



# WALTON HIGH

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY: YEARS 7 - 11



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## Contents

Introduction.....	4
Purpose.....	4
Policy objectives .....	4
Attendance Percentages .....	4
Promoting excellent attendance .....	5
Walton High will: .....	6
Governors will:.....	6
The Executive Principal will: .....	6
The Principals will: .....	6
The Vice Principals will: .....	7
The Assistant Principals will: .....	7
The MKET Family Support Worker will:.....	8
The Attendance Officers will: .....	8
Heads of Year will: .....	9
Personal Tutors will: .....	9
Subject teachers will:.....	9
Heads of Department/Faculty will: .....	10
Parents are expected to: .....	10
Students are expected to: .....	10
Recording Attendance and Authorising Absence.....	11
Register Opening Times.....	11
Authorising Absence.....	11
Holiday or leave of absence for other reasons .....	12
Unauthorised absence.....	12
Attendance and Punctuality Systems.....	12
First Day Contact .....	12
Continued Absence and Lack of Contact.....	13
Safe and Well.....	13
Ten days absence.....	13
Attendance Improvement Plan .....	13
Individual Student Attendance Reviews.....	13
Session One Lateness/Lateness to lessons.....	14
Education support for medical absence.....	14
Legal Penalties .....	14

Fixed Penalty Notices .....	14
Prosecution.....	14
Miscellaneous.....	15
Legislation:.....	15
Retention of Attendance Data .....	15
Removal of students from the school roll .....	15
Part-Time Timetables .....	15
Appendix A .....	16
Acceptable forms of medical evidence .....	16

## Introduction

### Purpose

#### ENABLING

#### ENHANCING

#### ENRICHING

*Walton High aims to enrich and enhance the lives of children and young people by enabling them to make the most of outstanding learning opportunities within and beyond the curriculum; instilling an appreciation that there are no limits to what they can achieve and developing the attributes needed to be able to successfully shape and respond to the future.*

Regular attendance to school is essential for all students as there is a direct link between the grades achieved and level of attendance. Similarly for punctuality, if students are not in lessons on time they are missing out on learning and disturb others if they enter the classroom late.

Regular attendance at school is important for wellbeing and social and emotional development, providing routine, purpose and social contact. Attending school regularly safeguards children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.

We expect that every child will attend school on time, every day. While we recognise that rare absence due to illness may be unavoidable, we expect all parents to meet their legal responsibility of ensuring regular attendance and good punctuality.

This policy sets out:

- our expectations of attendance and punctuality for all students in Years 7-11
- the responsibilities of parents, staff, and governors in relation to attendance and punctuality
- how we will make decisions about whether to authorise absence
- the school's systems and support to monitor, manage and promote excellent attendance and punctuality

### Policy objectives

This policy aims to ensure that:

- attendance and punctuality across Years 7-11 is 96% or greater

The efficacy of this policy and its associated processes will be reviewed on a half-termly basis to assess progress towards its objectives, which should be met at the end of the academic year 2023/24.

### Attendance Percentages

Good attendance is deemed as attendance of 96% or above and is essential in facilitating students' progress. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with medical conditions or disabilities that may impact on their attendance and the expected level attendance for them will be included in their individual plan.

Achieving 90% in an exam or test could be considered a fantastic result; however, in terms of attendance, if a student is at school for only 90% of the school year then they will have missed 19 days - almost four weeks of school.

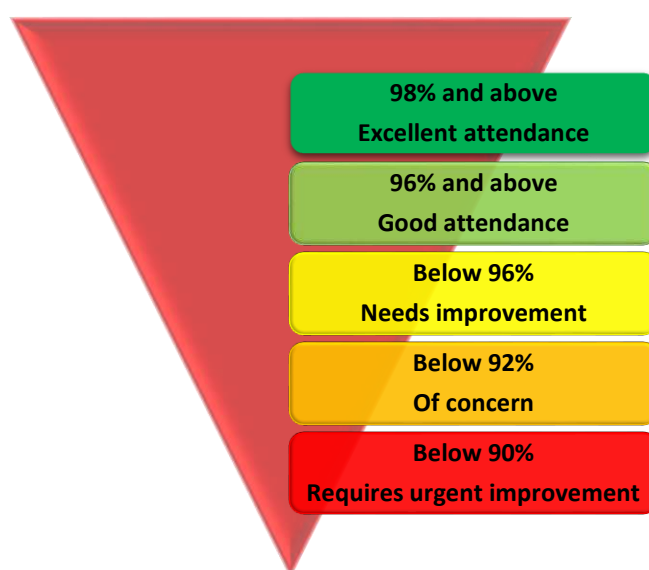
The table below shows how each percentage correlates to the number of school days and average number of lessons missed across the school year.

