STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023-24

RESPONSIBILITY:	LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE

PROPOSED BY:	DEPUTY HEADTEACHER - PASTORAL

TYPE OF POLICY:	STATUTORY
ON WEBSITE:	YES

DATE AGREED BY LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE:	27TH SEPTEMBER 2023
FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:	ANNUALLY
NEXT REVIEW:	SEPTEMBER 2024

APPROVED BY:	FULL GOVERNING BOARD
DATE APPROVED AND ISSUED:	16 OCTOBER 2023
SIGNATURE:	DAVID PACKER CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

In reviewing this policy, the Learning & Achievement Committee has taken into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010

POLICY STATEMENT

For a young person to achieve their full educational potential a high level of attendance is essential. We are committed to providing education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued. We pursue a range of strategies to promote the importance of excellent attendance.

Absence from school is a concern for many reasons, not least from a safeguarding perspective.

Parents, carers and school staff have a collective responsibility to promote excellent school attendance and punctuality. Every opportunity will be used to convey the importance of regular and punctual attendance and we will consistently strive to ensure a high level of attendance and punctuality for all.

For all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that all students attend every day and on time unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

High attendance helps to develop students' self-confidence and self-esteem. Future aspirations are dependent on excellent school attendance.

Our aim is to create a culture in school that welcomes and encourages all our students to attend regularly and maximise their learning potential.

With this policy we are complying with our statutory responsibilities under the 1996 Education Act and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Principles

➢ We believe that ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality of students is a responsibility shared by all the staff, parents/carers, governors and students of the school.

➢ We recognise the crucial link between excellent attendance and achievement and believe that regular attendance is vital to effective learning. We will encourage students to be aware of their attendance and the impact of absence using the Attendance Triangle (see Appendix 1).

➢ We will use the systems and procedures established for monitoring attendance and punctuality to address any problems as they arise.

➢ We will use tangible rewards to promote excellent attendance and reinforce its importance at every opportunity with students and parents/carers.

➢ We believe that the attitudes of parents/carers are critical in maintaining excellent attendance and will encourage and, where necessary, challenge parents/carers to play a full part in promoting an 'attending culture' in the school.

➢ We will use the data provided by our SIMS system to regularly review attendance/punctuality levels and patterns, to guide policy and practice.

➢ We recognise that to be 'an inclusive school' we must be imaginative about the curriculum we offer to students and will seek to establish appropriate learning experiences for all students.

➢ Staff will respond positively to students returning to school from a period of absence and will assist in helping them to catch up on work missed.

Student Responsibilities

It is an expectation that all students:

- attend school every day
- arrive at school and lessons on time
- catch up on work missed through legitimate and unavoidable absence
- arrive at school well-equipped and ready to learn
- avoid any behaviour that may cause another student(s) to want to miss school
- understand the important link between attendance and achievement
- be aware of their attendance level through reference to the Attendance Triangle

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

We believe that working together in partnership with parents/carers and students is the most effective way of ensuring excellent attendance.

It is an expectation that all parents/carers must:

- ensure that their child(ren) attends school each day, on time, equipped and ready to learn
- ring or text the school on the first morning of any absence before 8.45am and any subsequent absence
- be vigilant and contact the Head of Year/Tutor if they believe that their child is feigning illness. This may be a symptom of a wider problem
- not take holidays in term time and only request absence if it is under exceptional circumstances
- avoid, wherever possible, making non-urgent medical or dental appointments during the school day
- inform the school about any medical condition that may affect attendance, or a student's ability to work effectively in school
- promote the importance of excellent attendance and its link with high achievement and be aware of their child(ren)'s attendance and position on the Attendance Triangle
- notify the school of any change of address or telephone number

Tutor Responsibilities

In the management of attendance, tutors are responsible for:

- ensuring that an accurate record of students' attendance is maintained for all tutees
- ensuring that all tutees understand the school procedure relating to:
  - holiday requests during term time
  - punctuality
  - students falling ill during the school day
  - signing in and out for unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- discussing the reasons for absence with tutees
- encouraging students to improve attendance and praising/rewarding students who do so

- helping students to fully understand the link between excellent attendance and achievement by displaying and referring to the Attendance Triangle

- being alert to emerging patterns of absence

- liaising with the Heads of Year and Student Support and Attendance Officers re attendance matters

All tutors will receive guidance and training on the management of attendance and on the operation of the SIMS registration system.

Class Teachers

In the management of attendance, class teachers are responsible for:

- ensuring that an accurate record of students' attendance is maintained every lesson using the school's electronic registration system on SIMS

- helping students to fully understand the link between excellent attendance and achievement by displaying and referring to the Attendance Triangle

- being alert to emerging patterns of absence

- liaising with the Heads of Year and Student Support and Attendance Officers re attendance matters

Heads of Year

In the management of attendance, Heads of Year are responsible for:

- meeting regularly with the Head of Student Support to lead the school's work on attendance/monitoring and improvement

- monitoring punctuality and applying sanctions as per the school's punctuality policy

- promoting and rewarding good attendance and establishing an 'attendance culture' in the year group

- supporting students with absence to engage with their learning in school

- liaising with tutors and the Student Support and Attendance Officers to identify cases of poor attendance and plan strategies to address these concerns

- consulting with the Head of Student Support who is responsible for attendance and other members of the Leadership Group as appropriate re attendance issues

- contributing to the regular review of attendance and practice

Student Support and Attendance Officers

In the management of attendance, the school's Student Support and Attendance Officers are responsible for:

- checking registers for their Year groups throughout the day

- telephoning or texting all parents/carers of absent students on the first day of absence and following up if contact cannot be made

- working with tutors, Heads of Year and the Head of Student Support to follow up unexplained absences and to identify students whose attendance is a cause for concern

- checking that all register codings are correct

- attending a weekly diarised meeting with the Heads of Year and Head of Student Support responsible for attendance to review attendance issues every week

- collating work for students on long-term absence or exclusion

- contributing to the regular review of attendance practice

- processing rewards for good attendance and meeting weekly with identified students to monitor and encourage good attendance

- issuing Fixed Penalty Notices as required

- maintaining SIMS and manual records of strategies implemented, to encourage improvement in attendance

Attendance and Pastoral Administrator

In the management of student attendance, the Attendance and Pastoral Administrator is responsible for:

- ensuring the SIMS registration system is functioning properly

- notifying the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service of any Child Missing Education

- notifying the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service of any student removed by a parent/carer for Elective Home Education

- notifying the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Services of any student removed or added to the school roll

- producing statistics for external returns, including the Department for Education, as required

Data Manager

In the management of student attendance, the Data Manager is responsible for:

- producing weekly attendance figures for the bulletin

- providing relevant statistics for the half termly and annual review of attendance

Deputy Headteacher Responsible for Attendance

In the management of student attendance, the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- providing strategic leadership for attendance policy and practice

- ensuring that the systems and procedure for monitoring and reviewing attendance are understood by all staff

- providing support for Heads of Year and Student Support and Attendance Officers in the management of attendance

- reviewing attendance weekly with the Student Support and Attendance Officers and weekly with Heads of Year to identify concerns and implement strategies

- liaising and meeting as appropriate with the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Services and other relevant agencies

- organising Attendance Panel meetings with a governor, parents/carers and students as identified

➢ leading a regular review of attendance issues at relevant governor committee meetings

➢ publicising and promoting the importance of attendance and its link with achievement to students, parents/carers and staff

➢ organising staff training as appropriate

➢ producing an annual review of attendance

➢ liaising with Middle Schools to identify students with attendance concerns on transfer

Governing Board

The governing board take their role in attendance very seriously and support the school in the following ways:

➢ providing an active presence at Attendance Panels alongside the Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding and Heads of Year to address attendance concerns as identified

➢ ensuring that any concerns impacting on individual student attendance are actioned with the appropriate support and intervention

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

First Day Contact

Contact with parents/carers will be made by the Student Support and Attendance Officer on the first day of absence for any student whose parents/carers have not telephoned or sent a text message in to school.

A student who is not in school and where contact has not been made by their parents/carers is a safeguarding concern.

Third Day Absence

After three days of unexplained absence, the school is required to consider implementing the Child Missing Education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquiries to known friends and wider family to try to establish contact and may visit the family home.

Ten Day Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without explanation for ten consecutive days and the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service will be notified and the student will become a Child Missing Education. Staff from the service will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the young person.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

A student with an attendance below 90% for whatever reason, is defined as a persistent absentee by the Department of Education.

