



# Attendance Policy

## **Rationale**

DENI Circular 2015/02 entitled Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By School highlights the responsibilities of Boards of Governors of all schools regarding student attendance.

In our 'loco parentis' role we have a duty of care to ensure that the health and safety of all students is protected and that we know where all students are at all times.

Abbey Community College uses a texting service to inform Parents/Guardians daily of student absence after 10:00am each morning. Parents/Guardians must be confident that the information we text is accurate.

## **Procedures**

- Abbey Community College registers students twice daily – morning and afternoon.
- All Tutor Group registers must be completed by Class Tutors at 08:45am each morning. Subject teachers must take a register for all lessons each day.
- Students who arrive between 8.45am and 9.00am should go directly to their Class Tutor who will mark them late.
- Students arriving after 9.00am will be required to sign in at Reception and SIMS will be updated by administrative staff.
- Abbey Community College uses a texting service to inform parents/guardians daily of student absence after 10:00am each morning.
- Any member of staff taking a group of students off site, for whatever reason, must provide an accurate list to the office staff in advance. Failure to do so is likely to cause unnecessary worry particularly in the event of an emergency.

## **Policy**

Abbey Community College expects students to maintain high levels of attendance. Poor attendance inevitably has a negative impact on learning and achievement. We encourage students to attend school every day, to be punctual in the mornings and to lessons.

All staff will consistently highlight the importance of full attendance in the following ways:

- We encourage every student to aim for 100% attendance and all staff should continually stress the importance of this to students
- Student attendance and punctuality will be monitored closely through the Class Tutor and Head of Year.
- Staff will liaise with Parents/Guardians if there are concerns over a student's attendance

- Staff will collaborate with Parents/Guardians and relevant agencies to resolve issues if they are identified
- Parents/Guardians will be sent a daily text informing them of absence and lateness using the SIMS registration system
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### **What is Expected of Parents/Guardians?**

Parents/Guardians should note that “minding the house”, looking after family members, shopping or holidays are not valid reasons for absence from school. There is a statutory requirement on parents to ensure their child’s attendance at school.

#### **Parents are expected to:**

- Ensure their children attend school on time each day
- Ensure their children are properly prepared for the school day with correct uniform and equipment
- Contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence if a student is unfit to attend school
- Provide a written, signed and dated explanatory note upon the student’s return to school. This note should be recorded by the Class Tutor and sent to the school office for inclusion on SIMS Attendance

*No student should have an unexplained absence on their record. It is essential notes are sent by parents to explain every absence. Unexplained absences will be treated as truancies and three days unexplained absence will attract an after school detention. For Upper School students on EMA accurate records are vital.*

#### **Parents should ensure that:**

- Their children are absent only when ill health and bereavement prevents them from attending school
- Medical and dental appointments are arranged for a time outside school hours
- If a medical or dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents must provide a signed note and an appointment card. These are to be shown to, and the note signed by, the Class Tutor, Head of Year or Head of School. These should be shown at the school office for recording when leaving the school premises
- If an appointment is organised at short notice by a parent and no note is provided, it is essential that the school has confidence in any person collecting a student. This person should be the Parent or Guardian or someone who can prove clear responsibility for the child. This person should enter school and countersign the “signing out” book at reception before leaving with the student
- Students should sign back in to school upon their return. This is essential to ensure the school fulfills its legal obligation to keep an accurate record of all persons on the school premises at any time.

### **What is Expected of Students?**

- Students are expected to place importance on their education and to attend school and all lessons on time and properly prepared.
- Pupils should be in school by 08:45am for registration each morning
- If a student is late for a valid reason they must bring a short written explanatory note from their parent or guardian to their Class Tutor
- If a student arrives between 8.45 and 9.00am they should go directly to their Class Tutor who will mark them late
- Students arriving after 9.00am are required to sign in at Reception and their register will be updated by administrative staff
- A student who is late three times in any given half term without providing an explanatory signed note from parent will be assigned an after school detention for persistent lateness.
- Parents and students should note that “I slept in” or “I missed the bus” will not be accepted as valid reasons for lateness.
- Students must remain on the school premises at all times throughout the day. The school premises are self-contained and students have no reason to leave the grounds until the end of the timetable for the day. The exceptions to this are:-
  - Sixth Form and Year 12 students who may leave the grounds for lunch on designated days after a parental permission slip has been provided
  - Students attending unavoidable medical or dental appointments
  - Students leaving school with a member of staff for an approved educational activity
- Students must bring a note from their Parent/Guardian explaining any absence from school on the day they return. This is particularly important for Sixth Form students who are eligible for EMA as inaccuracy in their attendance records will affect payment.
- Students must catch up on any work missed due to absence.

### **What is Expected of Teaching Staff?**

- Subject Teachers are expected to record all attendance and punctuality for every lesson on the Lesson Monitor database.
- If a student arrives late to P1 or 2, all teachers must record an L code against the student’s name.
- Students with notes explaining their legitimate lateness or absence can be coded accordingly.
- Subject Teachers are expected to inform other staff via email of the names of any student(s) who is/are absent from school on an “approved educational activity” and to record the appropriate code against the names of student(s) who will be absent. It is preferable that this is done before the event. Failure to do so will result in an absence text being sent when, in fact, the student(s) are legitimately absent.