%	Days of missed learning in the school year	Average number of sessions missed
100	0 days of missed learning	No lessons missed
99	2 days of missed learning	12 lessons missed
98	4 days of missed learning	24 lessons missed
97	5 days of missed learning	30 lessons missed
96	7 days of missed learning	42 lessons missed
95	9 days of missed learning	54 lessons missed
94	11 days of missed learning	66 lessons missed
93	13 days of missed learning	78 lessons missed
92	15 days of missed learning	90 lessons missed
91	17 days of missed learning	102 lessons missed
90	19 days of missed learning	114 lessons missed

### Promoting excellent attendance

We are working to promote a culture in which the highest levels of attendance and punctuality are the norm. We expect 100% attendance from all students and will support them to achieve this.

The school's view of what is considered excellent attendance is illustrated on below:



#### Walton High will:

- work to ensure that all students feel valued and welcome, by modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication
- be a calm, focused learning environment in which all students feel safe
- offer a flexible and varied curriculum that provides challenging, relevant, and significant pathways through learning in subjects, personal development and extensive extra-curricular opportunities
- promote a culture where the highest levels of attendance and punctuality are the norm, using tutorial, positive referrals, assemblies, Firefly and the school website to communicate this
- communicate our expectations, processes and support structures related to attendance and punctuality clearly to all parents, so that they understand what to expect and know what is expected of them
- open registers for the morning session from 08:30 until 09:30 and open for the afternoon session at 14:00.
- monitor attendance and punctuality routinely, and follow up absence and lateness promptly
- monitor trends and, as appropriate, adapt school policies and practice to promote excellent attendance and reduce barriers to attendance
- regularly report all students' attendance to parents via Firefly
- work to meet the needs of every student with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- work with external agencies to support our students to attend school regularly and to remove barriers to attendance
- meet our legal obligations in maintaining accurate attendance registers, using correct codes for absence
- authorise absence consistently, fairly, and transparently, in accordance with this policy
- provide effective training for all staff to ensure that they know their responsibilities in promoting a culture of excellent attendance and punctuality
- expect all staff to follow and apply this policy consistently

#### Governors will:

- support the school in promoting good attendance
- set targets for attendance annually
- annually review this policy
- monitor the implementation of this policy
- receive termly reports on attendance, persistent absence, and punctuality
- ensure that improving attendance is an integral part of the school's strategic plan

#### The Executive Principal will:

- have overall responsibility for this policy
- ensure the policy is consistently and fairly applied to all
- receive monthly reports on attendance and punctuality

#### The Principals will:

- ensure that all registers are completed in accordance with legal requirements
- ensure that the Attendance Policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- grant Leave of Absence for students in exceptional circumstances only
- request formal action to be taken by the Attendance Officer in extreme cases of unauthorised absence
- promote attendance as a key focus across the whole school
- provide rewards for students, to celebrate excellent and significantly improved attendance

- act as a signatory for legal proceedings

#### The Vice Principals will:

- raise the profile of attendance and punctuality within the school
- ensure the full implementation of this policy
- regularly monitor, track and analyse attendance and punctuality, including lesson punctuality;
- monitor the school's attendance in meeting attendance targets
- regularly compile attendance and punctuality data for the Executive Principal, Principals, Senior Leadership Team, and Governors
- evaluate the school's systems to monitor, manage and promote excellent attendance and punctuality
- write to parents if their child's attendance is causing concern
- continually investigate and implement a range of strategies to improve attendance
- provide regular training and guidance for all staff on improving attendance
- support Assistant Principals and Heads of Year in implementing attendance improvement strategies
- monitor the work of Assistant Principals and Heads of Year to ensure they are being proactive in establishing excellent attendance with the year group
- regularly meet with targeted students whose attendance is causing concern
- consult with the School Council to take account of students' opinions on maintaining excellent attendance
- intervene where staff do not follow and apply this policy consistently, and provide support and training as appropriate
- meet regularly with the school's Attendance Officers and Assistant Principals to discuss the attendance and punctuality of individual students
- manage Attendance Improvement Plans for students at Stage Three B: Persistently Absent, depending on progress towards targets
- work with external agencies to support students to attend school regularly and to remove barriers to attendance

