



# Attendance Policy

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### 1. Aims

We believe that every child has a fundamental right to be educated and we regard regular attendance as essential if all of our students are to take full advantage of their educational opportunity. Hence, a key task at Wyvern Academy is to promote good attendance and achieve and maintain high attendance rates - in excess of 95%. All associated with the school - students, parents, carers, staff and governors - have a responsibility to ensure that this end is achieved.

We recognise that the curriculum, the liveliness and quality of teaching, the quality of relationships and of the school as a community, all directly affect students' willingness to come to school. Each of these areas will continue to be developed through the School Improvement Plan.

We are committed to generating an ethos that encourages students to be positive in all aspects of school life. Positive attitudes towards good attendance will be encouraged through:

- regular communications to parents and carers stressing the importance of good attendance and our expectations regarding attendance for students not meeting the overall target;
- raising awareness of expectations with staff and students via assemblies, pastoral meetings, tutor group discussion;
- incentives to students to maintain or improve their own performance, including certificates, post cards home, celebration assemblies each half term, certificates for the top tutor group in individual year groups each half term and regular attendance rewards.

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff and parents and carers have responsibility for encouraging positive attitudes towards attendance.

Students are required by law to be in school. Parents and carers have primary responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school on time and stay in school. Parents who fail in this legal duty risk prosecution. To enable us to be effective in monitoring the attendance, safety and whereabouts of all our students, parents and carers are expected to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence **daily** for safeguarding reasons. If this information is not received home contact will be made.

Students are responsible for maintaining their own attendance at the highest possible level. They are responsible for ensuring that they receive their mark at the start of each school session and for attending all lessons on time. They must ensure that they bring notes to school before (if possible) or after absence. An attendance target log is printed in the student planner and each student is responsible for maintaining an individual record of attendance.

Maintaining and improving the attendance of the whole school, or groups of individual students, requires persistent vigilance. Individual unexplained absences will be carefully and promptly investigated by Tutors, Pastoral Leaders and the Attendance and Family Welfare Team who is responsible for a first day response to absence. No absence will go unchallenged.

### 3. Definitions of Absences

All students, parents and carers should be aware of the statutory obligations relating to attendance and punctuality. It is important to understand the difference between authorised, unauthorised and persistent absence.

- Authorised absence – morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason such as

illness or medical appointment that is unable to be outside of school time.

- Unauthorised absence – those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no ‘leave’ has been given e.g. truancy, unexplained absence, students kept off school unnecessarily. This type of absence can lead to the involvement of the Local Authority.
- Persistence absence – An absence authorised or unauthorised which exceeds 10% or more schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects. Parents may be invited to attend a meeting with relevant staff around intervention and support.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

The Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour & Attitudes and the Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development have specific responsibility to oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality through liaison with Pastoral Leaders, Attendance and Family Welfare Team, and the Local Authority.

The Attendance and Family Welfare Team is responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance register via the SIMS Attendance Module and for providing attendance data as required.

Pastoral Leaders and the Attendance and Family Welfare Team are responsible for monitoring and improving individual student attendance through liaison with Form Tutors and the Local Authority.

Form Tutors are responsible for marking registers during tutor time, for securing reasons for absence from students, informing students of weekly attendance figure and updating tutor notice boards.

The class teacher is responsible for taking a register during the first 10 minutes of each lesson.

The beginning of the afternoon session is marked by the class teacher during lesson 4, and recorded on the SIMS system. Irregularities will be followed up by a parental phone call as soon as possible.

Subject staff must record attendance within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. In line with Page 10 Point 10 of the disciplinary policy. Point 1 on the standard operating procedures. The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amendments 2013 and the Teacher standards.

Where individual attendance is cause for concern - frequent or long-term or unexplained absence - follow-up action with parents will be taken by the Pastoral Leader or Attendance and Family Welfare Team, who may decide to make a referral for an Early Help Assessment through Children’s Services.

Every effort will be made to encourage students with poor attendance records to return to school and when appropriate short-term re-integration programmes will be tailored to individual needs.

When a student’s attendance fails to improve despite the support offered through our school staff and the Attendance Policy 2021 5 agencies that work with us, it is likely that the student and his/her parents or carers will be referred to the Local Authority and placed on ‘Fast Track’ attendance process which can lead to court prosecution.

#### **4. Holidays**

Family holidays are discouraged and are **not authorised** by the school. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless he considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the

Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Where the school does not agree on an absence or where the parent/carer keeps the child away from school in excess of the period agreed, that time will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Applications for leave of absence which are made in advance and are refused or parents/carers who take their child on holiday without seeking schools approval will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent/ carer in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **5. Lateness**

Students are actively encouraged to arrive on time. Anyone arriving after the 8.40am bell must enter by the late door and obtain a late mark at the Late Desk, which is open until 9.00am. Unless there is a genuine reason for the late arrival at school, the student will be issued with a learning time catch up session at the end of the day on a Wednesday.

Students arriving after the late door closes must sign in at Main Reception.

In circumstances of severe bad weather, or transport difficulties, registers are kept open for a longer period.

Students arriving after 9.30am will be issued with the code 'U' denoting 'arrived after the register closed' and is classed as unauthorised absence.

## **6. Children Missing in Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Schools must enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that students' poor attendance is referred to the local authority. Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

### **Updated Guidance published in May 2022 and applied from September 2022**

Updated guidance of responsibilities for school attendance published in response to attendance during the COVID pandemic states parents who have decided to register their child in a school are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book medical appointments around the school day where possible.

- Work with school and the local authority to help them understand the barriers their child faces to attend.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support, including parenting contracts or voluntary Early Help plans. This will help prevent the need for legal action.
- Understand that school will regularly update parents on their child's attendance.