This level of absence will have a huge impact on the attainment of these students and regular meetings with parents/carers, Heads of Year, the Head of Student Support and other agencies will be held, so that strategies are in place to bring improvement to attendance.

All attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department of Education.

Please be aware absence is monitored for the previous 12 academic weeks (including previous academic years). This information may be shared as part of the Regulation 12 Check.

Attendance Data and Follow-up Action

Weekly headline attendance figures will be published to all staff and students.

The Head of Student Support, Heads of Year and Student Support and Attendance Officers will look for patterns and trends, taking appropriate action, which will include:

➢ speaking to the student and setting targets

➢ contacting parents/carers by phone

➢ convening a meeting with parents/carers

➢ referring students' cases to the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Services if school-based intervention has failed to produce an improvement (see below)

➢ letters will be sent as appropriate to all students whose attendance is below 95%

Referral to the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service

Referrals may be made to the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service for the following reasons:

➢ where there is persistent failure/refusal of parents/carers to explain non-attendance

➢ where persistent periods of proven truancy continue, despite school interventions

➢ when the parent/carer informs the school that their child is refusing to attend school

➢ when, after one full week of absence, the student does not return and the school is unable to contact the parent/carer

➢ where, despite frequent parent/carer contact, including meetings, a student fails to meet the targets set without good reason

Holidays taken in Term-time

The school does not authorise holidays from school during school term-time. A two-week holiday equates to 50 hours of teaching lost.

Any request for absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher and will only be authorised in extremely exceptional circumstances.

If a student is taken out of school for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

The overriding concern is for a student to attend school. The school calendar allows ample opportunity for holidays outside term time.

Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Any absence in exceptional circumstances and requested on compassionate grounds will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued:

➢ for an unauthorised holiday taken in term time

➢ when a parent/carer is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance to school and does not take responsibility to do so

➢ when the school believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance

➢ for persistent lateness to school

Parents/carers will be alerted to the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in writing. Please find below further information about how the school applies fixed Penalty Notices at the end of this policy.

Health Matters

We wish to help each student to achieve their full potential in all aspects of school life and to minimise any diverse impact that health concerns may have. Parents/carers are asked to inform the school about any issue relating to their child's health and wellbeing that may affect their child upon admission and to keep school informed of any changes to that condition. Where there is concern about whether the school can meet a student's medical needs, the Head of Student Support, the SENDCo and Head of Year will discuss the matter with the parent(s)/carer(s) of the student concerned.

Advice will be sought from outside agencies and health professionals as appropriate, e.g. the School Nursing Team, the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service and the Medical Needs Team.

Long-term Absence

The school will access relevant support from the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service, any relevant health professional and the Medical Needs Team. The school will continue to support students who, for medical reasons, cannot attend school.

Where appropriate, work will be provided and marked in line with school policy.

A reintegration programme will be planned and implemented in the event of a student returning after a long-term absence.

Applications for Medical Needs tuition will be made through the Head of Year

Punctuality

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school on time. School starts at 8.40am each day and students who have not been registered by 8.45am will be marked as late. See below.

Procedures for Managing Lateness to School

➢ Student Support and Attendance Officers complete a late duty every morning. Students who arrive after 8.45am are met in the café entrance and issued with a late detention slip for a ten minute break detention

➢ Any student arriving late to tutor time will be marked as late on the register and will be given a late detention slip by their tutor

- Any student who fails to attend their break detention is issued with a lunchtime detention with the Head of Year and failure to attend will result in an after-school detention on a Friday afternoon with the Headteacher.

- A text message is sent to parents/carers to notify them of their child's lateness to school

- If a student continues to arrive late despite the interventions above, the Head of Year will call the student and their parents/carers in for a meeting to discuss the issue and to agree next steps. Should lateness continue, the Head of Year will liaise with the Head of Student Support who may escalate the case with the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service and may consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

- Clearly, if this system is to be fair, the information upon which Heads of Year base their actions **must be accurate.** For this reason, it is critical that staff do the following:

Tutors

Ensure they are in the tutor base at the start of tutor time and that the register is taken immediately at 8.45am. Leave the register open for any latecomers to be added.

