



ECKINGTON SCHOOL – GOVERNORS’ POLICY REVIEW

<u>Name of Policy:</u>	<u>Attendance Policy Statement</u>		
<u>Type of Policy:</u>	*Statutory	*Advisory	*School
<u>Review Schedule:</u>	*1/2/3 Years		
<u>Date of previous review:</u>	December 2009		
<u>Has the policy been changed?</u>	*Yes / No		
<u>Why has the policy been changed?</u> In line with the schools policy review cycle			
<u>Summary:</u> The material change in the policy is that we now fine parents.			
<u>Review undertaken by:</u>			
<u>Policy Review Approved:</u>	<u>Date:</u> 2 nd February 2015 <u>Min no:</u> PF06/02/15		
	<u>Chair:</u>		
	<u>Committee:</u> Pupils and Family		
<u>Date of next review:</u>	February 2018		

**delete as appropriate*

Action for governors: The governing body will:

- Review the policy every 3 years or when a change to statutory dictates *or as a result of monitoring.*
- Monitor any development in this policy from annual monitoring and evaluation activities including reports.

Attendance Policy Statement

Purpose

- To improve the attendance of students at our school, in order to ensure their safeguarding and so as to improve their achievement so that they may fulfil their potential.
- To ensure that we fulfil our requirement to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. At our school this is done electronically.
- Fulfil our statutory requirement to set a target for overall absence set out in the Education (School Attendance Targets in England) Regulations.
- Fulfil our statutory requirement to classify every half-day absence as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parent/carers. This is why information about the reasons for each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable cause such as religious observance, illness preventing attendance at school, death of a close family member or an urgent medical appointment.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parent/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily for purposes such as minding other children in the family or shopping;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark – students arriving after 11am will not be given a late mark for the morning session.
- Family holidays in term time. A fine will be requested of DCC for each occurrence. See Appendix 1 for further details.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- Ensure that the promotion of regular school attendance (minimum of 96%) is the known responsibility of our whole school community;
- Ensure that the school will promote positive good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials;
- Ensure that good attendance by students will be recognised and rewarded appropriately;
- Recognise that all children are sometimes reluctant to attend school and that any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the child, the parent/carers and the school.

Success indicators

Specific attendance and absence targets have been set and we will judge our success against these. The headline figures/targets for the whole school (Yr7-13) are: 96% attendance; 0.5% unauthorised absence; and no greater than 3.5% for persistent absenteeism (i.e. present 85% or less).

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Procedures

Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties (such as breakdown of friendships, learning difficulties, generally feeling unhappy at school) should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent/carers may refer the child to the education welfare officer from the local authority.

Please **see appendix 1** for criteria necessary for the school to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support of parents/carers. However, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can issue penalty notices or use legal action to prosecute parent/carers or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the local education authority.

The procedures applied by the school in deciding how to deal with individual absences are listed in **appendix 2**.

Information about school targets and strategies to improve attendance

The school sets attendance and unauthorised absence targets for each academic year.

- School support staff should contact parent/carers on the first day a registered student of compulsory school age is absent without explanation including in cases where a student skips lessons after registration. By contacting the parent/carers the school also ensure that the parent/carers are aware their child is not in school enabling the parent/carers where necessary to establish their child is safe. We also hope that we may quickly identify individual cases where support may be needed.
- If a student has been absent for three days and not contact has been made with home, a further phone call will take place, If this proves unsuccessful in establishing contact with parents/carers then a letter will be sent home.
- Developed a more flexible curriculum particularly in years 10-11.
- Sent home various pieces of information to parents/carers on the importance of good attendance, application for leave of absence and the link between attendance and achievement.
- Issue termly certificates for improved, good or better attendance each term.
- Issue half termly letters to parents/carers whose children's attendance has become a concern and termly postcards to all parents/carers.
- Use 'keep kids safe' to communicate with parents regarding unauthorised absences.

Roles and Responsibilities – Parents/carers

- All children of compulsory school age (5-16) must receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

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- If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them for attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. If parents/carers allow children to be absent from school without an appropriate reason, they are committing a legal offence.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in school and their responsibilities are listed under appendix 4.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher for student well being. However, the effectiveness of the policy will be responsibility of all teaching staff when taking registers and all relevant staff following up on this information.

Monitoring and evaluation will be achieved by:

- Reports on attendance, unexplained absence and punctuality data by student form year, key stage and whole school;
- Analysis of attendance, unexplained absence and punctuality data by student form year, key stage and who school in relation targets;
- Provision of attendance data and punctuality reports to parents/carers; analysis of missing SIMs registers; evaluation of the impact of the EWS in improving attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation activities will be undertaken to allow an informed picture to be built up of the effectiveness of this policy in improving levels of attendance and punctuality at our school. Process and outcomes will be used to inform the professional development of all relevant staff and to identify targets for development that will be incorporated in the whole school improvement plan.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our learning and teaching behaviour, anti bullying and pastoral policies.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance data to parent/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parent/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parent/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Review

This policy was agreed on: **2nd February 2015**

Minute no: **PF06/02/15**

It will be reviewed in detail by the governors on a three yearly cycle.

