



URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL  
**Wimbledon**

# Attendance Policy

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## Attendance Policy

### Vision

In support of the School Mission Statement we aim to “develop personal qualities of understanding of self and others, self-discipline and motivation and responsible maturity.” All staff and governors recognise that education is the key to achievement for all young people and that irregular attendance can lead to educational disadvantage and can place young people at risk, possibly leading to patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

This Policy has links with:

- The Social Inclusion Policy
- The Child Protection Policy
- The Behaviour Policy

### Aims

We aim to:

- Encourage parents/carers to recognise their legal responsibility in ensuring regular attendance and understanding the link between attendance and attainment and to work in partnership to encourage good attendance.
- Encourage students through the curriculum and the pastoral programme to recognise the importance of good attendance in achieving their full educational potential and to develop good habits in preparation for the world of work.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued, sending out a clear message that if a student is absent she will be missed.
- Work in partnership with agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service to encourage and monitor attendance.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and the Law relating to attendance.
- Implement a structured system of attendance monitoring at all levels.
- Evaluate procedure on a regular basis.
- Offer appropriate support to students who are experiencing difficulties with attendance.
- Work with the Educational Welfare Service to issue Penalty Notices to families who, in spite of support given, continue to have poor attendance .

## **Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of Compulsory School Age who are on the school's admission roll. The Education Act 2002 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 place a legal responsibility for enforcing regular school attendance on the LA. This responsibility is delegated to the Educational Social Workers (Attendance). Legal action can be instigated against parents/carers whose children fail to sustain an acceptable level of attendance and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility.

## **The Statutory Framework**

Regulation of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 states that:

Every school must keep:

- An admissions register
- An attendance register

The admission register and the attendance register of every school must be available for inspection during school hours by:

- Any of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools appointed under Section 1(2) or 5(2) of the Education (Schools) Act 1992(a);
- Any Inspector registered under Section 10 of that Act; and

In the case of a school maintained by a Local Authority (LA), any officer of the LA authorised for that purpose (usually Education Welfare Officers).

The Law requires regular attendance. Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

- Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence.
- All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.
- The governing body (which is legally responsible for the attendance register) must register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. If computers are used for attendance registration, staff must print the attendance register at least once a month. At the end of each school year sheets must be bound into annual volumes and, like manual registers, kept for at least three years.

- Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child/children attend school. If they fail to do so they may receive a penalty notice which invokes a fine of £120.00 which, if paid within 21 days, is reduced to £60.00

### **Procedures**

- Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 students should arrive for morning registration by 8.35am. The register will be taken and any students arriving after this time will be marked absent and asked to sign in using the late book in the General Office. Students arriving late will be required to sign in by 8.15am the following day or to bring in a note from their parent/carer with a valid reason for their late arrival. Failure to sign in or bring in a note will result in a school detention.
- If a student is late more than five times in one year then a letter will be sent home to parents/carers advising them of this. Any subsequent late arrival will result in a 45 minute detention on the day of the late arrival. Failure to attend detention will result in one day's internal exclusion.
- Students should arrive for afternoon registration by 1.25pm, Failure to do so will result in a ten minute detention by the subject teacher at the end of the school day.
- If a student is absent her parent/carer should telephone the school by 9.00am to report the absence. Upon her return to school the parent/carer should send in a note explaining the reason for the absence.
- Procedures for Sixth Form will be as follows:
  1. Tutors will call the register at 8.35am every morning. Students present are marked in and all others who are not in the room at the time are marked absent.
  2. If any student arrives between 8.35am and 8.45am they are marked as late on the register and must give a reason for their late arrival to the tutor.
  3. If any student arrives after 8.35am they must sign in the Sixth Form late book, which will be in reception- The student must explain in the book the reason for their late arrival. The book will then be checked by the Head of Year.

### **Responsibilities**

- Support the Head of Year and Pastoral Support Assistant in monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor attendance at the weekly Attendance and Inclusion meeting and recommend students for referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

### **The role of the Head of Year is to:**

- Work with the Pastoral Support Assistant in monitoring punctuality and attendance
- Monitor attendance at the weekly Attendance and Inclusion meeting and recommend students for referral to the Educational Welfare Service.
- Investigate any serious cases of unauthorised absence referred by the Pastoral Support Assistant
- Make referrals via the Assistant Head Teacher (Student Services) to the Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate. Provide the data needed to support the EWS referral.

- Inform the Attendance Officer of any changes of address (permanent or temporary) and details of special conditions e.g. Student has been moved away from home because of Child Protection issues.
- Contact the parents/carers of any student whose attendance falls below 90%; make a record of the contact and take necessary steps to improve attendance e.g. parental interview to set targets; referral to Educational Welfare Officer where the appropriate criteria are met.

