

# The Penk Valley Federation



# *Attendance Policy*

**Agreed at Full Governing Body Meeting**

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Frequency of Review: Annual

Policy based on SCC Model Attendance Policy May 2015

## Amendments

2016 – NF/DS/HJ/JA

### **Statement:**

At Penk Valley Federation, we actively promote regular School attendance in order to maximise opportunities for each pupil to realise their potential. The Wolgarston Collaboration holds a termly Attendance week where there is a focus on attendance across all schools.

### **Principles:**

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

### **School Responsibilities:**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through our use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

### **Parents or Carers Responsibilities:**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

### **The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment :**

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 Department of Education). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.
- Pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.
- For older pupils, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A\* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.

### **Admissions Register:**

- All Schools keep an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.
- All Schools keep attendance register for at least 3 years.
- All Schools inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **Penk Valley Federation of Schools :**

The attendance register is taken twice a day at our first schools' and every lesson at Middle and High School. The marks then show whether the pupil is present, engaged on an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- holidays

### **Elective Home Education:**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **First School Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

In the event of illness, parents are asked to contact school by phone on the first day of absence and write an absence note to the class teacher on the day that their child returns to school. If the illness is likely to last more than a week, the school should be informed by letter or telephone.

If the school has not received notification of absence the school administrative assistant will make every effort to contact parents on any day a registered pupil of compulsory school age is absent without explanation. By contacting the parent the school also ensure that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.

Parents are asked to ensure their children are punctual for school. Children should arrive in the school playground at 8.40am at the earliest and 8.50 at the latest to ensure they are in class for registration.

*Arrivals after 9.00am, are logged in a "Late Book" which is kept in the school. Any pupil arriving to registration after 9am will be marked "late", until 9.20am, after this time they will be marked with a "late after registration closed". Entries are checked termly and where lateness is a regular occurrence, it is discussed with parents. Entries are checked termly and where lateness is a regular occurrence, it is discussed with parents.*

Attendance letters are sent to parents on a termly basis using a colour coded system. Children with very good attendance (96% and above) receive a green letter of congratulations. Children with attendance between 90%-95% are sent an amber letter outlining the negative impact this level of attendance can have on attainment. If attendance is below 90% a red letter is sent out and a referral to EWS will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

### **Middle School Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

In the event of illness, parents are asked to contact school by phone/at reception on the first day of absence. If the illness is likely to last more than a week, the school should be informed by letter or telephone.

If the school has not received notification of absence the school administrative team will make every effort to contact parents on any day a registered pupil of compulsory school age is absent without explanation. By contacting the parent, the school also ensure that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.

Parents are asked to ensure their children are punctual for school. Children can walk up the drive to the school playground from 8.30 am and must be there ready to come into school promptly at 8.45am to ensure they are in class for registration by 8.50am.

Arrivals after 9.00am, are logged in a "Late Book" which is kept in the school. Any pupil arriving to registration after 9am will be marked "late", until 9.30am, after this time they will be marked with a "late after registration closed". Entries are checked termly and where lateness is a regular occurrence, it is discussed with parents.

Attendance information is sent to parents on a termly basis using a colour coded system in the autumn and spring term and on the annual report in the summer term. Children with very good attendance (96% and above) receive a green letter of congratulations. Children with attendance between 90%-95% are sent an amber letter outlining the negative impact this level of attendance can have on attainment. If attendance is below 90% a red letter is sent out.

Attendance is monitored regularly and if attendance is below 90% school will make contact with home either by a phone call or request a meeting to discuss this, with the aim to improve the child's attendance. If attendance fails to improve without genuine reason the school leadership team will make a decision as to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice and/or involvement of the Local Support Team.

Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

### **Secondary School procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

In the event of illness, parents are asked to contact school attendance line by phone 01785 788404 on the first day of absence and before 8.50am. If the illness is likely to last more than a week, the school should be informed by letter or telephone.

If the school has not received notification of absence the school administrative assistant will make every effort to contact parents on any day a registered pupil of compulsory school age is absent without explanation. By contacting the parent the school also ensure that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.

Parents are asked to ensure their children are punctual for school. Students walking to school should arrive in the school at 8.30am at the earliest and 8.50 at the latest to ensure they are in class for registration. Students arriving by school transport should ensure that they are at the transport pick up point at least five minutes before the published departure time.

Any pupil arriving after 9.00am will be marked "late", until 9.30am, after this time they will be marked with a "late after registration closed". Entries are checked termly and where lateness is a regular occurrence, it is discussed with parents.

Attendance letters are sent to parents when attendance falls below 96% and attendance is then monitored weekly to review the reasons for absence. Parents may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons for absence.

Attendance letters are also sent to parents where attendance falls below the PA threshold of 90%. Attendance is then monitored weekly and parents informed by letter or text of progress towards an attendance rate of 90%+. If attendance fails to improve without genuine reason the student will be referred to the School Inclusion Group who will make a decision as to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice and/or involvement of the Local Support Team.

### **Attendance procedures for Penk Valley Federation**

No school will grant leave for annual holidays during term time, except in exceptional circumstances, in which case parents are requested to complete the request for leave form (available from school office) or write a letter to the headteacher outlining these. Where parents take holidays that have not been authorised, penalty notices may be issued in accordance with the Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices (Jan 2015).

Leave may be granted for an approved public performance and for absence following the death of a close member of the child's family.

Late arrival at school causes many problems within school including:

- disruption and distraction for the school office, the teacher and the rest of the class;
- teaching students that being on time is not important and therefore, setting a bad example;
- anxiety. Students need routines to feel safe and secure;
- missing crucial learning objectives explained at the beginning of the lesson.

Any pupil arriving after 9.30am when the registers are closed for the morning session will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register. The only exception to this is if a child has had to attend a doctor or dental appointment, in which case **M** is entered in to the register.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

All schools will follow up individual pupils and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individual pupils' enabling school to target efforts when necessary. Wherever possible action will be taken by the school to improve a pupil's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to Local Authority.

Attendance letters are also sent to parents on a termly basis using a colour coded system. Children with very good attendance (96% and above) receive a green letter of congratulations. Children with attendance between 90%-95% are sent an amber letter outlining the negative impact this level of attendance can have on attainment. If attendance is below 90% a red letter is sent out and a referral to EWS will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

### **Definition of persistent absence :**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period. For the Academic Year 2015-16 only, data will be collected and published nationally for both measures to allow continued comparison.

### **Staff responsible for attendance matters:**

	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Classteacher</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Marshbrook First School	Admin Officer	Yes	Headteacher
Princefield First School	Admin Officer	Yes	Headteacher
Penkridge Middle School	Data Officer	Yes	Headteacher
Wolgarston High School	Attendance Officer	Yes	Asst Headteacher

### **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school whenever possible. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best as to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible is achieved.

### **Legal Framework :**

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010

**This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if necessary.**

**Guidance :**

- Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices
- Department for Education Guidance –Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers
- Example proformas such as school 'Leave of Absence' request or referral form for support from an external agency
- Example letters such as colour coded letters to parents related to levels of attendance

All of the above guidance information is available upon request at any school.