A copy of this policy will be placed on the school intranet and all staff will be issued with a copy of the policy annually.

Criteria for EWS referrals

- Threshold on absence has been met:
 - Two consecutive weeks of unauthorised absence.
 - Ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a five week period.
 - Ten sessions of authorised absence spread within a five week period where no medical evidence has been received.
- Contact has been made with the parent/carer within the time span identified by the school's attendance policy and record of the contact has been kept.
- There has been no improvement in attendance.
- Unsatisfactory or no reasons have been given for absence.
- The EWS formal referral form (SR1) has been fully completed by the school.
- The referral is not in breach of the Service Level Agreement.

Possible legal action

- Following investigation by the EWO and no improvement in a child's attendance, any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carers receiving a penalty notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 section 444.
- If necessary the school will offer parent/carers a parenting contract to support the improvement of the student's attendance.
- However, if parent/carers do not engage in this process then the local authority may consider applying for the court order to attend parenting/caring classes or may pursue legal proceedings.

Family holidays in term time

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time, for the purpose of a holiday, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers who take their children on holiday without the prior written permission of the Headteacher are **likely** to be issued with a Penalty Notice.

The penalty to be paid is £60 per parent/carer per student within 21 days or £120 per parent/carer (responsible adult residing with the student) per student within 28 days. This will be issued by the local authority based on the information provided by the school. Any appeal rests with the local authority.

Procedures applied by the school

Absence

- Parents/carers should contact the school on the morning of the expected day of absence and let the attendance office know that their child will be absent from school giving the reason for the absence and if possible the expected length of absence.
- If the absence is likely to be long term contact should be made with the student's assistant head of year who will arrange for work to be sent home.
- It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.
- On returning to school a note should be sent in with the student detailing the reasons for absence and date(s) unless the phone call made at the beginning of the illness covered the full absence period.
- The headteacher or other appropriate school staff will then decide if the absence will be authorised.
- If this information is not provided then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Concerning levels of absence

- Pastoral staff should follow up individual students and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individual students' classes and year groups enabling the school to target efforts and support.
- A trigger for response by the school would be three consecutive weeks of broken attendance, any day of unexplained absence after a period of a week, attendance figure below 85% after the first term in the school year, attendance below 92% after the second and all remaining half terms.
- As appropriate, attendance panels will be carried out in school when the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), pastoral support assistant and Leader of Student Development will meet with individual students to discuss their attendance. Parents/carers are invited to such meetings.
- Action must be taken by the school to improve a student's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to the local authority. **The school working with parent/carers is the best way of tackling any difficulties the student may be having and is given a high priority.**
- When an individual student's attendance gives cause for concern and having made contact with parents/carers and seen no improvement and the threshold on absence has been met, a referral to the educational welfare service will be made by the school. The EWO will try to support the student's improving their attendance.

Punctuality to school

- Morning registration must be taken at 8.40am. Students arriving between 8.40 – 8.45am should go straight to form rooms and should be marked late on the electronic register.
- Students arriving late to school after morning registration/8.45am should sign in at the attendance office explaining their late arrival to school and whenever possible produce a note from the parent/carers.

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- If a child arrives late due to the late arrival of a school bus service, then they should follow the school system for late arrival but they should be marked present.
- Students arriving late without a good reason will be issued with an appropriate consequence – **see appendix 3.**

Consequences of late arrival at school:

Consequence of arriving late at school in one week

Late once: student reports to form tutor at break. Reprimand and remind

Late twice: 20 min lunch detention with LoSD/DoL/PSA – FT liaise with LoSD/DoL/PSA

Late 3 times: 45 min evening detention with SLT – LoSD/DoL/PSA issue slip and student put onto punctuality target report with FT

Consequence of repeated late arrival at school over 2 or more weeks

2nd week – late twice: punctuality target report and evening detention

3rd week – late once: punctuality target report and evening detention.

Target report issued and monitored by form tutor – main target is to arrive on time to registration and all lessons (FT should consider associated targets). Students progress onto PSA report if they fail to meet main target(s) – 100% punctuality if single target, target score as indicated on report if three targets.

Consequence of triggering punctuality report again or not meeting target

On the second occasion student triggers punctuality report; or

if they fail to reach their target on the initial report; or

if the report has not been signed by parent/carer;

Personal contact must be made with the parent/carer by the form tutor and student goes onto PSA report.

