

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Formby High School
Determined To Achieve

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Rationale

The Law requires parents or guardians to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

All schools have a statutory duty to record student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.

This policy aims to promote excellent attendance and punctuality amongst all students. Whilst the responsibility for attendance and punctuality lies with parents, the school understands the importance of working in partnership with parents to ensure all students attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Formby High School will encourage excellent attendance for all students by offering an environment in which students feel valued and part of the school community. Excellent attendance underpins our stated aims that all students should feel that school provides a safe and pleasant environment for effective learning and that they are able to achieve their academic potential.

Students can only maximise learning and other opportunities if they are at school, every day the school is open. Absence is not acceptable unless it is unavoidable or authorised by school.

Definitions of Key Terms

Authorised Absence – student absence that has been approved by school and coded accordingly as an acceptable reason has been provided (for example, illness, to attend a family funeral or an unavoidable medical appointment during school time). Details of illness must be provided to the school and medical evidence may be requested.

Parent(s) – where parent(s) is used this relates to the person(s) who have parental responsibility for the child (parent(s), legal guardian(s) / carer(s)).

Persistent Absenteeism – a student who has an absence level of 10% or above and is deemed to be missing a considerable amount of school that will have a detrimental impact on his / her learning.

Unauthorised Absence – student absence that has not been approved by school and coded accordingly as the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable (for example, a shopping trip, a family holiday, any form of truancy or where an adequate medical reason cannot be provided).

Policy Aims

Formby High School will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school on all matters concerning attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise and respond accordingly when a student's attendance causes concern.
- Recognise and respond to the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence. Specific attention will be given to ensure students from vulnerable groups are given the support they need.
- Set targets to improve individual student and whole school attendance levels, through a systematic approach to analysing attendance related data.
- Work in collaboration with the Local Authority regarding support for parents whose children's attendance levels are causing a concern.

Policy Statements

- The school will comply with the latest Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006) which were updated on 1 September 2013 and the non-statutory School Attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities (November 2016).
- The implementation of this policy will support the school in meeting its safeguarding obligations to all students and it recognises equality of opportunities for all.
- All students are expected to maintain attendance of as close to 100% as possible and arrive punctually to school. This is considered to have significant advantages in promoting good learning and progress.
- Excellent attendance and punctuality are highly valued – the school will recognise and celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality by students.
- The school will work in partnership with parents and carers to address higher than expected levels of absence or repeated failure to arrive at school on time.
- Annually, the school will set a target for student attendance.
- In order to safeguard the welfare of all students, the school will make contact with parents using the 'first day response' method.
- The same principles and expectations apply to all students at Formby High School, including those in Sixth Form.
- The school will report regularly to parents on their child's attendance record.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents must:

- Encourage and support their children to attend school regularly and punctually.

- Support the approaches adopted by the school and, where appropriate, work in partnership with the Pastoral Support Team to ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Inform the school by telephone or email by 8.55am on the first morning of their child's absence.
- On his / her return to school after a period of absence, provide a written explanation of the reason for their child's absence.
- Ensure the school is kept fully informed of any change to contact details. This will ensure that the school is able to maintain accurate student records and make immediate contact with parents in the event of a child's unexplained absence from school.
- Provide medical evidence for absence due to illness if their child's attendance is an ongoing cause for concern or if the authenticity of illness is in doubt.

Students must:

- Arrive at school punctually ensuring they are in their tutor room, or assembly, by 8.55am.
- Follow the School's procedures if arriving late.
- Provide an absence note to their form tutor on the first day back to school after a period of absence.
- Take responsibility for completing classwork and homework missed during a period of absence. If necessary, the student should discuss this with his / her Climate for Learning Leader who will assist in collating work.

Form Tutors and Climate for Learning Leaders must:

- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and submitted on time during morning form tutor period or at the start of assembly.
- Code registers according to the statutory codes, seeking advice from the Deputy Headteacher if necessary.
- Ensure attendance registers remain up to date and any uncoded absence is followed up promptly.
- Monitor the attendance of students within their tutor group / year group and alert the Pastoral Support Team and relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team of any students who may be causing concern.
- If necessary, make contact with parents to discuss any concerns regarding attendance.
- Promote and recognise good attendance when opportunities arise, including during morning form tutor period and year group assemblies.
- Support students whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Follow up absence notes on a student's return to school.

