



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Mission Statement

Warlingham School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education and will strive to provide an environment which supports every student.

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. The promotion and celebration of good attendance and punctuality in combination with effective strategies and interventions will ensure that students are safe, healthy and prepared for the future. The expectation of this school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a reason for the absence, approved by the Headteacher or delegated member of staff (Assistant Headteacher or Attendance Manager).

### Aims

- To secure excellent levels of attendance at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, staff and governors
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students - Appendix A + D + E
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions – Appendix B + C + D
- To promote effective partnerships with the Inclusion Service and with other services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

All attendance and Persistent Absence (PA) figures are reported to Governors on a termly basis. These figures are approved and reported to the Local Authority via the Inclusion Service, on a half termly basis. Audience: (All members of the school community).

Monitoring: The Governors' Welfare, Support and Discipline Committee will monitor the implementation of this policy on an annual basis

Please see appendices for further details on context and implementation of the policy.

### Attendance Expectations

#### **We expect that all students will:**

- Attend regularly
- Attend all lessons
- Attend punctually
- Attend prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their parent/carer, Tutor, Head of House or Attendance Manager any problems that prevent them attending regularly and punctually

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Be aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school on a regular full-time basis - Section 7 Education Act 1996
- Ensure that their child arrives punctually and prepared for the day
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence, and every day thereafter with all absences being subsequently supported by a note
- Provide medical evidence for all absences of five days or more
- Contact the school if a problem occurs that may or has resulted in their child not wanting to attend
- Be prepared to attend attendance meetings to discuss support for their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes of circumstances or contact details
- Monitor their child's attendance using the Arbor parent app

**We expect that school will encourage attendance by:**

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for all students
- Keeping a regular and accurate register of attendance in registration time and for all lessons
- Contact parents/carers on each day of absence where no prior explanation has been received
- Monitoring students' patterns of attendance
- Inform parents if attendance becomes a cause for concern
- Responding promptly to a child or parent/carers concern about the school or other students
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express concern and clarify the School's and Local Authorities expectations with regard to regular attendance
- Refer to Inclusion Service students presenting irregular or unjustified absences
- Celebrate good and improved attendance
- Publish attendance statistics

Approved by Local Governing Body	Summer 2023
Due for review	Summer 2024
SLT Member	Mrs K Haynes

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX A - AIMS**

## **AIM 1**

### **To Secure Excellent Levels of Attendance at School**

- Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum
- Use measurable outcomes to monitor progress in attendance
- Ensure staff involved with attendance attend relevant training to keep up to date with new legislation

## **AIM 2**

### **To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Students, Parents, Staff and Governors**

- Use staff/school handbook, prospectus or DCSF literature
- Produce termly/annual reports to parents/governors
- Hold induction Year 7 evening for parents/students
- Update parents via school newsletters
- Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff
- Display materials at focal points – form rooms etc
- Discuss attendance issues in Head of House / Line Management Meetings and Tutor Meetings refer to IS / other outside agencies as appropriate
- Introduce reward systems to promote and celebrate good attendance
- Introduce sanctions to deter poor attendance and punctuality

## **AIM 3**

### **To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks**

- Maintain clear procedures for statutory registration
- Use of the InTouch and Edulink automated phone system to contact parents/carers on first day of absence
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures
- Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both students and parents)
- Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure
- Have clear procedures for in-house interventions prior to referral to IS
- Review whole school attendance and punctuality regularly through data analysis and commentary

## **AIM 4**

### **To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Students**

- Highlight attendance through effective communication
- Assemblies and Tutor Times
- Peer Mentor System
- Staff Listener Service
- Homework and Breakfast clubs
- Analysis of Internal Data
- Celebration and Publicity of Attendance Data
- Use of appropriate adult support

- Parents evenings
- Seek improved communication with parents by involving them from the earliest stage
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents

## **AIM 5**

### **To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

- Ensure standardised codes for the recording of student attendance, absence and other activities
- Ensure all absences are accounted for within two weeks or altered accordingly
- Be consistent in the collection and provision of information for tutors, Heads of House, SLT, parents, governors, students, outside agencies and other school staff
- Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness as soon as they occur

## **AIM 6**

### **To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication Between Home and School**

- Maintain and manage first day absence contact via Arbor
- Make full use of computer-generated letters
- Promote expectation of absence communication from parents
- Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written)
- Regular contact re: attendance and punctuality via newsletter, leaflets and other letters home
- Update parents about % attendance and punctuality via Arbor, tracking and reports

