

DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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Agreed:	June 2023
Next Review Due:	June 2025
Person Responsible:	Head Teacher

MISSION STATEMENT:

Darrick Wood School aims to promote and encourage the very highest levels of attendance and punctuality from all of its students.

Customer Goal:

To be a school which students are eager to attend.

Curriculum Goal:

To ensure all students have access to a full education.

Community Goal:

To encourage and develop excellent habits of attendance and punctuality at School and for later life.

Quality Goal:

To strive for the optimum levels of attendance and punctuality, ensuring access to the highest quality of education.

1 Introduction

Attendance and punctuality at Darrick Wood School is vital to wellbeing and ensuring our students are successful at school and in later life. This policy sets out how staff, parents and carers, students, and external agencies can help ensure attendance and punctuality are outstanding. All data relating to attendance will be kept according to the Data Protection Policy.

2 Aims

- To ensure student attendance is significantly above the national average.
- To improve the overall attendance percentage and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To improve the attendance of students below the School target wherever possible.
- To ensure every group of students has excellent attendance.
- To ensure all students arrive on time to School and attend all lessons punctually.
- To reduce persistent absence rates for all groups in relation to national figures.
- To act early to address patterns of absence.

This will be carried out by:

- Establishing a clear system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality which is clearly communicated to all staff, students and parents who are all working to expected routines and standards.
- Developing a learning environment where students are encouraged to attend School regularly and to be punctual because they feel valued as members of the community and that they are safe and secure.

- Maintaining an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Providing students and parents/carers with excellent support, advice and guidance on the importance of full attendance and excellent punctuality.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Students:

- To maximise their learning potential by attending every day and being on time.
- To encourage each other to attend well and be punctual.
- To ensure they have any appointment written in their planner, signed by their Form Tutor in order to be shown to Pupil Reception.
- On arrival back into School following an appointment, to sign in at Pupil Reception.

3.2 Parents and Carers:

- To be fully supportive of the School with regard to attendance and punctuality as part of signing up to the Home-School Agreement.
- To support the School and their child(ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible all other authorised absence, for example, dental or doctor appointments during the school day.
- To follow the School's procedures for dealing with attendance by making contact with the School on the first day and each subsequent day of absence.

3.3 Teachers/Form Tutors

- To act as role models by being punctual to every lesson/registration and to be standing outside the door of their room to greet students upon their arrival.
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson/registration period in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- To deal with any unauthorised absence from lessons, monitor the daily attendance statistics and deal with suspected truancy as detailed in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their tutor group e.g. absence letters, adjusting Bromcom, liaising with the Assistant Achievement Co-ordinators, and Achievement Co-ordinators who will in turn liaise with the Attendance Officer and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- To encourage their students and tutees to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality, for example, top tutor group of the week and use of the reward system.
- To record positive and negative House Points relating to attendance and punctuality.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their students and tutees after a period of prolonged absence, emphasising the importance of catching up with any missed work.
- To be fully aware of the attendance of all groups within their tutor group (especially those with poor attendance patterns).

3.4 Achievement Coordinators and Assistant Achievement Coordinators

- To raise the profile of excellent attendance and monitor the attendance of students allocated to their year group.
- To be responsible for regular liaison with attendance staff and the EWO regarding poor attendance of students and issues related to poor punctuality.
- To liaise with parents as appropriate in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues and attending attendance panel meetings as appropriate.
- To ensure that teachers/tutors in subject areas fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur.
- To ensure that the School reward system in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively across their year group.

- To analyse attendance data including attendance and punctuality patterns by groups, interventions and patterns of improving attendance over time.

3.5 Attendance Team (all staff with responsibility for attendance)

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the School's computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data, and recording all parental communication regarding their child(ren)'s attendance in a timely manner. This includes entering full reasons given for absence and contacting parents/carers for further information when insufficient reasoning has been given.
- The Attendance Team is responsible for ensuring that the correct attendance code is used in each circumstance, including removing N codes in a timely manner.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer, Assistant Achievement Coordinators and Achievement Coordinators and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, letters and home visits.
- To assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carers and external agencies, coordinating home visits, ensuring that any agreed targets are monitored.

3.6 Senior Leadership Team

- To coordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the School.
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assembly rota and the reward systems that are put in place.
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality.
- To regularly report attendance data at SLT meetings.
- To create an engaging and challenging learning environment for every student.
- To ensure that School expectations regarding this policy are communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

3.7 Governors

- To review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Policy every other year.
- To annually agree attendance targets.
- To take a lead role in supporting the School in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in our response to parents in supporting unauthorised absence.
- To scrutinise attendance data in line with the most recent Ofsted frameworks.
- To sit on an attendance panel meeting where appropriate.

4. Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attend/s School on a regular and full-time basis. Every half day absence has to be classified by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. The School must record the reason for any half day absence.

Typically, the sanction for an unauthorised absence such as truancy will be to make up the missed learning time in addition to a School Detention. Where appropriate and supported by the EWO, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to legal action being taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend, or if they have a scheduled medical appointment or if they are attending an alternative approved School initiated activity. These are examples of authorised absence, i.e. students have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason.

Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from lessons unnecessarily truancy, and absences which the School considers to have not been properly explained.

4.1 Leave of Absence request

The Education (Pupil Regulations) 2006 and the DfES Circular 10/99 state that a leave of absence can only be granted at the discretion of the School Head Teacher. Only in exceptional cases shall more than ten days be granted in any one year. The School does not encourage or support any holidays during term time but will consider a leave of absence on compassionate grounds upon request. If the School does not agree to the request then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the leave of absence involves any travel arrangements, these must not be booked until permission is granted. The leave of absence application form must be completed and sent to the Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher will consider the request taking into account:

- The age of the student(s) and their attendance history including patterns of attendance.
- The time of the year with regards to any examinations and the impact on learning.
- Attendance and punctuality in the current academic year.
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made.
- The academic progress of the student in relation to their academic potential.
- Any relevant behavioural issues.
- Any historical requests.

A letter of approval (or a letter stating the request is not approved) will then be sent to the parent/carer clearly stipulating that approval is only given in exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers are also informed that if any leave is taken beyond the dates agreed, a fixed penalty notice could be issued. Section 7.4 outlines the School's policy when a leave of absence is taken without being approved.

5 Procedures for Registration

5.1 Form Registration

a) Morning registration sets the tone for the rest of the School day. The bell will ring at 8.35am and tutors should meet their tutees to take the register. It is the tutor's responsibility to formally take the register and this task must never be delegated to students. Students arriving after the register has been taken will be recorded as late. Registers will be taken by computer. Where there is a breakdown of this system paper registers can be completed by the form tutor.

b) Tutees who are late will be recorded as such by their Form Tutor. Those who are repeatedly late will be issued with a relevant sanction. Tutors/ACs/AACs must check for patterns of lateness. Persistent lateness should be followed up initially by the Form Tutor with support from the AAC and the Attendance Officer. Suitable support should be considered along with appropriate sanctions. Form Tutors in conjunction with the AAC should ensure a student attends a detention given for lateness. If a student continues to have issues with their punctuality, sanctions will be escalated in line with our Behaviour Policy.

c) Any absence after 10am is recorded as a "U" i.e., late after the registers closed and thus will be treated as an unauthorised absence for the am or pm session.

d) Any student who arrives and misses their normal form registration for any reason must report to Pupil Reception. The member of staff at Pupil Reception, in conjunction with the Main Office/Reception will ensure that the appropriate register is updated accordingly.

5.2 Subject Registration

a) It is essential that an electronic subject register is taken at the start of every lesson (within 10 minutes of the official start time). This will ensure that the School is able to monitor and improve attendance to lessons. The Attendance Officer will monitor subject registers to determine any suspected truancy and will pass this information on to form tutors, ACs/AACs and HODs. If it is found that a student has been truanting then this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised absence. The procedures for dealing with truancy are stipulated in Section 6.

b) Lateness to lessons must be challenged and recorded in Bromcom with an L mark. Subject staff must take appropriate action against students who are late without a valid reason, for example, issue a reprimand and students must also be reminded that when repeated 'lates' have been recorded then a detention will be issued. Students who are late must have a signed note from a member of staff. Wherever possible staff should not hold students back so that they are then late to their next lesson.

6 Punctuality

a) It is vitally important teachers and form tutors are punctual to lessons/form tutor sessions, to model the behaviour and attitudes expected from all students (as stated in the teaching standards). All staff must reinforce the importance of punctuality when communicating with students and parents.

b) All registers should be recorded on BromCom. These are the only records the School has of students being on site and therefore it is the responsibility of the tutors to ensure they are accurate and readily available for reasons of health and safety.

6.1 Truancy

Truancy is not tolerated at the School and will be dealt with swiftly in line with the sanctions detailed in the behaviour policy. Students will be expected to complete the work of the lesson that they missed during any sanction. Repeated truancy will likely lead to the student being internally excluded. If this does not support the student in refraining from truancy then a panel meeting with parents initiated by the EWO will be organised as outlined in Section 7.

7 Strategies for Ensuring High Attendance and Excellent Punctuality

7.1 Rewards and Incentives

Form Tutors must take overall responsibility for encouraging and rewarding publicly the need for high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This will commonly be achieved through assemblies and encouraging a competitive spirit with other forms. Informal praise and formal awards should both be used and supported by all Staff. Formal attendance and punctuality awards could include:

- Excellent Attendance certificates
- 100% Punctuality certificates
- Excellent Punctuality certificates
- Contact home to parents praising excellent attendance and/or punctuality

7.2 First Day contact and dealing with absence

The Attendance Office staff will attempt to contact any parent/carer on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. A telephone call or email will substitute for a note but the Attendance Office staff must ensure that the caller is authentic. The Attendance Office and tutors will enter information regarding student absence in Bromcom and if the child is ill this should be

changed to I in the registers. Where contact has not been possible, form tutors must support the Attendance Office by following up any absence with students and obtaining signed notes (or a confirmation email or phone conversation) from parents. Contact must be made with ALL adults who hold parental responsibility for the child (until the School gets a response). If a response cannot be obtained from any adult with parental responsibility for the student then subsequent action may be taken including:

- Contacting all known contacts for the student.
- Asking the police to complete a welfare visit.
- Asking EWO to complete a home visit.
- Referral to childrens' social services.

