



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Version 1.2| September 2022

**First Implementation date** | September 2020

**Review period** | Annually

**Date last reviewed** | September 2022

**Document reference** | PL1.12

**Responsible person** | Liz Stanley and Ian Lohan

## **1) Statement of Principle**

We believe that good attendance and punctuality at school are vital to the well-being and future prospects of all our students. Attendance and punctuality are intrinsically linked to our School strategy for raising achievement. This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents, students, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment where high attendance and excellent punctuality is the norm.

## **2) Aims**

- To improve the overall percentage attendance and reduce unauthorised absence;
- To establish a clear system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality and ensure that this is clearly communicated to all school staff, students and parents who are all working to agreed routines and standards;
- To develop a learning environment for the School where students are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because they feel valued members of the School community and they are safe and secure;
- To put in place an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality;
- To offer students and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

## **3) Objectives**

### **3.1 For students**

- To ensure they maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To support their fellow students and thereby their class and House in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.
- To follow the School procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality e.g. bringing in signed letters from parents after a period of absence or signing in following a late arrival for the School day.

### **3.2 For Parents and Carers**

- To be fully supportive of the School with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- To support the School and their child(ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible all other authorised absence, for example, dental appointments during the school day.
- To follow the School procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the School on the first day of absence by phone or email, and where this is not possible, ensuring that they send a signed letter to the School when their child returns.
- To read and follow the guide parents/carers which details all our expectations and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

### **3.3 For Homeroom Teachers / Subject Teachers**

- To act as role models by being punctual to every lesson/registration and to be standing at the door of their room to greet students upon their arrival.
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson/registration period in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

- To deal with any unauthorised absence from lessons, monitor the daily attendance statistics and deal with suspected truancy as detailed in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their Homeroom group e.g. absence letters, making calls home, liaising with Pastoral Lead and Head of School.
- To encourage their students to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality, for example, top Homeroom group of the week and using the School reward system.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their tutees/students after a period of prolonged absence.

### **3.4 For the Pastoral Lead and Head of School**

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the School computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data.
- To liaise with faculty administration staff/teachers and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls and emails to parents/carers on the first day of absence, letters and home visits.
- To assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carers, making home visits, ensuring that student contracts and targets are agreed and monitored.
- To provide School Leadership Team with daily, weekly and termly attendance data.

### **3.5 For the School Leadership Team**

- To co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the School.
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assembly programme and the reward systems that are put in place.
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that the learning environment on offer to students, through the curriculum, personalised learning, behaviour policy and reintegration procedures, create the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality and low levels of fixed term exclusions.
- To ensure that School expectations in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality is communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

### **3.6 For the School Board**

- To annually review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- To annually agree attendance targets.
- To take a lead role in supporting the School in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in our response to parents in challenging unauthorised absence.

## **4) Absence**

Parent/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attend the School on a regular and full-time basis. Every half-day absence is classified by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. The School must record the reason for any half-day absence. Unauthorised absence such as truancy will lead to sanctions being taken against students or in exceptional cases, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to loss of school place.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence, i.e. students

have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason. Unauthorised absences are those, which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from lessons unnecessarily, truancy and absences which the School considers to have not been properly explained.

The School's Terms and Conditions outline that student attendance must not drop below 80% in any given academic year. As such, the School does not encourage or support any holidays during term time but will consider a leave of absence on compassionate grounds upon request.

The Heads of School oversee any such requests from parents. Each request will be considered individually taking into account: the age(s) of the student(s), the time of year, overall attendance percentage(s) and the student(s) progress. If the School does not agree to the request then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The leave of absence must be requested in writing to the student's Homeroom Teacher.

## **UNEXPLAINED CONTINUOUS ABSENCE**

### **1st Day of Absence**

Office staff will attempt to contact any parent/carer on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. A telephone call and or email will be made or sent to make parents / carers aware of the absence. Where contact has not been possible, Homeroom teachers must support the Head of School by following up any absence with students and obtaining an email or signed note from parents.

All students with attendance below 80% (persistent absentees) will be contacted by a member of the School Leadership Team on each day of absence. Any relevant information ascertained from these calls will be recorded on ISAMS. A list of all outstanding absences will be processed by the Heads of School and distributed to SLT prioritising the safeguarding list, and Grades 10, 11 and 12. When a letter from the parent is not forthcoming, the Head of School will process a letter to the parent/carer requesting a reason to cover the dates(s) concerned. When this has been received they will update the information on ISAMS.

