

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Rationale

At Tytherington High School regular school attendance is paramount. Without regular attendance the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will be frustrated. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Students need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places students at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

## Categorising Absence: Key Points

The guidance given below covers a number of areas, which are known to cause difficulty for schools. It cannot, however, cover every eventuality. It is recognised that schools face difficult decisions when investigating individual absences and in exercising reasonable discretion.

It may be helpful to restate the following key points:

- registered students of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school
- whilst it is right that staff should recognise that individual students and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance. 95% attendance should be the minimum expectation.
- lateness should be actively discouraged. Form Tutors/HOH should arrange for students to make recompense for time lost.
- where a student is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly
- staff are not obliged to accept notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered
- explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence
- parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that, as of right, schools will agree to family holidays during term time. Each application will need to be considered on its merits. However, the Headteacher only will decide if a request for holiday leave will be granted.
- even where absence is authorised, staff should be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning

- In promoting regular attendance, Heads of House should work closely with Education Welfare Officer. The EWO visits the school on a regular basis, at least once per week.
- The School Attendance Panel, which includes members of the Governing Body, Heads of Key Stages and the EWO, meets with the parents of the poor attenders to instigate plans for improved attendance and to establish the reasons for poor attendance.
- The EWO may instigate legal measures where absence has not been authorised by the school. These measures include the use of Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Orders, School Attendance Orders and prosecution under Sections 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Reporting Absences**

It is the parents' responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible - parental contact on the first day of absence should be the normal expectation - and to provide such further information as may be required. Where a student is ill the school should be notified of the nature of the illness and, when this can be predicted, the date the student is expected to be able to resume his or her studies.

- 1 All absences must be covered by a note from parent/carer or record of telephone call. Where there is no communication parents will be contacted through the Truancy Call System. (Refer to Truancy Call information). Telephone calls should ideally be supported by a subsequent letter when the student returns to school or by the completion of the "Absence Notes" section in the Planner.
- 2 Form tutors will appoint a monitor who will be responsible for the collection and return of the "register file". At morning and afternoon sessions a message or memo to be read out, will be placed on the front of this file. When taking the electronic register, the form tutor uses the codes – 'present', L 'late' or 'N' – 'not here' – the SSSO's will pick up the 'N's' electronically and send the truancy call. On receiving replies, the SSSO will attach a comment to the 'N' with the reason given in order for the form tutor to either authorise or unauthorise the absence.
- 3 If Form Tutors have any concerns over any student's absence, they must inform the Head of House as soon as possible.
- 4 Any student who arrives at school after 9.05 a.m. (8.50 a.m. on Thursdays) MUST report to their House Office to sign in. The Student Support Services Officer (SSSO) will then record a mark on the electronic register of 'L' (late mark) or 'U' (unauthorised absence mark) with an indication of the minutes late or time signed in.
- 5 Any change of address or point of contact should be reported to the school office/ Mrs Gill Amron immediately. Change of address and telephone number can cause difficulties.

Form Tutors should check every half term to make sure that there have been no omissions.

- 6 Head of House must report students on continuous absence of two weeks and those Students who fail to attend regularly except where such absences are covered by a Medical certificate to the EWO.

## **STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE**

- Registration at 8.45 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. (8.45 a.m. and 12.55 p.m. on Thursdays)
- Absences will be picked up by House Office electronically who will log names for 'Truancy Call' procedure.
- Certificate given for 100% attendance termly. Form certificates for good punctuality and attendance. Annual prize for 100% attendance and improved attendance certificate.
- All Form Tutors keep detailed files of absence letters and logged telephone calls. Patterns of attendance can be seen from these. Heads of House follow these up by telephoning parents or putting the student on absence report.
- All teachers must complete the electronic register for every lesson.
- The Head of House writes an individual letter to parents of students whose attendance record causes concern, requesting an interview. The Head of House discusses the problem and possible strategies with the parents. Parents informed that the next stage is referral to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Heads of House work closely with the EWO to monitor and investigate subsequent non-attendance. The EWO visits the school each week and Head of House must meet with her to monitor issues. Poor attenders may be referred to the School Attendance Panel.
- The EWO visits homes and interviews parents of those students whose attendance is a cause for concern. These interviews may take place in school involving the Head of House where plans can be made for the reintegration of students. Other agencies will be involved as necessary
- Head of KS2 when visiting feeder primary schools will identify possible non-attendees and information on these students is given to their new Form Tutors/Head of House when they start at Tytherington.
- Special arrangements are considered to help students back into patterns of good attendance. Curriculum issues need to be considered; Heads of Houses to liaise with Heads of Department. Verbal praise and attention to be encouraged by Form Tutors and subject teachers; Heads of Houses to liaise. Individual strategies can be considered by the Heads of House and Head of Learning/Behaviour Support.

- Late gates will be organised randomly twice termly. Letters home to parents and an evening detention will be instigated for those who arrive late.
- Notice board situated in a prominent position to display the attendance/ punctuality records for each form.
- Regular letters home to parents informing them of percentage attendance figures for their son/ daughter and the number of lates in a given period.