PEAK EDUCATION

Attendance Policy 2020

Contents

Principle:

For any student to meet their full potential academically, a high level of attendance is crucial. At Peak Education, our aim is to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance for all, in order to enable every student to take full advantage of the educational opportunities, both academic and social, which are available to them.

In line with our ethos, Peak Education is committed to providing the best possible education for our students, ensuring equal opportunities for all. Our intention is that each student feels valued and supported and our emphasis on building excellent working relationships with students is a key feature in the way in which we promote excellent attendance.

This policy outlines the various strategies we employ to promote outstanding attendance which includes creating a pleasant working environment, engaging and motivating students, ensuring early intervention when attendance begins to raise concerns and instigating further intervention when attendance is poor, including working with external agencies where necessary. Furthermore, this policy outlines our procedures for monitoring attendance and addressing persistent non-attendance, focussing closely on that of disadvantaged students.

The procedures outlined in this policy also apply to our post 16 students, unless otherwise indicated.

Legal Requirements:

This policy conforms to the legal requirements as detailed in The Education Act 1996, which states:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- *to his age, ability and aptitude and*
- *to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'*

For educational purposes the term 'parent' is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The Act also contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school stating:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

If in the circumstances mentioned [above] the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.'

This policy also addresses and conforms to the requirements outlined in the later document entitled 'School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. (November 2016)

Roles and Responsibilities:

Ensuring students attend school regularly is the responsibility of all members of our school community, including all staff, the students themselves and their parents/carers. At Peak Education the specific

responsibilities of staff are as follows:

Staff Members:

All staff members are expected to lead by example, modelling excellent attendance and punctuality, thereby conveying a message about the importance we attach to this matter. In line with our 'Ensuring Excellence' document, all staff aim to create a positive atmosphere, developing excellent working relationships with students which are supportive and encouraging.

All staff have high expectations of good attendance and punctuality which are praised and rewarded regularly.

For safeguarding and legal purposes, it is vital that the school has an accurate register of students which is completed promptly at the start of Tutor Period and during Lesson 3. Staff are expected to prioritise this task at these times.

IEPS:

Inclusive Education Practitioners (IEPs) are the members of staff who see their students every day of the week. As such, the IEP is responsible, along with the Education Managers, for monitoring the attendance of all the students in their group. IEPs should address attendance and/or punctuality concerns directly with students and should liaise closely with Education Managers in sharing their concerns.

Receptionist:

The Receptionist is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance on a daily basis, ensuring all registers are completed accurately and on time for both am and pm registration. The Receptionist also ensures that the parents of non-attenders are notified on the first day and any subsequent days of absence and that reasons for absences are provided by parents after each period of absence. Once reasons for absence are established, they are recorded electronically on the school's MIS.

Attendance Manager:

The Attendance Manager is the lead member of staff responsible for ensuring that attendance is monitored and that intervention takes place wherever necessary when attendance is low or in decline. They are responsible for following up unauthorised absences and lates and for planning interventions, including liaising with parents, students and the Local Authority's Education Welfare Team (EWT) service where necessary, to help address attendance concerns. The Attendance Manager brings up to date information to Senior Team Meetings including attendance trends, persistent non-attenders and agreeing intervention strategies, as required.

Head of School:

The Head of School ensures that the school complies with the attendance procedures outlined in this policy. Regular meetings ensure high standards of attendance and punctuality are expected and maintained.

The Head of School authorises information to be input and removed from the school's Admission Register ensuring that students are on roll on their first day in school and that all leavers are taken off roll only when the school is certain of their destination. Also, ensuring that all relevant members of staff are informed of starters and leavers and that the official register, in terms of students on roll, is accurate.

Parents:

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school or receives an appropriate education. The school regularly clarifies, via the website, the timings of the school day, as well as term dates and dates of planned closures, such as training days. Parents should inform the school by letter, telephone or in person when their child is absent from school. A student's absence will be viewed as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is provided by parents. In cases of persistent absence, parental support will be expected and where attendance levels do not improve, the EWT service will be engaged to set attendance targets, for which parents will be held responsible.

Students:

All Students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Students whose attendance is a concern will be supported initially by their IEP and where necessary, the Attendance Manager. Students are expected to take responsibility for catching up on all work missed due to absence.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

The Head of School reports termly to the proprietor on attendance, comparing data with that of previous years for the same period and annually with national data where appropriate. IEPs, senior IEPs, the receptionist, education managers and the Assistant Head of School, all monitor the attendance and punctuality of students under their remit.

