

# **POLICY STATEMENT: PUPIL ATTENDANCE**

## **RATIONALE:**

- Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education whether by regular school attendance or otherwise.
- Parents are under a legal requirement to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time suitable education.
- Regular school attendance is a key factor in promoting the achievement, welfare and social inclusion of pupils.

## **PURPOSES:**

- To assist maximum educational input and provide high achievement – ‘every day counts’.
- To encourage social experience and to promote social inclusion.
- To prevent truancy and the exposure of pupils to situations in which they might:
  - have an accident
  - experiment with dangerous substances
  - become involved in criminal activity
  - be abused or assaulted.
- To record the safe arrival of pupils in school, allowing the safety of pupils to be checked in the event of fire or other catastrophic occurrence.

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Parents will positively encourage the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- Parents will support only genuine reasons for pupil absence:
  - warning in advance where possible eg appointments and exceptional circumstances
  - notifying the school of genuine absence by phone initially, by letter on return.
  - seeking the school’s authorisation in advance when necessary eg unavoidable family holidays.
- Parents will advise the school promptly of any issues which may impact on pupils’ attendance, seeking advice from the school and the Education Welfare Officer where there is continuing reluctance to attend.
- Pupils will take responsibility for ensuring punctuality and regular school attendance; they will not leave school without the necessary permission.
- The school will maintain an ethos which places a high value on attendance and punctuality, making clear to pupils the disadvantage of irregular attendance and/or lateness, both socially and academically.
- The school will advise parents of arrangements regarding the communication of issues relating to non-attendance.
- The school has appointed the Assistant Head Student Support as the primary contact with the Education Welfare Service and as responsible for the oversight of effective support for pupils with attendance problems. A MARS form will be completed by the relevant Year Heads when a specific attendance issue arises.
- The school will set in place specific arrangements for the recording and monitoring of pupil attendance.
- The school in consultation with the Education Welfare Service will consider a range of options including the issuing of a Penalty Notice, or Fast Track Prosecutions, or Parenting Contracts in circumstances where parents or guardians condone truancy and unauthorised absence, and where the parent is judged capable of securing their child’s regular attendance, but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. (see appendix)

## **CONCLUSION**

It is recognised that both parents and the school need to work together towards developing individual pupil responsibility for themselves in the areas of punctuality and attendance.

17 July 2003

E Lyne Deputy Head Administration

- Reviewed and revised in September 2004 to include Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Reviewed and revised in February 2005 to include other developments.

February 2005

R C Evans  
Assistant Headteacher Student Support

Other relevant Documentation:

- Policy Statement: Pupil Attendance Records
- Prospectus
- Home-School Agreement
- Student Planner (Includes Calendar)

## **Appendix Attendance Policies**

Where persistent non attendance arises, the school in collaboration with the Education welfare service may consider:

- i) Education Related Parenting Contracts
- ii) Fast Track Prosecutions
- iii) Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **1 Parenting Contracts (Sec 19 – Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

A parenting contract is a voluntary formal written agreement between the parent and the school or LEA and it should contain:

- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply for a specified period with the requirements of the contract.
- A statement by the school or LEA agreeing to provide support to the parent for the purpose of complying with the contract. This support for the parent may include:
  - a) Parenting Group programme (resource implications)
  - b) Information & contact details of local/national agencies and helplines.
  - c) Regular meetings with a member of school staff.
  - d) Assistance with transport.
  - e) Per mentoring.

Failure to comply with a PC **cannot** lead to action for breach of contract or civil damages. Neither is there any direct sanction for a parent's non compliance or refusal to sign a PC. However, if a prosecution is deemed appropriate for non attendance, issues relating to PCs should be included in the case evidence.

If the school decides to issue a PC it is the Governing body whose name appears in the contract and it is the Governing Body who will have ultimate responsibility for the contract. However, the Governing Body may delegate responsibility to the Headteacher who may in turn delegate this aspect to a senior member of staff.

### **2 Fast Track Prosecution (12 weeks)**

At the start of next academic year – highlight to parents the importance of good attendance and the existence of fast track prosecution for non attendance.

- a) School Identifies Pupils
- b) School Attendance panel (AHSS, YH, Governor, EWO)
  - i) Meeting
  - ii) Action Plan – target attendance.
  - iii) Date for LEA attendance meeting.
- c) Six week review re target attendance.
- d) Target met – congratulatory letter.  
Target not met – refer LEA attendance meeting where options considered, including the issuing of a court date (in six weeks time).

### **3 Fixed Penalty Notices**

Documentation has already been sent to all parents.

- a) 10 unauthorised absences during a term
- b) Warning letter with 15 days to improve.
- c) Fixed Penalty Notice issued if no improvement.