When a letter from the parent is not forthcoming, the Attendance Office will process a letter to the parent/carer requesting a reason to cover the dates(s) concerned. When this has been received they will update the information on Bromcom.

7.3 Attendance Support

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored through the following computerised processes:

- Daily lists of absences.
- Follow up procedures on the first day of absence.
- Subject registrations.
- Weekly statistics.
- Rewards and sanctions statistics for attendance and punctuality as outlined above.
- Monthly attendance report at SLT meetings.

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence (more than 3 days), for example from a period of illness, tutors should liaise with parents and make arrangements for work to be made available. If a pupil has prolonged absence due to medical grounds then the parents should obtain a letter from the consultant treating the child and an application should be made to the home and hospital tuition service by the AAC.

The Attendance Officer and Assistant Achievement Coordinators have the major responsibility for identifying persistent poor attendance and punctuality. The EWO will also analyse attendance data and look for patterns of absence and poor punctuality for all the students including groups.

The Attendance Officer and the Assistant Achievement Coordinator will use the guidelines below:

Student attendance % (guidelines) / Scenario	Most likely action to be led by the Attendance Officer and AAC
Between 97.0% to 100%	Pupils and parents contacted regularly (between three and six times per year) and praised for excellent attendance. Form Tutor to record excellent attendance house points every week.
Between 95.0% and 96.9%	Meet with EWO to discuss any students in this attendance bracket causing concern. Phone call home made initially to set 3 week target to improve. Follow up letter sent to acknowledge improvement made, or arrange parental meeting if there is no evidence of improved attendance.
Between 90.0% and 94.9%	Letter sent for initial parental meeting. 3 week target to improve or risk of legal action being taken by EWO.
Between 80.0% and 89.9%	In collaboration with the EWO convening a "Persistent Absence, PA" attendance panel meeting, involving parents, attendance Governor (where possible) establishing targets for attendance and punctuality along with strategies for support in successfully reintegrating students back into the School. Consider legal action.

Below 79%	This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possibly court action being taken if the LA involvement does not lead to the student returning to the School.
10 days continuous absence	If the absence is longer than a period of ten continuous days and is treated as unauthorised absence then the LA must be informed (in addition to any actions taken above).
Suspected pattern of absence/truancy eg every Monday or Friday	Parents contacted by phone and informed. Conversation focused on support strategies and identification of concern. EWO utilised to make home visits where possible.
Attendance repeatedly below expected levels despite support strategies	This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possibly court action being taken if involvement does not lead to the student returning to the School.
Parents unwilling to support improved attendance, or failure to comply with agreed set targets	This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possibly court action being taken. This may also result in the Local Authority being informed.
A high percentage of absence combined with a high percentage of unauthorised absence	This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possibly court action being taken. This may also result in the Local Authority being informed.

7.4 Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

The School believes that when avenues of supportive intervention such as telephone calls, meetings with parents and any home visits have been used and there has been no improvement in attendance then we will use the legal avenues that are open to us. Our policy will involve the use of the following:

7.4.1 Leave of Absence

As stated in Section 4, the School does not support any holidays requested during term time. If a request is made for a leave of absence and this is not approved and the student does not attend during the stated period then a fixed penalty notice could be issued upon the student's return.

7.4.2 Students with less than 90% attendance (with unauthorised absence)

Students who have less than 90% attendance with any period of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period are classed as being persistently absent from school and will receive a warning letter from the School. This letter will state the student's overall attendance percentage and that if there is no improvement in attendance, normally within the subsequent 3 week period then a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

7.4.3 Late for the School day (after registers have closed – use of the U code)

Students who arrive at the School after 9.55am (without a justified reason) are registered as "late after the registers have closed" and this is recorded as a U, which is an unauthorised absence for the am session. Any parent/carer of a student who records repeated U codes (more than 5 U codes in any one half-term) is likely to be issued with a fixed penalty notice. This will be preceded by a warning phone call and/or letter to the parent/carer.

7.5 Catch up Sheet and Reintegration Programmes

If a student has had a period of absence for longer than three consecutive days then the AAC will instigate a catch up sheet and a possibly consider a reintegration programme. This will involve the Form Tutor supporting their tutee in reintegrating back into School life. It will involve a meeting which sets agreed targets. The Form Tutor will check the catch-up sheet is fully completed. The AAC will identify these students and inform the relevant Form Tutor.

7.6 Reintegration

Following a period of prolonged absence, a student will be referred to their Achievement Coordinator (AC). A meeting will take place with the parent/carer and student to discuss a suitable reintegration strategy. Consideration may be given to a reduced timetable initially to ensure a smooth reintegration. This could include the use of the Referral Room as part of a staggered re-introduction into School.