#### The Assistant Principals will:

- raise the profile of attendance and punctuality within their key stage
- ensure the full implementation of this policy;
- monitor, track and analyse the attendance and punctuality of their key stage, including lesson attendance and punctuality
- continually investigate and implement a range of strategies to improve attendance in their key stage
- support Heads of Year in implementing attendance improvement strategies
- monitor the work of Heads of Year to ensure that they are being proactive in establishing excellent attendance with the year group
- meet regularly with the school's Attendance Officers to discuss the attendance and punctuality of individual students
- regularly meet with targeted students whose attendance is causing concern
- meet with parents if their child's attendance is causing concern
- investigate alternative educational provision for students with serious attendance issues and discuss this with the Vice Principal and Principal where necessary
- intervene where staff do not follow and apply this policy consistently, and provide support and training as appropriate



- manage Attendance Improvement Plans for students at Stage Three A: Persistently Absent and Stage Three B: Persistently Absent, depending on progress towards targets
- work with external agencies to support students to attend school regularly and to reduce barriers to attendance

#### The MKET Family Support Worker will:

- support the Trust schools, Principal, Vice Principals and Assistant Principals in the full implementation of this policy
- work with the Attendance Officers to track early intervention to prevent persistent absenteeism
- ensure that monitoring and review of students at risk of truancy is in place and effective;
- track and monitor the attendance and welfare of dual-registered students attending alternative provision
- track and monitor the attendance of students at Stage Three A and Stage Three B of the attendance process.
- monitor, track and analyse specific student attendance and punctuality where it becomes of concern
- be a key point of contact for specific parents with regards to attendance and punctuality
- communicate consistently with students and parents at an appropriate early stage, when attendance and punctuality issues emerge
- establish, develop and maintain positive relationships with students and parents and work with them in a problem-solving capacity to develop action plans to address attendance and punctuality concerns
- conduct home visits, where necessary, including to identify barriers to attendance and punctuality
- keep accurate records relating to contact with students and parents and use these to inform appropriate courses of action, including preparation for issuing fixed penalty notices
- establish, develop and maintain positive relationships with school staff and external agencies in order to identify and develop understanding of issues experienced by students, which may prevent them from attending school regularly and on time, and potential solutions to these
- establish, develop and maintain relationships with colleagues in feeder primary schools to gain relevant information to promote the excellent attendance of new students
- where necessary, communicate with previous schools of in-year transfer students to promote the excellent attendance of new students
- liaise with external agencies to represent the school

#### The Attendance Officers will:

- support the Vice Principal in the implementation of this policy
- monitor and track individual student attendance and punctuality, including lesson attendance and punctuality, and highlight concerns to the Attendance Officer, Personal Tutors, Heads of Year, the Pastoral Team, SENDCO, Assistant Principals and Vice Principal as appropriate
- ensure that monitoring of students at risk of truancy is in place and effective
- ensure the accurate administration of daily statutory and lesson registration procedures, and advise the Vice Principal of breaches
- administer start of day school punctuality procedures
- authorise absence due to illness and for medical appointments, in line with the school's attendance and punctuality policy
- be a key point of contact for parents with regards to attendance and punctuality issues
- establish, develop and maintain positive relationships with students and parents
- track and monitor the attendance of students at Stage Two of the attendance process.

- keep accurate records relating to contact with students and parents and use these to inform appropriate courses of action, including preparation for issuing fixed penalty notices
- produce regular updates on, and analyse trends in attendance and punctuality for use by Senior and Middle Leaders

#### Heads of Year will:

- raise the profile of attendance and punctuality within their year group, celebrating excellent attendance and highlighting the link between excellent attendance and high attainment
- support their Personal Tutors to communicate consistently with students and parents/carers at an appropriate early stage, when attendance and punctuality issues emerge
- monitor the effective completion of registration by Personal Tutors
- liaise with Personal Tutors regarding attendance and punctuality
- engage in consistent communication with students and parents/carers if it becomes necessary
- pass on any information they receive about absence to the Attendance Officer or Attendance Officers, Pastoral Team, Head of Year, Assistant Principal, DSL, SENDCo, and Vice Principal as appropriate
- review appropriate action for students with attendance concerns following each Individual Student Attendance Review
- manage Attendance Improvement Plans for students at Stage Two: Of concern