### **3rd Day of Continuous Absence**

The office staff will phone home to follow up on the absence and an email will be sent, requesting explanation for the absence. In the Primary Phase, where no contact has been made with parents/carers or if there are safeguarding concerns, a home visit may be carried out. In the Secondary Phase, students who have had three or more absences in the academic year will be identified by Heads of School through data analysis and Homeroom Teachers will be tasked with phoning home and logging the call on ISAMS. Any relevant information arising from these calls must be passed on to the Head of School. For any absence above three days the School would expect medical evidence in order to authorise the absence.

### **5th Day of Continuous Absence**

If the Head of School has not received a valid reason for a student's absence over five continuous days, he/she will contact the parent/carer and student and request they attend an attendance meeting. At this meeting, targets will be set for the student and appropriate support discussed and agreed to ensure the student's return to the School that will include measures to ensure re-integration and work 'catch-up'. In addition, if contact can still not be made after five days of continuous absence, and no

reason can be established, the Head of School will arrange a home visit to the student's last known address, and a further copy of the letter will be hand delivered.

### **10th Day of Continuous Absence**

The following action will be taken on the student's 10th day of absence if:

- The parent/carer and student did not attend the attendance meeting following the 5th day of absence and the student has not returned to the School and there has not been a valid reason for absence received.  
or
- The parent/carer and student did attend the attendance meeting following the 5th day of absence, but the student has not returned to the School and there is no valid reason for absence.

The Head of School and a nominated member of staff will make a home visit. The parent/carer will be offered additional support as appropriate and/or requested. The seriousness of the situation will be stressed including notification of the possibility of loss of school place. Should there be no-one at home or no response, a letter will be hand delivered noting the visit outlining the possible next steps as above and requesting urgent contact with the School.

### **INTERMITTENT ABSENCE**

It is also recognised by the School that students will on occasion be ill, but the School expects students to be in good health and regularly attending so they achieve 94% attendance for the year.

For this reason, a number of measures are taken to minimise intermittent, short-term absences:

- Truancy phone calls are made daily to inform parents of their child's absence and request information to confirm it
- Weekly phone calls made by Homeroom Teachers to encourage maximum attendance
- Rewards for students with 100% attendance and Homeroom groups with the best attendance
- Bespoke programmes led by the Heads of School and Pastoral Leads to tackle persistent issues with individuals and groups
- All students with attendance below 80% (persistent absentees) will be contacted by a member of the leadership team on each day of absence. Any relevant information ascertained from these calls will be recorded on ISAMS.

A letter will be sent out half-termly to the parents of all students where attendance has been identified as below the school target.

### **Below 94% attendance**

In occasional circumstances it may be deemed appropriate to not send out the letters outlined above although we expect the instances in which this to be the case to be minimal.

Throughout this process is it possible that a student may be identified as being persistently absent.

The following procedure will be followed for persistent absentees:

- High risk students identified fortnightly

- High risk students assigned to a member of the leadership team for monitoring
- Leadership team to make regular attendance checks during a monitoring period
- In cases of absence, phone calls home and home visits may be undertaken to support the family in improving attendance

## **5b Procedures for Registration in the Homeroom:**

- a) Homeroom time starts promptly at 7:40am and this is where morning registration will take place. From 7:30am, teachers should be at their classroom to meet their students and should complete the register by 7:55am. It is the teacher's responsibility to formally take the register and this task must never be delegated to students. As with any lesson, we expect teachers to ensure that students are in appropriate uniform, in their designated seats with bags placed on the floor. Registers will be taken by computer or handheld device, where there is a breakdown of this system paper registers can be collected by the Homeroom teacher or a reliable student in that group, this must be completed and returned to the administration team at Reception.
- b) Students who are late to school (after 7:40am), will enter via the Main entrance and have their names written in the late book, administered by a member of the SLT. Any lateness will be challenged, but when there is no good reason, for example, oversleeping, Homeroom teachers must challenge this upon students arrival to Homeroom time and inform their student that this will be recorded as a late. Homeroom teachers must check for patterns of lateness and for Secondary students, follow the sanctions prescribed in the Attendance Policy regarding persistent lateness:
  1. If a student is late 3 times in a half term = 1hr detention and thereafter for the 4th and 5th time.
  2. If a student is late 6 times in a half term = 90 minutes detention and thereafter for the 7th and 8th time
  3. If a student is late 9 times in half term = internally isolated in the Reflection room for a day.

