



## Attendance Policy 2020

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<b>Signature of Chair of Management Committee:</b>	<i>A. Cunningham</i>
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	Annually

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **The Link School Approaches to Attendance**

#### **Introduction**

The Link School Attendance Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with attendance.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the DFE Guidance on Attendance (November 2013) and the School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (January 2015)

The policy aims to make explicit the School's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that attendance concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the student's wellbeing. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Whole School Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection Policy.

#### **Covid – 19**

Whilst Covid-19 restrictions and guidance are in force, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Covid-19 attendance addendum (if a local/regional or national lockdown is enforced)

Our aims;

#### **To work with each learner as an individual and improve their attendance by removing barriers to learning.**

- On induction discussing individual plans which will improve attendance.
- Taxi provision where the learner meets the LA criteria.
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and put interventions in place if patterns are beginning to emerge.

#### **To make the improvement of individual attendance a priority for all learners, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders.**

- By placing the improvement of attendance on the school development plan.
- By making sure that parents/carers are aware of the link between good attendance and good achievement.
- By placing attendance information around the school.
- By discussing attendance at relevant meetings including SLT and whole staff meetings.

#### **To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.**

- Data from SIMs/Sleuth and contact from parents/carers will be examined weekly to ensure that learners at risk of becoming persistent non-attenders are quickly identified.
- Members of the SLT will analyse data on a half termly basis and this will inform the SEF and lead to actions on the school development plan.

**To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school**

- Promote a positive working relationship right from induction.
- Involve parents/carers in decisions.
- Identify potential issues as early as possible, work in partnership with parents/carers to solve them.
- All staff to understand that many parents/carers are doing their best, often under difficult circumstances however, good attendance is non-negotiable.
- Parents to receive termly reports which include a printout of attendance.

**To promote effective partnerships with the LA Attendance Team and other services and agencies to effectively remove barriers to learning and promote good attendance.**

- Designated key staff to act as liaison with individual agencies.
- The school will carry out a staged intervention before referring to the Local Authority.
- The school will gather and record relevant information to enable local authority intervention to be effective and meaningful
- Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school

**To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or an ingrained habit of low attendance at school.**

- Be sensitive and show understanding of the circumstances of individual learners.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers involving them in decisions.
- Set up regular meetings either at the school, home or via telephone to evaluate the pupil reintegration plan
- Ensure that learner is placed in the best class to ensure success.
- Consider use of designated member of staff e.g. Lead Behaviour Officer or Attendance Support Officer to ensure success.
- Celebrate improvements and build confidence and self-esteem of the learner.

## **Procedures**

We have a commitment to actively pursue each pupil's attendance by a system of daily phone calls at close of register. Each learner is an individual and our response to non-attendance depends on their own circumstances. Learners are sometimes reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons – many of these reasons have little to do with school itself, but are often symptomatic of deeper barriers to learning e.g. mental health issues, substance misuse and addiction. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the learner. If a learner is reluctant to attend, we advise parents/carers not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. A culture of openness about our thoughts and intentions will encourage good attendance.

## **Alternative Education Placements and Pupil Re-engagement Plans.**

Where learners are involved with alternative education placements, the provider must inform the school of the learner's presence or absence. This can be done by a phone call, email or fax daily. If a parent/carer knows that their child is unable to attend their placement they must inform the school. The attendance support officer will carry out a quality assurance visit weekly to check attendance, behaviour and attainment.

In order to ensure that learners begin to improve or maintain attendance the school will occasionally decide in consultation with a parent/carer/Senior Leader that a Pupil Re-engagement Plan will operate for an agreed fixed term period. These arrangements are, for example, put in place following an exclusion to reintegrate a pupil back to the school. These timetables would only be negotiated through attendance Support Meetings or through re-integration meetings. These arrangements are kept under review with the aim that learner will return to full time education as soon as possible. There may occasionally be a need for a more permanent arrangement. The school will work with the relevant agencies and bodies to try and ensure that the needs of the individual are met.

For learners on a pupil re-engagement plan, there must a reduced timetable form signed by the pupil, parent/carer as appropriate and social worker if one is allocated to the pupil. The form explains specifically that the parent/carer takes responsibility for the learner when they are not present in the school.

Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity (B) if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

## **Registration**

The school is statutorily required to take an attendance register twice daily. This will be managed manually on arrival then electronically via SIMS. This system will display present/absent using the national attendance codes. This will be input by front office administration staff.

The attendance register should only be altered:

- Where a learner's name has been legally changed
- Where an unexplained absence has been explained
- If an error has been discovered.
- Any alterations will be recorded on SIMS with reasons for the change.

## **Codes U and L - Late Arrival**

As a school we are duty bound to record codes **L** and **U**. A 'U' recorded on Sims will affect a pupil's individual attendance.

Any pupil arriving after 9.30am may be required to catch up on work either during morning break or remain in the building at afternoon.

In line with DFE guidelines we have a degree of discretion so the following will apply;

### **AM.**

KS1 School starts at 8.45am any child attending between 8.45am – 9.30am should be marked **L** after 9.30am will be **U**

KS2 School starts at 9.00am any child attending between 9.00am – 10.00am should be marked **L** after 10.00am will be **U**

KS3 School starts at 9.00am any child attending between 9.00am – 9.45am should be marked **L** after 9.45am will be **U**

KS4 School starts at 9.00 am any child attending between 9.00am – 9.45am should be marked **L** after 9.45 am will be **U**

### **PM.**

KS1 School resumes at 12.45 any child attending between 12.45pm and 1.25pm should be marked **L** after 1.25pm will be **U**

KS2 School resumes at 12.40pm any child attending between 12.40pm and 1.20pm should be marked **L** after 1.20pm will be **U**

KS3 School resumes at 12.50pm any child attending between 12.50pm and 1.30pm should be marked **L** after 1.30pm will be **U**

KS4 School resumes at 1.00pm any child attending between 1.00pm and 1.30pm should be marked **L** after 1.30pm will be **U**

## **PRP's**

The expectation is that students arrive in school promptly as identified on the PRP. Lateness within 30 mins of the start time should be marked **L** after that period should be **U**

### **First Day Absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents/carers must let the school know ASAP. This information will be placed on the register when it has been received. If the learner is on a CP or CIN plan or we have concerns about the welfare of the child then the visit **will** take place on day 1 of the absence. Every case of absence is examined and safeguarding is paramount.