Pastoral Support Team must:

- Provide parents with a record of their child's attendance if requested.
- In conjunction with Climate for Learning Leaders and Form Tutors, monitor the attendance of all students and identify a cohort of students for whom intervention strategies are required.
- Implement appropriate strategies, including engagement with parents, to bring about improvements in the attendance of any students with whom the school has concerns.
- Regularly monitor, review and update the list of students whose attendance is causing concern.

- Conduct home visits if necessary, including to meet with parents / carers and / or collect students who are absent from school without authorisation.
- Respond accordingly if students have more than two periods of absence in a half term.
- Inform parents when, due to a child's level of attendance, absences without medical evidence will not be authorised.
- Inform Sefton's Attendance and Welfare service when a student's attendance or punctuality is causing a concern.

Inform parents of potential penalties where there have been periods of unauthorised absence and / or persistent punctuality concerns.

Headteacher must:

- On an annual basis, present a target level of attendance for the school year to the Governing Body for approval.
- Receive regular feedback from the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team on matters concerning the attendance and punctuality of students.
- Report regularly to the Governing Body on the attendance of students at school and the effectiveness of strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Consider requests for leave of absence on a case by case basis and in light of the existing statutory regulations and the individual circumstances concerning the request.
- Inform parents as to whether or not a request for leave of absence has been approved.
- Promote and recognise good attendance and punctuality amongst students, staff and parents.

Governing Body must:

- Monitor and review the school's Attendance Policy.
- On an annual basis, approve a target level of attendance for the school year.
- Provide a representative to sit on the school's Attendance and punctuality Panel.

Processes and Procedures

Informing School of an Absence

If a child is absent, parents / carers must contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence (if possible before the start of the school day at 8.55am) and send a note in on the first day the child returns to school with an explanation of the absence (even if telephone contact has already been made with school). If the absence is longer than originally reported it is expected that parents will maintain contact to keep school updated on their child's illness and expected date of return.

If a student is absent from school, we will telephone and may visit parents / carers on the first day of absence if they have not already made contact with school. If absence persists, parents will be invited to a meeting in school to discuss the situation.

Lateness

Students are expected to be in their tutor rooms, or assembly, at 8.55am; those students who arrive at school after this time will be marked as late. If a student arrives after 9.10am he/she must sign in at

the main office. Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 who arrive after 8.55am will be issued with a behaviour point. Students in Year 10 and 11 who arrive after 8.55am will be issued with a school detention.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, any student who arrives after this time will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence until a note explaining the absence from school is provided by parents.

Recording Absence

The statutory absence codes will be used to code absence. All staff with responsibility for completing registers should do so in a timely and accurate manner. The lesson register should be called at the start of each lesson whilst students are standing behind their chairs. Absence will be coded as 'N' until a written explanation has been provided, at which point it will be coded accordingly. Parental notes explaining absence will be retained on the student file. Where a note has not been provided, the absence will be followed up with a telephone call to parents.

Monitoring Procedures

- Data relating to attendance and punctuality is analysed weekly by Climate for Learning Leaders and discussed at line management meetings with the Deputy Headteacher; emerging themes or issues will be further discussed at Pastoral Forum.
- Punctuality to lessons is the responsibility of individual teachers and the Curriculum Area in which they teach.
- Registers that are not completed correctly or in a timely manner will be identified by the Pastoral Support Team and an email will be sent to the relevant member(s) of staff requesting that it be completed (with a copy provided to the Deputy Headteacher).
- Patterns of attendance and punctuality will be monitored by the Pastoral Support Team and any student whose attendance begins to drop, or has an increasing number of 'broken weeks', will become a cause for concern. The Pastoral Support Team will alert the Climate for Learning Leader to discuss an appropriate course of action.
- Where deemed necessary, the school will implement a range of strategies to promote improvements in a student's attendance and punctuality; these may include writing to parents, setting targets, conducting a home visit, an invitation to attend the school Attendance and Punctuality Panel or support from the Local Authority.
- Where the authenticity of an absence is in doubt, or a pattern of absence causes concern, then the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. A member of the school's Pastoral Support Team and/or the Climate for Learning Leader will contact parents to request medical evidence to support this and future absences.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Legislation prevents the Headteacher from authorising any holidays taken during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. From September 2017, the School will request Sefton Council issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parents of any students taken out of school for five days or more of unauthorised holiday.