Students who arrive after the bell must be marked late (remember to input the number of minutes late).

Talk to students about their punctuality and encourage them to be on time.

Subject Teachers

Take a register immediately at the beginning of each lesson and mark anyone late who arrives after the start of the lesson.

If a computer is not working, tutors and subject teachers must forward details of students who are late (and by how long) to the Student Support and Attendance Officers.

Heads of Year

Ensure that all students who are late attend the same-day lunchtime detention and follow up any students who do not with further sanctions.

Rewards

Students with excellent punctuality will be rewarded in our regular Achievers' Assemblies, to reinforce the importance of excellent punctuality.

Publicising the Importance of Attendance

The school will regularly refer to the importance of excellent attendance and the impact on attainment through:

- parent/carer consultations, Information Evenings and parent/carer consultation events

- school progress reports

- the School Prospectus

- the weekly School Bulletin

- assemblies (including Achievers' Assemblies)

- notification of attendance level letters to parents/carers

- ➤ displaying the Attendance Triangle in all classrooms and key areas

Attendance will be a standing item on the Full Governing Body meeting agenda.

Attendance Analysis

Regular analysis of attendance data is used to inform practice and set attendance targets. A full review and analysis of attendance figures is produced termly, for submission to the governing body. This includes a breakdown of the following:

- ➤ overall % attendance
- ➤ overall % unauthorised absence
- ➤ overall % authorized absence

- ➤ % attendance by:
  - • year
  - • gender
  - • ethnicity

- ➤ Pupil Premium and special needs
- ➤ a comparison with previous year(s)

This analysis will then be used to inform targets for the following academic year.

Review of Attendance Policy and Practice

This will be ongoing throughout the year, but the whole policy will be reviewed annually.

School will react to new legislation accordingly and respond to new initiatives after due consideration has been made through discussion with all appropriate parties.

Other Supporting Documentation

- ➤ Tutor Guidance Booklet on Attendance Monitoring

- ➤ Sixth Form Attendance Policy

- ➤ Attendance Triangle

A guide to non-school attendance penalty notices (Central Bedfordshire Council):

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. Parents can help to ensure regular attendance by:

- encouraging their children to attend school regularly and on time
- taking in interest in their children's education and life at school
- communicating with their children's school in order to discuss any emerging issues or problems notifying their children's school on the first day of any absence
- not arranging any family holidays during term time

Some children, unfortunately, fail to attend school regularly. Central Bedfordshire Council have legal powers to address this. Included among these powers is the authority, under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to issue Penalty Notices (or fixed fines) to parents whose children fail to attend school regularly.

When a penalty notice may be issued

In Central Bedfordshire, schools are responsible for deciding when a Penalty Notice shall be issued. A Penalty Notice may be issued when:

- a student is taken out of school during term time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school
- a child's school attendance has been poor and the school believe that the issuing of a Penalty Notice may lead to an improvement in the child's attendance (for example, when a child is persistently late for school and his/her parents fail to address the situation)

When a Penalty Notice is issued it is issued on a per child/per parent basis. This means that if a mother and father have two children and take both children out of school they may be issued with a total of 4 Penalty Notices – one to each parent for each child.

Issuing a penalty notice

When a school requests the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice, the following criterion will apply: when the number of unauthorised absences amounts to at least 10 sessions (5 days) during the previous 12 school weeks.

Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, there is no statutory right of appeal, although there are circumstances in which the council may withdraw the Notice.

The £60 payment should be made within 21 days. If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the penalty is doubled to £120.

Late or part payments will not be accepted and no reminders will be sent. If payment is not made, you are likely to be prosecuted for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £2,500

For further information please visit the Central Bedfordshire Website:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/526/non-school_attendance

ATTENDANCE TRIANGLE

WHERE ARE YOU?

inspiring excellence

GREEN GROUP

98% - 100%
Outstanding.
Will achieve highly.

YELLOW GROUP

96% - 98%
Up to 40 missed lessons in a year.
This could have an impact on your achievement.

AMBER GROUP

94% - 96%
Up to 60 missed lessons in a year.
This could have a more serious impact
on your achievement.

PINK GROUP

90% - 94%
Up to 100 missed lessons in a
year. Will have a serious
impact on your
achievement.

RED GROUP

0% - 90%
This is
"persistent
absence"