## **AIM 7**

### **To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

- Ensure clear and consistent implementation of an effective reward and sanction system
- Ensure that policies and procedures are followed prior to engaging outside agencies

## **AIM 8**

### **To Promote Effective Partnerships with the IS and with other Outside Agencies**

- Designate key staff for liaison with IS and other outside agencies and attendance at local team meetings
- Ensure that all initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral are clearly documented
- Hold termly attendance review with key school staff and IS
- Arrange multi-agency liaison / attend child in need meetings as appropriate
- Develop a service level agreement
- To work closely with IS to identify possible PA students
- To attend school attendance agreements meetings and school attendance contract meetings as appropriate, including home visits
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## **AIM 9**

### **To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Student When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence**

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students
- Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process
- Provide opportunities for counselling, peer support and mentoring and feedback
- Involve parents and other relevant agencies in all stages of the re-integration programme and agree timescale for review of reintegration plan Continue to monitor attendance of individual students closely
- Ensure referrals to outside agencies have been completed
- Use of support available in school including Learning Development staff, the Counselling and listening service and use of the Maple room

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX B**

### **ABSENCE POLICY – UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE, FAMILY AND SPORTING EVENTS**

It is illegal for the Headteacher to grant any leave of absence during term time unless in very exceptional circumstances.

If a child is selected to represent the school or a club in a significant sporting or musical event, then permission for "approved sporting activity" will be considered.

**Permission must be sought before any arrangements are made.**

Please note that the school will ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice if a child is absent due to an unauthorised absence, family or sporting event without the express agreement of the Headteacher and this falls within the Penalty Notice Guidelines as in Appendix C.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX C

## PENALTY NOTICE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School**

A Penalty Notice will be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances:

1. Students identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more). In such cases the Head teacher/Governing Body may request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.
3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be requested where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance. This will be considered if there are unauthorised absence of 7 or more sessions in a six-week period, which may include a student arriving late after close of registration, which is after 9.10am.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the education welfare officer.

### **Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions**

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carers liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

### **Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice**

The amount payable for a Penalty Notice issued in any of the above circumstances is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Advice and support is available from an Inclusion Officer by contacting your local Education Office as follows:- South East - Tel: 01737 737777

# ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX D

## ATTENDANCE PENALTY NOTICE FAQs

In addition to Penalty Notices being issued for unauthorised leave of absence, the issue of a Penalty Notice will be applied where there are 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason. Unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time could result in parents being sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

### **What is Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?**

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Education Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carers is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. The powers came into force on the 27th February 2004.

### **Why has it been introduced?**

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally as missing school affects a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a student vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

### **What is a Penalty Notice?**

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a student's attendance. If the Penalty Notice is paid in full on time, then you will not be prosecuted for this particular offence.

### **What are the costs?**

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carers for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996

Please be aware that each parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absences. For example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents and two children incurring unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 21 days.

### **How are they issued?**

By post to your home.

### **When are they used?**

Surrey County Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs.

- Overt truancy (pupils found during truancy patrols)
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time
- 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks



### **Is there an Appeal process?**

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish to the Headteacher.

### **How do I pay?**

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalments is not an option with Penalty Notices.

### **What happens if I do not pay?**

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to consider commencing proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child. If proven, this can attract a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment, or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences.

### **Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?**

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice as payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school & support agencies such as the Inclusion Service.

### **Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?**

Yes, Surrey County Council and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need to secure an improvement in your child's attendance. It is very important that you speak with the school or with the LEA's Inclusion Welfare Officer at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance. For more information on attendance issues, please contact the Local Area Office.

### **Legal Proceedings**

The Inclusion Service, on behalf of the Local Education Authority, has authority to commence proceedings either in the Magistrates' Court or in the Family Proceedings Court when a student fails without justification to attend the school on a regular full-time basis. Lateness after close of registration at 8.35am constitutes unauthorised absence and where a pupil continually arrives late under these circumstances legal proceedings may be considered. When considering legal proceedings, the Inclusion Officer will consult with the Headteacher who would be asked to complete a Certificate of Attendance for the pupil to be used in the prosecution process or in the application for an Education Supervision Order.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX E

## PROCEDURES

### Registration and punctuality

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day. At Warlingham, morning registration is taken at 8.35am and afternoon registration is taken at 12.30pm. The register will show whether a student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity or absent.