Where Primary students are persistently late in arriving to school, the Head of School will hold a formal meeting with the child, parent and Homeroom teacher all in attendance.

- c) Students who arrive after 7:55am must register at the School Reception. Students will be issued with a late slip, which they must present to the subject teacher. Depending on the reason for the lateness, a detention will also be set for the student. Subject teachers must send a student back to Reception if they do not have a late slip.
- d) By 8.00am, all registers should be recorded on ISAMS. These are the only records the School has of students being on site and therefore it is the responsibility of the Homeroom teachers to ensure they are accurate and readily available for reasons of health and safety.
- e) The register taken during Period 5 will act as the afternoon registration.

## **ii Subject Registration**

- a) It is essential that an electronic subject register is taken at the start of every lesson. This will ensure that the School is able to monitor and reduce truancy from lessons. Heads of School will monitor subject registers to determine any

suspected truancy and will pass this information on to the Pastoral Leads, Homeroom teachers and Heads of Department. If it is found that a student has been truanting then this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised absence. The procedures for dealing with truancy are set out in Section 6. If a teacher suspects a student on their lesson roll to be truanting then they should contact the Head of School immediately.

- b) Lateness to lessons must be challenged and recorded. Staff must take appropriate action against students who are late without a valid reason and apply the appropriate sanction. Students who are late must have a signed note from a member of staff or a late slip from the School Reception.

## **6) Punctuality/Truancy**

It is vitally important that Homeroom teachers and Subject teachers are punctual to lessons/Homeroom sessions, otherwise this gives the impression to students that late arrival is acceptable. Homeroom teachers and Heads of School must reinforce the importance of good punctuality when communicating with students and parents. Procedures for dealing with lateness are dealt with in Section 5 above.

Truancy is not tolerated at the School and will be dealt with swiftly in line with the sanctions detailed in the Behaviour Policy. Truancy will lead to a letter home to parents and an immediate 60 minute detention that or the following evening, should the truancy be detected prior to 12.50pm the detention will be issued that day with parents/guardians notified by telephone, where truancy is detected after 12.50pm the student will sit the detention the following day. Students will be expected to complete the work of the lesson that they missed during that detention. Any subsequent truancy could potentially lead to the student being placed in internal exclusion for a period of one day. If this does not support the student in refraining from truancy then a panel meeting with parents initiated by the Head of School will be organised as outlined in Section 7.

## **7) Strategies for Ensuring High Attendance and Excellent Punctuality**

### **7.1 Rewards and Incentives**

Heads of School and Pastoral Leads will take overall responsibility for encouraging and rewarding publicly the need for high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This will commonly be achieved through assemblies and encouraging a competitive spirit with other grades and houses e.g. competing to have the highest attendance statistics and best levels of punctuality. Informal praise and formal awards should both be used and supported by all School staff. Formal attendance and punctuality awards may comprise:

- 100% Attendance Certificate. These will be issued annually and signed by Executive Principal.
- Excellent Attendance Certificate. These are awarded to students who are generally excellent attendees but who have been unavoidably absent e.g. funeral. They are issued termly and signed by Head of School.
- 100% Punctuality. These are awarded to students who have an excellent punctuality record. Issued half-termly and signed by Pastoral Lead.
- 100% Club. These are awarded each term to students who have 100% attendance. Students can receive bronze, silver or gold awards. Each term where a 100% attendance is achieved a badge will be awarded.

- Termly Attendance Trophy. This is presented to the Homeroom group in each phase which has recorded the highest attendance figures of the term. This is presented by the Executive Principal in the End of Term Assembly.
- Termly Punctuality Trophy. This is presented to the House which has recorded the highest punctuality figures of the term. This is presented by the Executive Principal in the End of Term Assembly.

## **7.2 Attendance Support**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored through the following computerised processes:

- Daily lists of absences;
- Follow up procedures on the first day of absence;
- Subject registrations;
- Weekly Statistics;
- Rewards and sanctions statistics for attendance and punctuality as outlined above.