### **Class Tutors and Heads of Year must:**

- Continually stress the importance of full attendance and punctuality. Tutors can use the reward scheme to identify and reward full attendance
- Class Tutors must take a morning registration daily at 8.45am. If unable to do so for whatever reason they must ensure a replacement is in place to take the attendance register. This information must be accurate as it is used to send daily absence text
- Class Tutors are expected to monitor student attendance and punctuality. Attendance reports are to be reviewed by Heads of Year monthly (weekly when there is cause for concern). Concerns over any pupil must be referred to the Heads of Year when appropriate and discussed at the monthly pastoral meeting as follows (also refer to Appendix I):-
  - When attendance for any student falls below 95%
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- Leave pre-marks in place and not overwrite
- Closely monitor the attendance of all students in their Tutor Group and Year Group and refer, when appropriate, any concerns to appropriate Head of Junior, Senior or Upper School.
- If you have any concerns about the attendance of SEN students the SENCO needs to be informed as soon as possible
- Reinforce with students the need to catch up on work missed following a period of absence.
- Monitor closely students who fall below 95% attendance until improvement is evident. Interviews with students and contact with parents are to be noted and any liaison with Heads of Year, Head of Junior, Senior or Upper School.
- Heads of Year, should demonstrate concern for their students by endeavouring to speak to any student on their return to school after an absence.
- Class Tutors should encourage students to catch up with work missed by providing advice, support and practical help, e.g. collating work from other staff.
- Class Tutors are expected to commend and recognise any student who achieves full attendance in any calendar month.
- **Class Tutors are expected to:**
  - interview those students whose attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern, i.e. attendance below 95%, following three or more days unexplained absence or lateness to school and refer these pupils to the Head of Year for an after school formal detention
    - assist any interviewed student by setting targets for improvement
    - provide counselling and support for any student who has been interviewed
    - monitor closely any student who has been interviewed until improvement is evident

### **Heads of Year are expected to:-**

- Liaise closely with Class Tutors and other staff to monitor and review attendance and punctuality
- Contact home by 'phone when attendance falls below 95% or there are persistent unexplained absences and inform the Head of Junior or Senior School
- Contact home by letter – requesting an appointment – if no improvement is evident
- Refer when necessary to the EWO (85% and below attendance) and send a standard letter to the parents (refer to Appendix II)

### **Heads of School are expected I are expected to:**

In consultation with Heads of Year and the Attendance Officer, identify those students whose attendance is greater than 85% and less than 95%. Years Heads are to monitor these students closely.

### **Heads of School must:-**

- Contact home by phone to arrange an appointment when attendance falls below 95% and/or there are significant unexplained absences. Discuss with parents the amount of time lost and the likely effects of poor attendance/punctuality on attainment
- Contact home by letter if no improvement is evident or attendance continues to fall
- Refer to the EWO (and inform the designated teacher) any pupil whose attendance falls below 85%. A standard letter (available from the Attendance Officer) must be sent to the parent informing them of this (refer to Appendix II)

### **What is Expected of the Attendance Officer?**

The Attendance Officer will:-

- Maintain the integrity of student attendance records by updating where necessary
- Produce and disseminate monthly a year-to-date attendance and punctuality report by year and issue to Year Heads
- Award full attendance achievement points to relevant students on a monthly basis
- Produce standard letters to parents when required by Heads of School
- Change an M code for pre-arranged medical appointments to a present mark when the pupil arrives back in school.

### **What is expected of the Office Staff:**

- Office staff will ensure good communication regarding attendance by passing information quickly and accurately to teaching and pastoral staff
- Office staff will produce manual attendance sheets in the event of an emergency

- Office staff will maintain a “late sheet” for latecomer pupils
- Office staff will maintain a daily “out” log for pupils who are released from school
- Office staff will maintain a daily log of phone calls from parents regarding absence, lateness or other pertaining to attendance
- Office staff will pre-mark EOTAS pupils

APPENDIX I

Percentage Figure	Action	Person Responsible
95%	Class Tutor to contact parents and email Head of Year and Head of School	Class Tutor
90%	Head of Year to phone parents and send out letter (refer to Appendix II) recording times and filing copy	Head of Year
Below 90%	Referral to EWO by Head of School, having received contact details, phone call and letter timings from HoY and Class Tutor. (Referral follows meeting with parents.)	Head of School And EWO Link Teacher

Legal proceedings can be initiated below 85%. When referral is made the EWO link teacher meets with the EWO to discuss possible reasons/circumstances. Parents and child to be interviewed by EWO with a suggested strategy and to set conditions. Failure to comply will lead to legal proceedings.

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

As the teacher responsible for attendance I have to inform you that \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance percentage is \_\_\_\_% for the first \_\_\_\_ months and, in real terms, if this percentage was maintained it would mean \_\_\_\_ periods of English, \_\_\_\_ periods of Maths and \_\_\_\_ periods of Science would be missed, along with all of the other subjects.

Statistics confirm there is a link between poor performance in examinations and poor attendance. When you consider the amount of work missed in each subject, this is understandable.

From a legal point of view we are obliged to inform the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) once attendance goes below a certain level and your child comes into that category.

I would request that you please stress the importance of regular attendance and this point is further reinforced by the fact that employers requesting references from teachers, Heads of Year or the Principal all ask for a record of attendance and lateness to be attached.

We want your child to fulfil their potential and ensure that missing the above number of teacher periods is reduced as soon as possible.

I look forward to seeing \_\_\_\_\_ attend regularly for the remainder of this school year and beyond.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for help or support.

Yours sincerely

EWO Link Teacher