



Learning that Connects

## Attendance Policy

**Policy date:** September 2015

**Review date:** September 2017

**Chair of Governors:** Bob Paton

**Governors Approval:** 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Please note that Simon Hanson is our Chair of Governors as from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016

At Studio West we believe that good attendance is crucial factor in students achieving well.

We believe that children with poor attendance are more likely to leave school with fewer qualifications and therefore have fewer life chances.

Studio West is a happy school. Students learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care for the welfare of each and every student..

The school places great emphasis on attendance and is committed to communicating this to parents.

Our target attendance figure at Studio West is 95% as studies have shown that when a student attends for less than this figure it will have a negative impact on their final GCSE grades. Furthermore, we feel that regular and punctual attendance at school prepares young people for the workplace.

### **Communication**

The importance of attendance is highlighted in the school prospectus and the School Attendance Policy is published on the Studio West website. A letter is sent out to all parents/carers advising them of the attendance policy and giving instructions regarding notification of any absence.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school about any issues which may affect attendance and parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset and worry students which mean they may become unhappy or anxious and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this and understand that school will provide support and guidance where it can.

Parents are asked to arrange their family holidays only within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. An attendance officer will interview those parents who persistently take their holidays in term time and remind parents of the disruption to their child's education. Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised by the school and therefore negatively affect a child's attendance percentage.

Students may be admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups – a meeting will take place with the Principal / Deputy Principal where the importance of regular attendance will be highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent or is going to be absent. This can be done by telephoning the school reception. All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. When a child has poor attendance e.g. a significant number of absences or a significant number of broken weeks, the school will require medical evidence of illness before it authorises the absence. If notification about a child's absence is not received, then the attendance officer will contact the parent/guardian. The school will only authorise illness absence if it considers it to be a genuine health issue. If such health related absences were to persist, the school would expect a note from the GP to explain.

### **Concerns**

The school will start to show concern for a student if their attendance dips below 95% in a year.

Appendix 1 details the procedures for dealing with absences from School.

If attendance does not improve, parents are invited to an attendance meeting with the Attendance Officer to outline targets and explain the legal monitoring process.

Attendance is monitored by the Attendance Officer and punctuality is also monitored during regular health check meetings within the attendance team. This meeting acts as an accountability measure to ensure students with attendance concerns do not remain unnoticed.

Failure to improve attendance will result in the student entering the "Fast Track to Attendance" process.

### **Attendance Team**

The Attendance Officer monitors daily registration, signs in late pupils, collects persistent absence data and the accumulated attendance records.

Target percentages are set for each year group at the beginning of each term. These are based on the previous term's percentages.

The families of absent pupils are contacted on the first day of absence unless we have received information about the absence.

### **Registration**

It is a legal requirement to register students for am and pm sessions. All registration is done using lesson monitor on SIMS. AM registration is recorded by the Form tutor during the first 10 minutes of the day. This is completed and saved by 8:45am. The afternoon registration is completed during period 4.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

1. Certificate and celebrations for full attendance are awarded at the end of year presentation.
2. Regular raffles, spot prizes and certificates for 100% attendance are awarded every half and full term
3. Attendance above 95% will influence a student in being chosen for work experience possibilities

### **Truancy**

All the staff at Studio West are concerned about students' regular attendance and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness.

If truancy is suspected, a member of staff contacts the parent, usually by telephone. Parents are encouraged and expected to bring their child back into school so that reasons for the truancy can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then a member of staff will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the staff team and appropriate action is taken.

The school will work in partnership with the City Council to tackle pupils who fail to attend regularly. The City Council can issue penalty notices or prosecute unless:

- The pupil was absent through leave authorised by the Principal
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable circumstances
- Absence was due to religious observance
- The pupil's parents are travellers
- The school is not within walking distance and the Council has not made suitable arrangements for transport

Upon conviction fines can be up to £1,000 and £2,500 for aggravated offences. Parents can be subject to a prison term conviction if they fail to comply with a school attendance order.

The school will pursue a policy of using legal sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices. The flow chart describing this process is attached in Appendix 1.

Authorised Absence can only be authorised by the Principal or her representative - not the parent. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (Section 8) provides details of the circumstances under which pupils may be removed from a school roll. Enquiries that have taken place in authorities around the country following the death or disappearance of a child, have highlighted the crucial role which school registration plays in the monitoring and tracking of students in need and those at risk of significant harm. It is extremely important that pupils are not removed from the school register except in circumstances listed in the regulations and that schools actively consult with the Education Welfare Officer or an Officer of the City Council, if there is any doubt whatsoever as to an individual child's whereabouts or safety.

The School is rightly concerned at the level of absence caused by parents removing students from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time. The Government does not allow Principals to authorise holiday absences and so Studio West has adopted the "zero tolerance" of this category of absence. The school cannot authorise holiday periods during term time and this decision has been communicated to all parents via letter. The school will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to enforce this policy.

The policy is in line with Newcastle City Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice scheme. The Code of Conduct states that a Penalty Notice may be issued where there are at least 5 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term-time.

Payment of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 42 day period the LA must either prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice. Penalty Notices will be issued for each individual child and to each individual parent.

### **Attendance Policy Performance**

Attendance and Truancy will be monitored by Governors with an annual report to the full Governing body by the Principal.

Progress of the annual attendance figures will be monitored on a termly basis.

# Attendance Procedures—At A Glance

Current Attendance Target : **95%**