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, then Homeroom Teachers should liaise with parents and make arrangements for hybrid learning where appropriate or for work to be made available and sent home.

Pastoral Leads and Heads of School share responsibility for identifying persistent poor attendance and punctuality. The Pastoral Lead will also analyse attendance data and look for patterns of absence and poor punctuality particularly in relation to students with Special Educational Needs.

Where there is a significant pattern of absence, Pastoral Leads and Heads of School will:

- Involve the Homeroom Teacher in developing strategies for intervention including a letter being sent home to parents/carers informing of the cause for concern and the negative impact on student learning and/or home visits.
- Attend as relevant, weekly panel meetings to discuss any students causing concern regarding attendance and punctuality.
- If attendance falls below 90%, work together in convening a “Persistent Absence, (PA)” attendance panel meeting, involving parents, in establishing targets for attendance and punctuality along with strategies for support in successfully reintegrating students back into the School. The School will use a PA planning sheet to track and record the attendance and intervention support of any student whose attendance is below 80%.
- Students with attendance between 80% and 90% will also be tracked and the appropriate intervention taken, for example, a meeting with parents. Patterns will also be analysed to detect any condoned absence or suspected periods of truancy. If condoned absence is detected, the School may take the decision to only authorise future absence where suitable evidence is provided.
- For attendance between 90%-94%, we expect class teachers, and Homeroom Teachers to play an active role in advocating the importance of full attendance to both students and parents.
- If the attendance is longer than a period of ten continuous days and is treated as unauthorised absence then the Executive Principal must be informed.
- All steps will be taken by the Pastoral Leads and Heads of School to ascertain the student’s whereabouts and documentation should be kept on this process.
- The Executive Principal must be further informed if the student’s absence is continuous for a further 10 days.



In a small minority of cases, for example, where parents are unwilling and failing to comply with the agreed action plans as a result of a panel meeting resulting in attendance being between 50% and 80% with at least half of the absences being unauthorised or absence is more than 50%. This may lead to the student not returning to the School.

### **7.3 Warning Letters**

When avenues of supportive intervention such as telephone calls, meetings with parents and any home visits have been used and there has been no improvement in attendance then the School will inform the Ministry of Education, and the decision will be taken to rescind the child's school place.

### **7.4 Leave of Absence**

As stated in Section 4, the School does not support any holidays requested during term time.

The School will take into consideration the following criteria when processing each Leave of Absence request:

- Grade
- Current attendance (94% or above)
- Reason for the leave of absence

Leave of Absence may be considered for students if their attendance is at 94% or above with an exceptional circumstance.

Where children are below compulsory school age (KG1 and KG2), absence during term time is still discouraged and will be monitored, however no action will be taken.

If a student is in Year 6 or Year 11, requests for a Leave of Absence will normally be denied. However in exceptional circumstances the request may be considered at the discretion of the Executive Principal.

Examples of leave which may be authorised are:

- Bereavement (A close family member)
- Funeral (A close family member)
- Sporting participation, drama and dance activities (If attendance is over 94%)
- Hajj / Ummrah and other recognised religious festivals.

We have the right to reject any leave of absence application which may have a detrimental impact on the student's attendance at the Executive Principals' discretion.

### **7.5 Students with less than 90% attendance (with unauthorised absence)**

Students who have less than 90% attendance with any period of unauthorised absence within a six week period will receive a warning letter from the School. This letter will state the student's overall attendance percentage and that if there is no improvement in attendance, normally within the subsequent three week period, then a panel meeting will be called and a note placed on the student's file.

### **7.6 Late for the School Day (after registers have closed – use of the O code)**

Students who arrive at the School after 8.00am are registered as “late after the registers have closed” and this is recorded as a O, which is an unauthorised absence for the am session. Any student who records more than five O codes in any one half-term will be issued with a one hour Head of School detention. This will be preceded by a warning letter to the parent/carer after the third O is recorded in the School register informing of the consequences of reaching a fifth O in the register.

### **8.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The School will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through the Pastoral Leads, who oversee the generation of attendance data and report to the SLT where there are any key issues. The SLT will analyse the data to look for patterns and generate the required plans of action, for example, reviewing any related policies and procedures such as Student Voice in working with students to generate strategies to improve punctuality. Action to improve attendance and/or punctuality will feature in the School Development Plan.