#### Personal Tutors will:

- raise the profile of attendance and punctuality within their form, celebrating excellent attendance and highlighting the link between excellent attendance and high attainment
- take the register at the start of registration ensuring that a mark is entered for every student and that no missing marks are left
- know that a student should only be marked as present if they are in the room
- be aware of the attendance and punctuality of individual students in their form group, and liaise with the Head of Year Leader regarding concerns
- communicate consistently with students and parents at an appropriate early stage, when attendance and punctuality issues emerge
- pass on any information that they receive about absence to the attendance officer in the first instance
- manage Attendance Improvement Plans for students at Stage One: Need to improve

#### Subject teachers will:

- take the register within the first 10 minutes of every lesson, ensuring that a mark is entered for every student and that no missing marks are left;
- know that a student should only be marked as present if they are in the room and that an N mark should be recorded in all cases of a student is absent from their room
- check absent students' attendance in previous sessions, and email WT Attendance/WT Pastoral or BL Attendance/BL Pastoral if a student is absent from their session, but has been present during the rest of the day, unless a tag providing an explanation (e.g. music lesson, medical appointment) has been added;
- highlight students to the Head of Department/Faculty whose absence from lessons is causing concern;
- work with Heads of Year and their Head of Department/Faculty to support the reintegration of a previously absent student back into lessons.

#### Heads of Department/Faculty will:

- include attendance as a standing item in all departmental/faculty meetings and briefings, so that subject teachers can raise concerns about students who are absent from sessions
- pass on information they receive about lesson absence to the appropriate Personal Tutor and Heads of Year
- work with Heads of Year and subject teachers to support the reintegration of a student back into sessions

#### Parents are expected to:

- understand that their child's regular attendance at school is their legal responsibility (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)
- understand the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance
- contact their child's Personal Tutor at the earliest opportunity if they have concerns about their child's learning or punctuality
- understand that Walton High authorises absence, and not parents
- report specific reasons for absence by 09:30 on every day of an absence, not just the first day, using Feedback or by telephone
- provide medical evidence for absence, if asked to (see Appendix A on Page 16)
- ensure that their child arrives at school by 08:20 each morning, ready for an 08:30 start to the school day
- report specific reasons for lateness by 09:30 on that day using the attendance email address or telephone
- make appointments for their child outside of school time, unless unavoidable, and where appointments are made, minimise absence around such appointments
- provide evidence for any appointment made during school time
- collect their child from school for any appointment made during school time, or arrange for an appropriate adult to do so and communicate this to us
- not book holidays and days out during term time
- only request leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances and do so at least two weeks in advance of any such absence
- provide evidence as asked for by the school to support any request for leave of absence
- provide the school with up-to-date contact details for parents and other emergency contacts

#### Students are expected to:

- speak to their Personal Tutor or an adult they feel comfortable speaking to if they have a concern that is making them feel unhappy at school or is affecting their learning, attendance or punctuality
- attend school 100% of the time, unless they are unwell
- arrive at school by 08:20 and be in their first session at 08:30
- enter the school via the front door, if arriving after 08:30
- sign in at reception if arriving after 08:30
- attend all sessions on time
- catch up on any work missed following any absence and complete any homework that has been set
- only leave the school site during the school day for authorised reasons and if they have signed out at reception
- complete consequences issued for poor punctuality

## Recording Attendance and Authorising Absence

Each school day is made up of two 'sessions' – in the morning and in the afternoon. A student attends school for 190 days each year. There are 380 possible sessions. The school is legally required to record a mark in the attendance register against each student registered at the school for each session to show whether they attended or were absent. Marks for absence demonstrate the nature of the absence and whether this was an authorised or unauthorised absence.

