Limehurst Academy Policy Document

Attendance - Students

Date Approved by Governors: June 2019

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Headteacher’s signature:

Chair of Governors’ signature:
Attendance Policy – Students

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child’s education and development. It is for this reason that non-attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Parents of children who have an unauthorised leave of absence may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, the case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

Collection of Data

Registration

Student’s attendance will be recorded electronically using Go 4 Schools. There are two official registration sessions each day at the following times:

AM registration takes place between 8:40am and 8:55am.
PM registration will take place during lesson 4 in departments.

A student is late when they arrive after the tutor has started calling the register. Form tutors are responsible for recording late marks for any pupils arriving to registration late until 8:55am. Students arriving after these times must sign in late at Reception. The morning session register closes at 9:30am and the afternoon register closes at 12:45pm. Students arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised for that session of school.

All absences are to be indicated by form tutors using ‘n’. These will be amended by the school office using the appropriate symbol for specific reasons as soon as the reason for a child’s absence is available.

During Lessons

Registers will be taken each lesson using Go4Schools, allowing departments to monitor attendance of pupils within their subjects. Lateness (more than 5 minutes) is recorded and teachers will note electronically how many minutes a student is late to the lesson.

Use of Data

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

- Individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons.
- Patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by
  - Year groups
  - Seasonal patterns
  - Ethnic groups
  - EAL
  - Disadvantaged students
  - SEN
  - Patterns and nature of absence

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school accepts there is good reason for absence. If suitable contact numbers are available, parents/carers of students who are absent will be sent a text message asking for
acknowledgement that their child is absent. An authorised absence requires a communication from the parent/carer. This can also be in the form of a slip completed by the parent/carer in the student’s planner. In most cases parents / carers can telephone the school and leave a recorded message on the school answerphone or speak to a member of office staff. A written record is made of telephone messages of this type. Students who return to school following an absence without having notified school will be deemed to have had an ‘unauthorised absence’. Parents / Carers of such students will be phoned or given an absence letter to be completed and returned to school the following day.

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

- Absence due to illness or other unavoidable cause
- An absence for religious observance sanctioned by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Medical appointments that cannot be taken outside of normal school time
- A leave of term time absence under exceptional circumstances (authorised by the Head teacher)

Follow Up

There are a range of situations where the school will respond by contacting parents / carers:

- Unauthorised or unexplained absence
- A pattern of absence, with parental notes, over a period of weeks
- Persistent lateness
- Unexplained absence from one lesson.

Action to be taken in the first instance is to contact the parent/carer by either;

- School Comms text
- Telephone conversation of which a written minute is produced
- A letter requiring a response
- Pupil will be referred to the School Attendance team for intervention

Action will be taken by:

- On the first occasion: School Attendance Officer
- Subsequent occasions: School Attendance Officer / Form Tutor
- Persistent infringements:
  - Referral to School Attendance team for intervention
  - Parental interview with School Attendance Officer / Pupil Support / Head of Year / Community Liaison Officer
  - Referral to Attendance Improvement Officer
  - Home visits by Community Liaison Officer
  - Agreed improvement plan

Holidays

Requests for annual leave will not be authorised. However, under exceptional circumstances, the Head teacher might authorise an extended leave of absence and decide what is an acceptable length of absence. Parents who request authorisation for an annual holiday will be sent a letter advising them that it will not be authorised and that they might be subject to a fine if they choose to take their child out of school for this activity.

Increased Communication

- The School Attendance team closely monitor all pupil attendance, with overall analysis of data enabling focused interventions to take place.
- The School Attendance Officer will give pupil attendance percentages for each pupil to form tutors
every two weeks showing increasing or decreasing attendance.

- Letters are sent to parents regularly informing them of their child’s attendance and the need for improvement or congratulating them on excellent attendance.
- Daily attendance for any pupils already cause for concern or vulnerable passed by 10 o’clock to Pupil Support team.
- Details of pupils with poorest attendance and any known reasons as well as intervention they are receiving will be passed to Heads of Year and Form Tutors monthly. This information will be produced by School Attendance Officer / Admin Staff.
- Form Tutors will be informed of lateness to sessions by the School Attendance Officer.
- When Form Tutors receive communication from parents they must inform the School Attendance Officer so that the official register is updated.

