the school approves the student's absence
- unauthorised where the school will not approve the student's absence

Only the school can authorise the student's absence. Whilst this is straightforward in most cases, there may be a time when the school will refuse to authorise a student's absence without medical support.

If a child is ill, the parent is to call the school before 8.40 a.m. and notify the school of the child's absence, the reason and when the child is to be expected back in school (**Tel 01773 825281**). Where the school is unsure of the reason for illness, or needs clarification about this, then the parent will be contacted.

Unfortunately there are occasions when a child can suffer from more sustained health problems. If this is the case, the school will contact the medical professionals involved with the child in order to be able to support the child in the most appropriate manner. The school would like the parent to give permission for the medical professionals to be able to speak to the school about the best way to support the child. In these circumstances it is not appropriate for the parent to contact the school every day and a more appropriate frequency of communication will be established with the parent. This bespoke arrangement will be put in place by the Tutor/Head of Year and will be logged with the Attendance Team. It will be monitored and reviewed as time progresses to see if this response is still appropriate in the circumstances.

If the student is not in school by 9.15 a.m. then a member of the First Day Response Officer will contact the parent during the day to find out why the student is not in school.

The parent is expected to book routine dental and medical appointments outside school hours wherever possible.

#### **If a student's attendance fall below 95%**

This is the lowest limit of what is viewed as 'good attendance'. Students who fall below this level are endangering their education. Attendance reports are monitored for the basic attendance percentage or worrying patterns of absence. If regular time is being lost through absence and the number of broken weeks is over half the number of weeks in the school to date, then this is also trigger for intervention.

An attendance level of 95% means that the student should have no more than 10 days absent from school throughout the academic year. Once a student falls below this level, the Head of Year/tutor is aware and will work with the student to promote good attendance.

An attendance level below 90% is classed as that of a persistent absentee. At this point the Attendance Team will become involved and will work with the student and parent/carer to improve attendance. The student will be supported to achieve an attendance target and this will be reviewed regularly. The support may take the form of a referral to an outside agency e.g. school nurse, Multi-Agency Team, but parental permission will always been needed for this.

If a student fails to improve attendance despite support offered, then the school will request input from the Education Welfare Service and fixed penalty fine/prosecution is possible.

We accept that for some students ill-health will prevent good attendance. In this situation the school will work with the student, parent/carer and health professionals to support the student to maintain their education.

### **If the student is late**

Registers open at 8.40 am and close at 9.10 am. Students are marked present if they are in registration with their tutor before 8.40 am. Students arriving after 8.40 am but before 9.15 am will be recorded as arriving late during the registration period. Should the student arrive at school after 9.15 am, this will be classed as an unauthorised late and the register will show an unauthorised absence due to being late after registers closed. Student lateness is monitored and detentions given for lateness to school.

Afternoon registers will take place in Lesson 4 and will be taken at the beginning of the lesson. If a student has permission from their parent to leave the school site at lunchtime, they should leave at 12.15 pm and return to the school site no sooner than 12.50 pm. Should these students arrive late to school on a regular basis, then the permission they have to leave the school site will be removed and they will have to remain on the school site during the lunchtime period. The vast majority of our students stay on the school site at lunchtime, those who leave have a special arrangement with their Head of Year and this is not an automatic right.

### **Truancy**

If the student is known to have been in school, but has not attended all, or some of their lessons, then they will have truanted. The parent will be informed if the student is discovered to have truanted and sanctions will be applied to the student.

If it is believed that the truant has left the school site then, the school will inform the parent should the student not be found. In this situation we would advise the parent to contact the child themselves. If the school is unable to contact the parent to inform them of their child's truancy, then messages will be left with the parent. However, if the parent is unable to be contacted then the school will contact the police and report the student absence.

Sometimes parents believe that their child is at school, but the student has not actually entered the building. Should this happen then, the school would naturally believe the student to be absent and would contact the parent to confirm the absence. If we are unable to contact the parent then messages will be left to make sure that the parent is aware of the absence. At this point the truancy would come to light. In this situation we would advise the parent to contact the child themselves, but if they do not get any response, then we would advise that they contact the police. In these circumstances the school believes the child is ill, whilst the parent believes that child is at school. If we have any safeguarding concerns around a student, then we will inform the police.

**For this reason it is important that parents let the school know of all absence and keep us informed of any changes of contact details.**

## Leave of Absence Requests

It is expected that families take their holidays during the school holiday periods. There will be no authorisation of absence for holidays during school time. The government guidelines are very clear and only allow the Head to grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. **Parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.**

Leave of absence during school time will not be routinely granted. Ideally any request for leave of absence should be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the time asked for. Parents should write to the Student Service Manager stating the time requested and the reason. The Director of Student Support will discuss this with the Head and Leadership Team and will then write back to the parent within 5 school days of receiving the request with the school's response.

The Head is only allowed to authorise leave of absence in 'exceptional circumstances'. The following are examples of leave of absence that has been granted in these circumstances:

- Wedding/bereavement relating to a close relative
- Serious terminal illness of a close relative
- Significant family trauma has occurred and it is believed that a break is in the best interests of the child
- External examinations e.g. music, dance etc.

This is not an exhaustive list and the Government encourages schools to look at each request on an individual basis. **As a guideline 'exceptional circumstances may refer to:**

- The leave being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child
- The benefit of the leave would outweigh the loss of teaching time

The Head may grant compassionate leave as an authorised absence.

It is reasonable to say that unless the request meets this type of criteria then it is quite likely that the request will be turned down. If the student still takes the leave of absence, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and there is the possibility of requesting the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

The school reserves the right to refer any case where a student takes a holiday during term time to the Education Welfare Officer with a view to the Local Authority issuing a penalty notice. However, the circumstances around any absence of this nature will always be examined on an individual basis before any decision to request a penalty notice is taken. This is not a decision that the school will take lightly and all aspects will be thoroughly considered and taken into account.

If a student is absent for more than 15 consecutive days without permission, then attempts will be made to contact the parent to ascertain the details of the absence. The EWO will be informed and under these circumstances it is possible that the student may be removed from the school roll and listed as missing from education