## Register Opening Times

- The register for the morning session opens from 08:30 until 09:30, taken as part of session 1
- The register for the afternoon session opens from 14:00, taken as part of session 5

## Authorising Absence

Walton High will authorise absence in the following circumstances:

Reason	Evidence/Circumstance	Mark
Genuine illness	Parents must notify the school by 08:15 on the first day of absence. A specific reason must be provided (e.g., symptoms rather than comments such as 'ill', 'poorly' or 'unwell'). In the case of low attendance medical evidence would need to be provided.	I
Unavoidable medical or dental appointment	Appointments should be made outside of school hours, or if unavoidable during the first hour of the school day. Evidence of appointment (e.g., hospital letter, screenshot of appointment confirmation text message) must be provided prior to absence. Time out of school must be kept to a minimum.	M
Exceptional circumstances	These can be authorised in exceptional circumstances (e.g., bereavement, attendance at a funeral). Special occasions are authorised at the discretion of the school. Parents must notify the school.	C
Child performer	Parents must notify the school at least two weeks before the absence and provide a copy of the Child Performance Licence issued by the local authority. If this is unavailable, evidence from the company the child will be working for is acceptable.	C
Interview for school, college or employment	Authorised absence for employment interviews will only be granted for Year 11 students applying for post-16 apprenticeships and work which could lead to permanent employment. Parents must notify the school in advance and provide evidence of appointment (e.g., invitation letter/email).	J
Supervised sporting activity	Parents must notify the school and provide evidence (e.g., letter from sport's governing body/accredited club detailing name of coach, confirmation of adequate safeguarding arrangements, time and address of activity and arrangements to support missed education) at least two weeks in advance of the absence. Absences for students with attendance concerns are authorised at the discretion of the school.	P
Days of religious observance	The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the students belong. Where possible parents must notify the school and submit this at least two weeks in advance of the absence.	R
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	When traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school and it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision, parents must notify the school and submit a request at least two weeks in advance of the absence.	T

## Holiday or leave of absence for other reasons

In accordance with the law, the school will not authorise absence for holiday during term time. If there are exceptional circumstances behind a request for holiday or an absence not covered above, parents should request authorisation. This should be done before any bookings are made and no later than two weeks in advance of the absence.

In making a decision as to whether to authorise absence for holiday or other absence, Walton High will assess whether:

- alternative arrangements could be made outside of term time;
- the leave would be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the student;
- the benefit of the leave would outweigh the loss of teaching time;
- the leave would be for a one-off, never-to-be-repeated experience.

We will also consider previous attendance, including in previous academic years, the student's current attainment and progress, their capacity to catch up on any work missed, any impending tests or exams, and the frequency of other requests for leave.

## Unauthorised absence

Where the school has not received a reason for absence, or where the school has not authorised an absence, an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

This will occur when:

- a student goes on holiday or takes a leave of absence, despite it not being authorised
- a student is truant from school (even if the parent intended for the student to be in school, or if they attended for part of the day)
- supporting evidence or sufficient evidence has not been provided when requested
- a student arrives at school after registers have closed without a justifiable reason, communicated by parents

The school will, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, and vice versa, if new information becomes available. For example, where the school has been informed that a student is unwell, but on return to school there is evidence that they have been on holiday.

## Attendance and Punctuality Systems

The school will take a graduated, problem-solving approach in seeking to improve the attendance and punctuality of students. We recognise that there can be barriers to attendance, and we want to work with students, and parents to identify these and remove or reduce them.

## First Day Contact

Parents must contact the school on the first day of absence, unless the absence has been applied for in advance and authorised, or notified in advance. This contact must be made by 08:15. A specific reason for absence must be given. For example, in the case of illness, the type of illness or symptom(s) should be provided. If the absence continues after two days, parents must report for each day of absence.

To safeguard children, we will review absence at the start of the school day once registers have closed. We will aim to contact all parents of students who are not in school and whose parents have not provided a reason for absence on the same day, but this may not always be possible. In addition, we will attempt to telephone to find out the reason for absence.

## Continued Absence and Lack of Contact

### Safe and Well

If a child has not attended school for three consecutive school days and no contact has been made with school, we will consider this a safeguarding concern. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with the parent or student to check on the safety and wellbeing of the student, as well as the reason for absence, and may:

- contact other emergency contacts on the student's record;
- conduct a home visit;
- contact the schools of siblings, if known;
- make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the police.

### Ten days absence

We are required by law to report the absence of any student who does not attend school for 10 consecutive days to the local authority.

We must also follow this process in the event of irregular attendance.