'Exceptional circumstances' might include, for example, attending a funeral of a close relative, or representing the school in extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Taking students out of school for family holidays is not acceptable and will not be authorised. Parents who choose to take their

children out of school without permission must be aware that the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

If parents are requesting leave of absence for non-school-based activities (such as performances, sporting events, etc) a Leave of Absence Request form should be completed in advance of any planned absence. In such cases, the Headteacher may authorise up to five days per academic year for such purposes.

Requests for leave of absence should be made to the Headteacher by completing a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' and submitting it, along with an explanatory letter, at least 10 school days in advance of the date of intended absence.

Legal Proceeding

The school will seek to adopt a range of strategies and will work in partnership with parents to promote excellent attendance and address poor attendance. Where such measures do not have the intended outcome, the Governing Body reserves the right to pursue legal proceedings, including requesting that the Local Authority issue a fixed penalty notice.

To ensure consistent and equitable application, the local delivery of the fixed penalty notice scheme will be managed by the Sefton Attendance and Welfare Service.

The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time (of at least 10 school sessions per term or 18 over two consecutive terms)
- Parentally condoned absence
- Unwarranted delayed return from leave of absence (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed
- Truancy

The option of fixed penalty notice will only be considered when all alternative strategies have been applied and not resulted in the necessary improvements. Further guidance is set out in the Local Authority document Procedures for Issuing Education-Related Penalty Notices (September 2015).

Reintegration of Students following a Significant Period of Absence

A child who is returning to school after a long period of absence will be supported by his/her form tutor, Climate for Learning Leader and subject teachers to ensure he/she is able to catch up with missed work. For a short period of time, it may be necessary for the student to complete additional homework through attending the school's lunchtime and after school study clubs.

Each individual case will be dealt with accordingly and it may be necessary to put reasonable adjustments in place; for example, a phased or partial return initially. A copy of any temporary reduction in timetable will be sent to the Local Authority.

For a student returning to school who has a mobility issue, priority will be given to his/her health and safety, and that of his/her peers. Prior to returning to school, a meeting will be arranged with the student and his/her parents to determine which reasonable adjustments will be implemented.

Recognising and Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The school will adopt a range of strategies to encourage and reward excellent attendance, including the issuing the allocation of rewards points, inter-tutorial competitions and a regular prize draw for students with 100% attendance. Attendance will be a standing agenda item at Pastoral Forum meetings and discussed at Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Support for Students who have Difficulties Attending School

A number of children miss long periods of school through sickness, exclusion, school refusal/phobia and may feel especially vulnerable when they do eventually return. It is vital, therefore, to make the transition back to full-time schooling as smooth and untraumatic as possible.

Ideally, the return of the long-term absentee will be carefully planned in advance with the student, parents, Climate for Learning Leader and Pastoral Support Manager, agreeing to a written programme or plan and, where possible, a phased or gradual return adopted.

To ease the return of the long-term absentee, subject teachers of the student will be notified by email and will be responsible for providing meaningful work to be sent home and ensure it is marked on a regular basis.

The Climate for Learning Leader will co-ordinate, monitor and review the student's return. Consideration will also be made with respect to the student's timetable and determine what is immediately possible and manageable.

Complementary Education

Sefton Complementary Education Service currently provides an education to:

- students who cannot attend their own school for a period, due to issues relating to their health; either physical, mental or psychological
- pregnant school girls or nursing mothers (during maternity leave, nine weeks before expected due date and nine weeks after delivery date)

Referral Pathway

Where a student is unable to attend school a referral will be made to the Complementary Education Service and the school will submit the following relevant information:

- the referral to Monitoring and Placement Group
- a completed Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT)
- a completed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support Plan
- a written report detailing the recommendation from a health professional

Where a student is offered a cycle of support with the Complementary Education Service, he/she will remain on roll at Formby High School.