**Lateness**

Persistent lateness is often a significant indicator of underachievement. Lateness is acted upon swiftly in the following ways:

- Lateness to school is picked up by the Attendance Officer in the first instance. School Attendance Officer to inform Form Tutors and the Attendance team daily by e-mail so that a clear record is kept and pupils can be spoken to.

The School Attendance Officer will contact parents as pupils receive an after school 15 minute detention on the same day. If students are persistently late, parents are contacted, and further sanctions are put in place. Lateness to lessons is also recorded.

- How many minutes a student is late is recorded each lesson by the subject teacher in Go4Schools.
- Lateness to particular lessons is a curriculum area’s responsibility and as such must be dealt with within that department.
- Persistent lateness to a range of lessons will be identified by Pupil Support Staff using SIMS or Go4Schools. Heads of Year will be notified and the lateness acted upon by them.

**Rewards**

Good attendance is regularly promoted through the tutorial programme, assemblies and posters displayed around school. Rewards for attendance are given in the following ways:

- Regular School Comms will inform and congratulate parents and pupils on excellent attendance.
- Letters will be sent termly congratulating parents and pupils on excellent and improved attendance.
- 100% attendance Certificates are presented in end of term year assemblies.
- Termly prize draws for all pupils with 100% attendance to take place during Whole School Assemblies (Autumn and Summer) and year assemblies (Spring). Pupils with full term’s attendance are given a reward each term (e.g. half a day trip, visiting theatre group, inflatable session etc.) Rewards increase as the year progresses.
- School reward system rewards pupils for being in the lesson. These reward points can be exchanged for prizes.
- Pupils who have poor attendance and are being supported by the Community Liaison Officers and pupil support or have AIO involvement are rewarded if attendance improves at the discretion of pupil support, Community Liaison Officers and School Attendance Officer.
- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality for the duration of a whole school year will receive an additional reward.
- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality during Key Stage 3 receive an award at the Awards Assembly at the end of Year 9.
- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality during Key Stages 3 and 4 receive an award at the Awards Evening at the end of Year 11.
Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually. Parents are provided in good time with the necessary information from the school which will enable them to meet these obligations. This includes:

- The times of the school day
- School dates and holidays
- School procedures relating to attendance and punctuality and its importance
- School expectations regarding lateness
- Prompt communication of matters causing concern

The school expects that all parents communicate with the school, giving a reason;

- In advance of any planned absence
- Immediately following any unplanned absence
- During any absence expected to last more than three days

Parents / carers who do not conform to the above are contacted and requested to provide an explanation for their child’s absence. Any noncompliance on the part of the parents is documented.

Attendance Improvement Officer

The AIO can provide an important bridge between home and school by working closely with the school and families to try to establish any underlying reasons for poor attendance and punctuality. Regular meetings take place between the AIO, the School Attendance Officer, the Community Liaison Officers and Pupil Support to help raise concerns over pupil attendance and deliver a cohesive effective approach.

Reintegration of Long Term Absentees

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

For each student, the Head of Pupil Support will draw up a reintegration action plan. This plan will acknowledge the reasons for the student’s absence and may involve a reduced timetable in the first instance and temporary additional support. All staff who teach the student will be advised in advance of an anticipated return so that they can plan how to re-introduce the student to their scheme of work.

New Students

Students commencing school in Year 7:

- The importance of good attendance and punctuality is overtly expressed at the Parents’ Induction Evening and forms part of the Home School Agreement between the school and parents /carers.
- Meetings and records from primary schools can identify potential poor attenders who should be targeted for close monitoring from the beginning of term.

Students who commence at a later date

- These students are monitored over their first few weeks to see how well they settle in to their new school, including attendance and punctuality. As part of an interview for prospective entry, this review process will be clearly articulated as a support to the student and a means of directly informing the parent of the achievement of their child.

Attendance Meetings

Regular meetings between the Deputy Head and the member of staff with responsibility for attendance take place to discuss trends in attendance and individual students whose attendance is falling. Students who are identified will have a meeting to talk about poor attendance and the consequences if their attendance
doesn’t improve. These students are usually referred to the AIO.