## Attendance Improvement Plan

### Individual Student Attendance Reviews

Each student's attendance will be classified into one of five categories, in line with our attendance pyramid, shown earlier in this policy:

Stage	Absence	Description	Responsible Person
	100% to 98%	Excellent attendance	Personal tutor
	Below 98% to 96%	Good attendance	Personal tutor
1	Below 96% to 92%	Need to improve	Personal tutor
2	Below 92% to 90%	Of concern	Head of Year Personal tutor Attendance Officer
3a	Below 90%	Persistent absence	Assistant Principal Attendance Officer MKET Family Support Officer Attendance Officer
3b	Below 90% - no improvement	Persistent absence	Assistant Principal/Vice Principal Attendance Officer MKET Family Support Officer MK Council Attendance Officer

An Attendance Improvement Plan will be opened for all students who have attendance below 96%. When a student's attendance returns to 96% or higher, this will be closed.

A student can be placed on any of the stages without having moved from stage to stage, depending on need. A student does not need to have been through all stages of the plan before a referral is made to the local authority.

## Session One Lateness/Lateness to lessons

In line with school policy, a student who is late to session one of the school day on more than 2 occasions in one week will be set a punctuality detention on a Tuesday evening. This will run for 20 minutes, usually from 15:00 until 15:20.

If a student receives two detentions for lateness in a half-term, the Personal Tutor will contact home to discuss organisation with the parent. If this does not improve the student will be placed on an Attendance Improvement Plan.

If a student arrives to school after registers close at 09:30am without a valid reason, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Students who arrive late to sessions two to five throughout the day will be dealt with through their Head of Year. This may include making up time for lateness in detention, staying for an extra ten minutes after the end of session 5 and/or being placed on a Head of Year lateness report.

## Education support for medical absence

Where a student has medical evidence that they are unable to attend school in the medium to long term, we may make a referral to Stephenson Trust - Bridge Academy West, who offer a teaching service for these students.

Bridge Academy West will work with the student, their family, and the school to support them back into school, as soon as they are well enough to do so. We will make reasonable adjustments to support this reintegration back into school. We will designate a named member of school staff to be the liaison between Bridge Academy West, the student and their parents, and the school.

Where a student is not a Milton Keynes resident, we will make a referral to the equivalent service in their local authority.

## Legal Penalties

Ensuring regular attendance of a child at school is the parent's statutory responsibility. There are legal penalties if this responsibility is not met and a child is being denied their entitlement to a regular education. The school will work with Milton Keynes Council to use legal action to secure good attendance if we are dissatisfied by the engagement of parents or carers, or the student, and if improvement is inadequate or slow. This will include taking a student on an unauthorised holiday during term time.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

- We will work in accordance with Milton Keynes Council's Code of Conduct in the issuing of fixed penalty notices;
- we will issue a non-attendance letter if a student has 10 or more sessions unauthorised absence (1 day is 2 sessions) in any two adjacent school terms;
- if the number of unauthorised absences exceeds 15 sessions in any two adjacent school terms, the local authority may issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice;
- if issued, a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 would be issued to each parent for each child, which must be paid within 21 days;
- failure to pay this within the time limit, will lead to an increase to £120, which must be paid within 28 days.

## Prosecution

- The local authority may seek to prosecute each parent of a child under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a fixed penalty notice is not paid within the 28 days of being issued.

## Miscellaneous

### Legislation:

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

The government expects:

- a. Schools and local authorities to:
  - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - ensure every student has access to full time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- b. Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the school, attend regularly.
- c. All students to be punctual to their lessons.

These requirements are contained in:

- a. The Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- b. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- c. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- d. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- e. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- f. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

### Retention of Attendance Data

In accordance with statutory requirements, we will preserve every entry in the admission register and attendance register for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

### Removal of students from the school roll

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 the school will notify the local authority when a student is removed from roll in all instances of removal from roll (with the exception of the usual transfers between phases). We will only remove a student from our roll for a reason set out in Regulation 8 and after our notification has been made to the local authority. We will maintain a record of all students who have been removed from our roll and the reason why and keep this for three years.

### Part-Time Timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a suitable education which includes full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs for reasons that relate to the child's physical or mental health where it would not be in their best interests to attend full time. Advice from the DfE October 2014 states that any agreement must have a time limit by which the student is expected to attend full time or be provided with alternative provision. Students on part-time timetables should be recorded as C (authorised absence) for the period they are not in school.

No student will be placed on a part-time timetable without the written agreement of the Vice Principal and the Principal.



## Appendix A

### Acceptable forms of medical evidence

- Hospital discharge letter
- GP note
- Appointment card or dated text message for GP showing date of appointment and name of student
- Photograph/Copy of prescription in conjunction with other items listed
- Photograph of pharmacist's label on medication showing name of student and date of issue
- Note or letter from another health care professional