Third occasion student triggers report – parents/carers invited into school to meet form tutor and further late arrival at school should become unauthorised.

Fourth occasion – Education Welfare Service referral by HOY

Other considerations

This system includes the 6th form on those days they are due in registration.

Punctuality of attendance to Periods 1-6

To remain the responsibility of departments – consequence in line with their behaviour plans, which should cover punctuality to lessons.

Roles and responsibilities of school staff

Form Tutors

- Regularly discuss the importance of good attendance with students.
- Monitoring daily, weekly, half termly and termly levels of attendance of students.
- Achieving form attendance targets if set.
- Take the morning register accurately and not change previously inputted attendance codes.
- Contact parents/carers if there are concerns about a student's attendance.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance with the pastoral support assistant such as three broken weeks of attendance an unknown reason for absence one week after the absence.
- Make a referral to the Leaders of Student Support if a student has been absent for three days and no known reason for absence is indicated on the electronic register.
- Mentor students in their form with attendance issues.
- Follow the agreed system for responding to poor punctuality.

Subject teachers

- Take the statutory afternoon registration of students.
- Monitor attendance of student to their lessons.
- By taking an electronic register every lesson provide vital information to monitor and identify post registration truancy and ensure the know whereabouts of our students in our care.
- If they have a concern about the whereabouts of a student then contact the attendance office immediately so that their absence can be checked and parents/carers may be contacted if necessary.
- Contact form tutor over the any long term absence concerns – more than one week unless indicated on SIMs.
- Follow up the late arrival of students to their lessons as outlined in departmental behaviour plans.

Attendance administrator

- Follow up and make telephone contact with students who are missing from lessons.
- Process leave of absence requests for the authorisation of the Assistant Headteacher for student well being.
- Produce attendance data in agreed format for different staff (daily, weekly, half termly, termly and yearly information to relevant staff).

Data Manager

- Analyse attendance data on half termly, termly and annual basis for year form, gender, FSM eligibility, SEN register, differing abilities, persistent absentees (absent for 15% or more of available sessions), subject area, period of the day and days of the week.
- Produce attendance analysis reports incorporating the breakdown of attendance statistics by reason given, by absence including unauthorised absence.
- Produce attendance analysis for specific events taking place in school.

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- Complete the statutory return of attendance data to the local authority and to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Pastoral support assistant (PSA)

- Make contact daily with parent/carers of students whose children's absence has not been reported to the attendance office by the beginning of break.
- Enter relevant information regarding this into SIMs if possible, if not pass this to the attendance administrator.
- Track the attendance of students who have been identified as a concern – below 85%.
- Meet with and mentor targeted students whose attendance is a concern.
- Discuss attendance concerns with form tutors and heads of year and agree appropriate action.

Leader of Student Development/Director of Learning (LoSD/DoL)

- Develop the ethos of excellent attendance in the year group through constant reminders in assembly, updates and stimulated displays encouraging and recognising good and improved attendance each half term through draws in assembly and termly through certificates. Oversee the sending home of termly attendance postcards.
- Responsible for the year group meeting its overall attendance targets.
- Make referral to the EWS as appropriate including any absence of 10 or more days where school has been unable to make contact with the parent/carers.
- Liaise fortnightly with the EWO or delegate this to the PSA.
- Liaise with the EWO regarding attendance panels and ensure school has representation on such panels.
- Scrutinise the weekly, half termly and yearly attendance data by form in their year group, including the reasons for absence in each form and particularly so in forms where the attendance percentage drops under 92% and where the rate of unexplained absence rises above 0.5%.
- Identify cohorts of students at risk of poor attendance and ensure individual attendance plans are drawn up for such students.
- Ensure letters are sent home to parents/carers of all students whose attendance is below 85% for the first term and 92% for all remaining half terms. Ensure that letters of concern are sent home as appropriate such as for three broken weeks.
- Oversee the punctuality of students in their year group and ensure that the agreed system is followed.

Education Welfare Assistant

- Support the education welfare service for students, their families and the School.
- Work in conjunction with feeder schools, other support services, key personnel that students receive education appropriate to their needs by regular attendance
- Assist students to obtain maximum benefit from this education.
- Aid in the development of the staff with regard to attendance matters.

Assistant headteacher responsible for attendance

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- Support the developing ethos of excellent attendance in the whole school
- Responsible for the school meeting its overall attendance related targets.
- Scrutinise the weekly half termly, termly and yearly attendance data by year group. Ensure monitoring and evaluation of such data and actions overseen by heads of year to raise standards of attendance further.
- Liaise with EWO on issuing fixed penalty notices and the carrying out of truancy sweeps.
- Meet annually with EWS managers to discuss the whole school attendance plan.
- Evaluate the impact of the educational welfare service provision.
- Send a report to governors.