

<b>Policy Focus</b>	<b>Attendance v3</b>
<b>Policy Date &amp; Version</b>	<b>August 2017</b>
<b>Date Directors Approved</b>	<b>19 March 2019</b>
<b>Review Date(s)</b>	<b>March 2020</b>
<b>Owner/Lead</b>	<b>Executive Principal</b>

<b>School Aim</b>
<p>Our overall goal is to enable young people to 'be the best they can be' and to reach it we will use concepts and best practice in learning, neuroscience, emotional well-being, child development and coaching.</p> <p>Our aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meet the previously unmet needs of young people and enable learning and employment.</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide positive interventions into barriers to learning and negative family or intergenerational life cycles.</i></li> <li>• <i>Contribute to community and social change.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduce costs to society in terms of both social and economic benefits.</i></li> </ul>

<b>Statement of Intent for this Framework</b>
<p>The aim of this attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance at school is key to steady student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.</p>

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## 1. Aims/Objectives of This Framework

SfIT takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, students, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.**

## 2. Legal Framework

**The Education Act 1996 states that:**

**The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —**

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

(a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and

(b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

*[Normally referred to as the start of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday]*

**A person ceases to be of compulsory school age** at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year —

(a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,

(b) if he attains that age on that day, or

(c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

*[Normally referred to as the last Friday in June in the school year in which they obtain the age of 16 years].*

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### Board of Directors (BoD)

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the BoD will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff.
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively.
- nominate or identify a member of the Board of Directors who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance.
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children, and staff.
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year, take time at Director's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year.

- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site.
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data, including for vulnerable groups, and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff.
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.
- ensure that data is used within the school to measure the impact of strategies used to improve attendance.

### **Executive Principal and Head of School**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the principal and Head of School will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- coordinate with the Directors to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review.
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- report to the Board of Directors each term and the lead Director for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision.
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend.
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.
- ensure that the local authority is informed in a timely manner if students cease to attend.

### **Teachers and support staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.

- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily.
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- encourage and support their children's aspirations.
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return.
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Principal (**see section 4**).

### Students

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that students:

- speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.

## 4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absence

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a student is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

### **Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day and each following day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

### **Authorised absences**

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

### **Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absent. The Principal will arrange for work to be sent home.

### **Absence in exceptional circumstances**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. The Principal has the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If the Principal grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Principal weeks in advance of the leave being taken and by using the required form. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

When deciding whether to authorise absence, the Principal will consider if there are exceptional circumstances. If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice.

### **Religious observance**

SfIT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### Late arrival

**Registration begins at 0900.** Students who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The registration period ends at 0915.**

Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised.

## 5. School action: following up absence

### School action: following up absences

After the registration period closes if there are any unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the principal or Head of School will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

The school will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make parents/carers liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carers, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2 500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

## 6. Actions to improve attendance

### Below 96%

- Head of school will discuss attendance with parent/carers and student where appropriate.
- Head of school identifies issues affecting attendance and supports appropriately.
- Improved attendance will become a student target.
- Initial alert letter sent to parents/carers by Head of School – Attendance certificate included.

### Below 92%

- Head of school support for student continues.
- Head of school to discuss absence with Executive Principal through line management meetings.
- Alert letter (including references to legal obligations) sent to parents/carers by Head of School – Attendance certificate included.
- Head of school to implement support strategies to assist.
- Persistent Absenteeism (below 90%)
- Head of School support continues
- Family practitioner to arrange a home visit
- Head of School to meet with parents – minutes of the meeting to be recorded
- Penalty notice discussed
- Deadline set for improvement
- Possible multi-agency support to help make improvements

## 7. Policies and procedures

This policy, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in school, will be reviewed and updated annually or in the event of a change to school circumstances or relevant legislation.

Policy created by:

Date:

Policy reviewed by:

Date: