

Attendance Policy

Governors' Committee: Curriculum
Lead Officer: Mr K Dyke
Review: January 2017

Introduction

Plymstock School is committed to providing an outstanding educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, outstanding attendance is crucial. Poor attendance undermines progress and attainment and can lead to social disadvantage. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the goal of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our students. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

Objectives

- To encourage 100% attendance and punctuality for all students
- To ensure that parents and carers are aware of attendance / punctuality concerns promptly
- To work with Education Welfare Service and other appropriate agencies to support 100% attendance & punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies for improvement
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the school's rewards system
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To improve attainment and achievement of pupils through improved levels of attendance.

Statutory Duty of School and Parents

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the

afternoon session. At Plymstock School an electronic registration system is in place. Student attendance is recorded for every lesson.

Principles

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at school on time, properly attired, with correct equipment and in a condition to learn. The school will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The EWS is a part of Plymouth City Council. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents and carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects them to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised?)

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and, as the parent, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring you to pay a fine of up to £60 per parent/carer, per child if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

Statutory Attendance Responsibilities

There is a legal responsibility to have a morning and an afternoon registration.

The School will:

- Record and monitor attendance and absence. Legally we are required to do this twice a day.
- Use electronic registration system to record and monitor attendance of all lessons during the school day to ensure the safety and welfare of all

students.

- Record and monitor the punctuality of all students and, where necessary, inform parents of persistent lateness and apply appropriate consequences (Registers are closed at 9.00am, and 2.10pm).
- Only authorise student absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Maintain a strong home-school relationship to inform and support parents with their child's attendance. The school uses an automated system to follow up daily absences.
- Work closely with the school's Educational Welfare Officer and other appropriate agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- Help to investigate, identify and resolve any issues with children and their families, which prevent full attendance at Plymstock School and will do everything possible to help return students to full attendance.
- Promote the importance of attendance through weekly assemblies, tutorial time and subject lessons.
- Celebrate and reward students who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality.

Parents will:

- Ensure their children arrive on time to school with the correct equipment and full uniform.
- Be aware that any person who has the care of a child or who has parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring good attendance.
- Ensure that they are fully aware of school attendance procedures.

Up to three Days' Absence

- It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence by 8:30am on the day of absence and each subsequent day.
- The school will operate the Truancy Call system and the parents/carers of every absent student will be contacted.

More than three Consecutive Days' Absence

- Parent/carer must contact the school on the first day of absence giving expected date of return.
- Where there has been no parental/carer notification after three consecutive days, the Tutor should contact parents/carer.
- Where there has been an absence of more than four consecutive days and parents/carers have not made contact or cannot be contacted by school, the EWO should be informed.
- In the case of long term illness the school should be notified so that teachers can set work. If it is known that the student will be absent for

more than two weeks, the EWO should be notified.

Methods of Reporting Absences

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

1. By phone to the school – There is a dedicated absence line option through 01752 402679 (Option 1)
2. Email from an agreed account (i.e. the registered home email address)
3. Personal contact at the Hub where a note will be passed to the Tutor.

Authorised Absence

Be aware that absence from school will only be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible).
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of immediate family member.
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces.
- External examinations.
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents.

Holidays in term time

Plymstock School does not support holidays taken during term time.

Holidays in term time are not a universal entitlement. They are only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and only in exceptional circumstances. In most cases this decision is delegated to the Head of House.

Parents who take their child out of school for a holiday without authorisation could receive a Penalty Notice.

Exceptional circumstances would include:

- When a parent in the armed forces returns from deployment.
- When the holiday is related to bereavement or serious/terminal

illness of a family member.

Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. The school will inform parents/carers if their child has been identified as truanting.

Students who truant will be issued with a sanction and will be expected to make up the lost time.

Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time.

The school monitors punctuality and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice

Roles and responsibilities

Heads of House will be accountable for attendance matters within their respective Houses.

The responsibilities of the Tutor will include:

- Consistently following the school's attendance procedures.
- Accurately recording and monitoring attendance and absenteeism of students in their Tutor Group and alerting the Head of House to any concerns.
- Ensuring that all unexplained absences in their Tutor Group are cleared by the end of each half term.
- Encouraging 100% attendance and punctuality in their Tutor groups.
- Rewarding students with a successful record of attendance through the school's rewards system.

The responsibilities of the Head of House will include:

- Consistently following the school's attendance procedures.
- Ensuring Tutors are clear on their responsibilities and that they consistently follow school attendance procedures.
- Being the 'gatekeeper' for attendance code reasons for their House.

- Inputting of attendance data where appropriate.
- Encouraging 100% attendance and punctuality in their House.
- Ensuring that parents and carers are aware of attendance / punctuality concerns promptly.
- Working with the Education Welfare Service and other appropriate agencies to support 100% attendance & punctuality.
- Recording and monitoring attendance and absenteeism for all students (including analysis of sub-groups) within their House and applying appropriate strategies.
- Acknowledging and rewarding a successful record of attendance through the school's rewards system.
- Improving attainment and achievement of students through improved levels of attendance.
- Holding Tutors accountable for attendance data and procedures.

The responsibilities of House Matrix Managers (Assistant Headteacher) will include:

- Promoting 100% attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Monitoring attendance data through House Matrix meetings.
- Monitoring, through House Matrix meetings, that Heads of House are following the school's attendance procedures for their Houses. By the end of each half term, Heads of House have resolved all unexplained absences.
- Holding Heads of House accountable for attendance data and procedures.

The responsibilities of the Deputy Headteacher will include:

- Promoting 100% attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Monitoring whole school attendance data and key indicators.
- Monitoring adherence to the school's attendance procedures.

The responsibilities of subject Teachers will include:

- Promoting 100% attendance and punctuality across the school .
- Consistently following the school attendance procedures.
- Ensuring that lesson registers are taken consistently and are accurate for each lesson.
- Monitoring the attendance of students in their class.
- Rewarding students for high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Alerting the relevant Tutor to attendance concerns.

The responsibilities of Heads of Department will include:

- Promoting 100% attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Rewarding students for high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Consistently following the school attendance procedures.
- Monitoring that lesson registers are taken consistently and are accurate for each lesson across the department.

- Working with Heads of House to raise attainment and achievement of students through improved levels of attendance.
- Hold subject Teachers accountable for lesson attendance data and adhere to school attendance procedures.

These roles and responsibilities are supported by the Attendance Officer.

The responsibilities of the Attendance Officer will include:

- Input attendance data into SIMS where appropriate.
- Initiate and manage the school's Truancy Call system.
- Produce daily fire registers for AM and PM registration.
- Produce attendance data (including sub-groups) for Tutors, Heads of House, House Matrix and Deputy Headteacher.
- Alert Tutors and Heads of House to attendance concerns.
- Store data and consent forms relating to school trips/visits.

When Attendance causes concern

- Tutors will set targets to encourage good attendance and to address any concerns.
- Contact will be made with parents to advise them of poor attendance.
- Pupils may be put on daily report and / or an Individual Attendance Improvement Plan for lateness or poor attendance.
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence if there are a high number of absences due to illness.
- A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- In extreme cases a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Action to improve attendance

Below 96%

- Tutor discusses attendance with student.
- Tutor identifies issues affecting student and supports appropriately.
- Attendance will become a target on the Student Support Programme.
- Initial alert letter sent to parents/carers by Head of House – Attendance certificate included.

Below 92%

- Tutor support for student continues.
- Head of House and EWO discuss attendance with student.
- Alert letter (including reference to legal obligations) sent to parents/carers by Head of House – Attendance certificate included.

- A variety of pastoral support strategies will be used to improve attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism

- Tutor support for student continues.
- Fourth alert letter issued by House Matrix Manager – Attendance certificate included.
- Head of House, EWO and House Matrix Manager to meet with parents/carers to discuss strategies to improve attendance – minutes of the meeting to be recorded.
- Penalty Notice discussed.
- Deadline set for improvement.
- Possible implementation of a CAF.
- Pastoral Support Programme continues.

If there is no improvement the House Matrix Manager will recommend that the Deputy Headteacher issue a Penalty Notice.

Monitoring

Weekly House briefings and scheduled Monday House meetings to include discussion on House attendance data and identification of students causing concern. Strategies for improvement shared.

Weekly Attendance Clinics between Head of House and EWO held to monitor House attendance and identify concerns and implement support strategies.

House attendance will be a standing item on all House Matrix meetings.

Reports will be produced comparing the attendance levels of groups of students. Comparison will be by:

- House
- Year group
- Gender
- SEN
- Ethnicity
- FSM

Tutors and Heads of House will monitor attendance levels continuously.

Tutors will take the initial steps to reduce levels of absence. The Head of House will monitor this.

Follow-up work will then be undertaken by the Head of House, with involvement of the EWO where appropriate.

Heads of House will monitor the attendance of all sub-groups within their House.

House Matrix Managers will monitor House attendance levels (Inc. sub-groups) with Head of House during House Matrix meetings.

A termly audit on overall percentage attendance will take place for the whole school by the relevant Deputy Headteacher.

KPD (Sep 2015)