If a learner is absent and we have been unable to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence then the Attendance Officer may perform a home visit.

### **Authorised Absence**

Every absence (am/pm) will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. This will be confirmed using the National Attendance Codes. Authorised absences include events such as:

- Illness
- Bereavement
- Interview
- Medical appointments (where every eventuality has been made to make this outside School hours)
- Approved sporting activities.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

'Unauthorised Absence' is a period of absence which the school does not consider reasonable and no leave of absence has been issued. This may include events such as:

- Family holidays
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences

A parent can offer an explanation for their child's absence, but the law clearly states that it is the Head teacher's decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent for an absence is justified. For pupils on non - attendance procedure stage 2 onwards absence will only be authorised when evidence can be provided.

### **Holiday Absence**

Holidays in term time are classified as unauthorised and marked on the register as G. This should not change unless it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and only under exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised.

### **Long Term Absence**

If there is a long term absence for medical reasons where external tuition has been put in place, for example hospital schooling a 'B' should be marked on the register.

If a child has been in hospital and discharged under medical supervision work packs should be provided for the learner for up to two weeks. If the learner has not returned to school a member of the Senior Leadership team should complete a home visit and discuss the appropriate intervention which needs to take place.

### **Children Missing From Education**

A learner going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding Leads and the attendance and family support officer will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where learners go missing on repeated occasions.

The Link school follows DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and work closely with Sunderland City Council Attendance Team.

Where a learner has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and responsible steps\* have been taken by the Link School to establish the whereabouts without success, the Attendance and Support Officer will make an immediate referral to the Early Help Team.

Children Missing Education team can be contacted by calling 0191 561 6501 or emailing ehaat@togetherforchildren.org.uk

\*Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visit where safe to do so
- Enquires through friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the family
- Request a Police Welfare Check (after 5 days)
- All contacts and outcomes should be recorded on Facility

The Attendance Team will then work with the school and make reasonable efforts to try and identify the child's current whereabouts or destination. If the child is not found, the Attendance Team will complete a Child Missing From Education form (CME). The child's name will be entered onto the Children Missing from Education Register, which is held centrally in accordance with the LA Children Missing from Education Procedural Guidance.

After four school weeks (20 school days) should such efforts prove to be unsuccessful and confirmation has been received from the Attendance Team that they are aware of the Child, they can be removed from roll.

### **Attendance Intervention Support**

School has a dedicated Attendance and family support officer who can work with the pupil and family to encourage good attendance. Those pupils whose attendance starts to decline due to regular unexplained absence, will be subject to discussion at the weekly attendance meetings. Strategies to improve attendance will be discussed and interventions recorded.

For those pupils who fall below 90% and are classified as a persistent absentee (PA) and where unauthorised absence exists school may apply a staged intervention toward formal proceedings:

<b>Stage 1</b>
All learners will have their attendance monitored on a weekly basis. Where a concern is raised over an individual's attendance, a home visit will be made and parents/carers will be issued with a letter, setting out our concerns, and a certificate of attendance. This is followed by a monitoring period of up to 4 weeks which can include phone calls, text messages and home visits by the Attendance officer – all contact will be recorded. A pupil Re-engagement plan may be issued to re-engage learners or create a more suitable personalised timetable.
<b>Stage 2</b>
Following an attendance review over a period of 4 weeks and, if there is no significant improvement, a further home visit will be completed and a second letter will be issued informing parents/carers that if any further absences are to be authorised, then there needs to be medical evidence explaining the absence. A pupil re-engagement plan may be issued to re-engage learners or create a more suitable personalised timetable.
<b>Stage 3</b>
Learners who have reached stage 2 of the Attendance Procedures will be closely monitored. A formal meeting will take place and weekly targets will be set – these will be monitored on a weekly basis. A pupil re-engagement plan will be issued to re-engage learners or create a more suitable personalised timetable. Parents/carers will be issued with a 'final notice' letter informing them that failure to comply will result in possible prosecution by the Local Authority.
<b>Stage 4</b>
If all previous interventions have failed and following a final attendance review a letter will be sent out to notify parents/carers that an attendance referral will be sent to the Local Authority for a prosecution to be pursued.

### Quality Assurance Procedure.

QA Process	Action	By whom	When
Attendance meeting	Overview of attendance/PA's for the week.	HOS Springwell Dene HOS Pallion Attendance Officer	Weekly calendared meeting
Attendance Focus meeting	To identify any pupils at risk of PA	HOS Springwell Dene	As scheduled in SEF calendar



		HOS Pallion	
Check quality of home visits	Accompany AO on home visits.	HOS Springwell Dene HOS Pallion	At least 2 per month
Monitor changes to marks in registers	Regular check to be made on any marks being changed in registers Ensuring; all changed marks/codes have been annotated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original entry</li> <li>• The amended entry</li> <li>• The reason for the amendment</li> <li>• The date on which the amendment was made</li> <li>• The name and position of the person making the amendment</li> </ul>	HOS Springwell Dene HOS Pallion	Fortnightly random checks
Code use check.	Ensure correct codes are used for absence, particularly codes B and C.	HOS Springwell Dene HOS Pallion	Weekly random checks