Punctuality to School is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's Tutor is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive to school on time.

- If they arrive after registration, students must sign in on InVentry at student services for the purpose of ensuring health and safety of all students and ensuring that we meet our legal obligation.
- Students who arrive to school after 9.10am, without contact from parents and a valid reason will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority
- Examples of unjustified lateness include, missing the bus, getting up late, uniform issues or waiting for a friend
- Lateness by a student will be dealt with through the School pastoral and detention system and may be referred to Inclusion Officer
- Afternoon registration will be take place at 12.30pm at the beginning of Period 4.
- The School day ends at 3.10pm unless otherwise advised

The register must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Schools, not parents, authorise absence and in doing so must adhere to DCSF Guidelines in authorising absences. Schools should make sure that parents are aware of their responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly.

- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for an absence for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for the absence. In cases of doubt reference should be made to the Head of House or Attendance Manager
- All other absences must be regarded as unauthorised
- Parents/carers must contact school on each day of absence
- Periods of absence of five days or more must be supported by medical evidence

### Students leaving during the School Day

Students are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the School.

- Whenever possible, parents should arrange medical and other appointments outside of School time
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected time of return and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination
- Students must sign out at Student Services on leaving the School and sign back in upon their return
- Where a student is being collected from the School, parents are requested to report to the School reception before the student is permitted to leave the School site. If you arrange for another adult to collect your child please ensure that you have contacted school in advance to advise
- If a student is known to have left the School site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the School be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police to register the student as a missing person

## **Requests for unauthorised leave of absence/Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances**

The School holiday dates are published a year in advance and we expect parents/carers to book their family holidays during the School holidays. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. As parents you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, students are at school for 195 days and at home for 170 days.

If, however, this is unavoidable, parents/carers must apply to the School by completing a Leave of Absence Request Form which can be collected from the Attendance office, Student Services and is the school website. This must be signed & returned to the Attendance Manager. It is not policy to authorise any leave of absence taken during term time. When the Headteacher considers there to be exceptional circumstances, leave may be considered.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised leave of absence during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

All requests for leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final.

## **Changing Schools**

It is important that if a parent/carer decides to send their child to another school they must inform the school of their decision as soon as possible. A student cannot be removed from the roll of the school until the following information has been received in writing to the Headteacher:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school
- The name of the new school and start date
- The new home address if it is known and applicable

The student's records will then be sent on to the new school. In the event of the information not being provided then the student/family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

There is an expectation that the child will continue at school until the transfer takes place other than in exceptional circumstances. A student will not be taken off roll until they have started at the new school, or at the Headteacher's discretion or if a student has not attended school for four weeks and they are known to be attending another school or are known to be living out of County or Country.

## **Withdrawing from School**

If a parent decides to withdraw their child, the school cannot take them off roll until another school place has been arranged. Alternatives open to parents who withdraw their child are:

- Finding another school place
- Education by parental provision – It is a parent's legal responsibility under section 7 of Education Act 1996 to arrange full time education at school or otherwise. This must be put in writing to the school before a child's name can be taken off roll. The Inclusion Service and the Elective Home Education Department will then be notified of your decision

The school are not legally obliged to provide any work to be sent home for a child who has been withdrawn from school.

### **School Action to Improve Attendance**

Parents will be made aware of the school attendance policy and will be encouraged to co-operate with the procedures outlined in the policy. School will only provide work for absent students to complete at home if these absences are authorised and valid.

The School has systems and procedures for:

- Registering pupils - registers MUST be up-to-date and accurately completed
- Categorising absence
- Collating and analysing attendance data to identify trends and enable action to be taken
- Determining in which exceptional circumstances leave of absence will be granted in term-time
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality for all lessons
- Dealing with late arrival
- Dealing with unauthorised absence
- Referring cases to the LEA
- Re-integrating pupils who have been absent

Action will be taken to improve a student's attendance before a referral is made to the Inclusion Service. This could include:

- Phone Calls
- Letters
- School Meetings
- One to One Meetings with students
- Head of House support
- Other School interventions and support

Where intervention at school level fails to affect an improvement in attendance a referral to the Inclusion Service will be made. School works closely with The Inclusion Service to determine the course of action to be taken in cases of poor attendance and other agencies such as Children's Services, Family Support Service and the Police should be engaged where appropriate.