**The role of the Form Tutor is to:**

- Take the register every morning at 8.35am. If a student arrives after the register has been called the Form Tutor should send her to the General Office to sign in the late book. The register should be returned to the General Office by 9.00am.
- Collect transcripts of telephone call or letters from parents/carers detailing reasons for absence and pass these on to Student Services in the General Office on the day that they are received.
- Be aware of students who may have attendance issues that are linked to concerns over Child Protection and to be vigilant in reporting any unexplained absence to the Child Protection Officer and Head of Year on the first morning of absence.
- Contact the parents/carers of students in their Tutor groups whose absence has fallen below 90% to find the underlying reasons behind the poor attendance and to offer pastoral support. Form tutors should then inform the Pastoral Support Assistant of contact made so that a record can be kept.

**The role of the subject teacher is to:**

- Take the electronic register at the start of every lesson.
- Report to the Head of Year any concerns they may have over poor attendance to their lessons of any student.
- Discuss issues of attendance with parents/carers at Academic Review day

**The role of the Pastoral Support Assistant is to:**

- Monitor punctuality and report any concerns to Head of Year.
- Make contact with the parents/carers of students who are absent for 1 day.
- Arrange detention for students who have arrived late and have failed to sign in at 8.15am the following day.
- Contact the parents of students with unauthorised absences and find out reasons for absence. Pass on the details of any absence that remains unauthorised to the Head of Year.

**The role of the Student Services/Attendance Officer is to:**

- Maintain attendance and truancy information and provide an accurate summary on a weekly basis to Heads of Year and Senior Leadership Team.

- Liaise with Social Inclusion Manager and Heads of Year to identify patterns of truancy that require further investigation.
- Maintain, in liaison with Social Inclusion Manager and Heads of Year, an “At Risk” list of students to be contacted on the first day of absence. This list may contain the names of students with a known truancy record or students on the Child Protection Register etc. The Attendance Officer is responsible for contacting the parents/carers on the first day.
- Telephone the parents/carers of students on the “At risk” on the first day of absence.
- Meet on a regular basis, the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss students who have serious issues of attendance in partnership with the Assistant Head Teacher.
- Update on a weekly basis the “At Risk” register and the list of students who have been referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Receive telephone enquiries from parents/carers regarding absence; log the calls and pass information on to Form Tutor.
- Print and send out letters to parents/carers asking for explanations of unauthorised absence.
- Produce weekly attendance reports for the Senior Leadership Team for use at the Attendance and Inclusion meeting.

**The role of the Social Inclusion Manager is to:**

- Liaise with Assistant Head Teacher, Attendance Officer, Educational Welfare Officer and Heads of Year over students on the Social Inclusion register whose attendance may be at risk.

**The role of the Child Protection Officer is to:**

- Liaise with the Assistant Head Teacher, Attendance Officer and the Heads of Year over students on the Child Protection register whose name(s) should be placed on the “At risk” list to be contacted in the first instance of absence.
- Inform Social Services of any student on the Child Protection Register who fails to turn up to school.

**The role of the Assistant Head teacher (Student Support) is to:**

- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer, Attendance Officer, Child Protection Officer, Social Inclusion Manager and Heads of Year over students on the “At risk” list and students whose attendance falls below 90%. Where possible the Educational Welfare Service(EWS) will work with the school to address attendance issues above their referral criteria. The EWS referral criteria are 10 days unauthorised absence in one term; attendance below 85% with 50% or more of the absences being unauthorised or a sudden unexplained drop in attendance where no explanation has been received.
- Refer students with attendance issues who are in need of support to the appropriate agencies

- Monitor unauthorised absences at the weekly Attendance and Inclusion meeting. Develop strategy to reduce the numbers of unauthorised absences.
- Report the attendance figures to the Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis.
- Liaise with the Heads of Year and Assistant Head Teachers for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 over the management of students with medical needs.
- Collect data and make referrals to the Education Welfare Service. Meet the Education Welfare Officer every two weeks to discuss the attendance of referred students to decide on appropriate strategies including Penalty Notices
- Oversee the collation of data for the PLASC returns.

**The role of the Head Teacher is to:**

- Make a decision on whether or not to grant holiday leave during term time.
- Instruct the Attendance Officer on when and if to take a student off roll.

**Supporting Students**

We recognise that some students may have attendance problems that could be caused by a variety of factors which may include chronic illness; anxiety; family issues etc. We aim to support students in a variety of ways including:

- Interviews with parents/carers
- Interviews with students
- Counselling
- Medical Plan
- Pastoral Support Programmes
- Individual support Programmes.
- Modified timetables
- Referral to a range of external agencies
- Peer mentoring
- Arranging alternative education e.g. SMART Centre