Registration Procedure:

The school uses a computerised system to monitor and record absences. Morning registers are taken at the start of period 1 at 9:30am every day. Students are marked present once they are in the care of a Peak Education member of staff. Any student arriving at school or collected after 9:30am will receive a late mark (L). Students arriving at school or collected after 10:00am will be marked as arriving after registration is closed (U). Afternoon registration is taken during lesson 3 at 12:00pm and follows the same procedure as the morning session.

The school emphasises its expectations regarding attendance and punctuality to parents/carers via newsletters and the school website. Patterns of absence and lateness are closely monitored to assess the impact on learning and where attendance concerns become critical, outside agencies are engaged to ensure the students concerned have the best possible chance of achieving and continue to have access to an appropriate curriculum.

Attendance Codes – Authorised & Unauthorised Absences:

The school decides how attendance and absence should be recorded using national codes which comply

with the regulations as outlined in 'School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. (November 2016)

Authorised Codes:

Code	Notes	Code	Notes
/ \	Present am pm	W	Approved work experience
L	Late arrival 09:30-10:00	C	Absence authorised by the school (exceptional circumstance only)
B	Educated offsite	E	Excluded
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	H	Authorised holiday (exceptional circumstance only)
J	Interview for alternative placement, job, etc…	I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment	T	Gypsy, traveller and Roma absence

Unauthorised Codes:

Code	Notes	Code	Notes
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	G	Holiday
O	Absence	U	Arrived after registration has closed

Examples of unauthorised absence includes:

- Staying at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances),
- Shopping during school hours,
- Absent for a birthday.

Leave of absence - The Government issued the following regulations in September 2016 regarding Leave of Absence: The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. These regulations stipulate the following:

- *Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*
- *Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.*

- *Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.*
- *Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.*
- *Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against Page 8 the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.*
- *If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to the Local Authorities Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.*
- *Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.*

Procedures for Following up Absences:

The school will attempt to inform parents of the absence on the morning of the absence. If direct contact is not made. The school will request that parents contact the school immediately to provide a reason for absence.

Once a parent contacts school with a reason for absence this is logged on to the MIS system, which authorises the absence. If the school is not satisfied with the reason provided for absence, an unauthorised absence is recorded.

If a student is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Attendance Manager will make contact with parents/carers to discuss these concerns. Medical evidence may be requested to support high levels of absence due to illness. Parents may be invited into school to meet with relevant members of the pastoral team to resolve any issues which are resulting in poor attendance.

If a student is persistently absent or late and the school's efforts to affect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the EWT service during their consultation visits to the School, who will consider whether prosecution is necessary.

Notes from parents/carers are included on the computerised registers and students' records. Similarly, all telephone messages and emails regarding absence/lateness are logged on the computerised registers as part of the student's records.

If a student is absent for ten days without the school being able to ascertain the reason for that absence, the case will immediately be referred to the Children Missing from Education (CME) team by the Attendance Manager.

Any illness related absences of more than 7 days must be supported by medical evidence.

Promoting Excellent Attendance:

At Peak Education, all staff work hard to create a positive working environment for our students in which they feel safe and supported. The school believes that students have the best opportunity to achieve if

they feel happy and valued. This approach is at the heart of our pastoral care. In order for a student to meet their potential, they need to have full access to their lessons and the school aims to encourage students to have the highest levels of attendance through a range of strategies including the following:

- Providing a varied and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students, challenging the most able and supporting the students who struggle with their learning.
- Regularly collecting and analysing attendance data by identifying patterns, correlating attendance with achievement and setting short, medium and longer term targets to support and inform policy/practice.
- Setting personal targets for students whose attendance is a cause for concern. The Attendance Manager will monitor and review these targets. It may be that assistance with this matter is required from the EWT Service.
- Providing individually tailored re-integration programmes, when appropriate, for students who have been absent for an extended period.
- Liaising, when appropriate, with other agencies including the Educational Psychology Service, Children's Services, CAMHS and EWT when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Making visits to feeder schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible transfer.
- Holding regular celebrations which reward students who have excellent attendance each term.
- Ensuring, in partnership with the EWT Service, that regular pre-legal stages/ meetings occur to support parents and students in raising their attendance levels in order to avoid prosecution.
- Pre-Legal Stages/ Meetings
  - o If a student's attendance reduces by greater than 10% or is consistently below 95%, the Attendance Manager will contact parents by letter to highlight our concerns and/or discuss any mitigating factors.
  - o If there is no improvement within a four-week period after initial contact, a letter will be sent home requesting that parents contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss strategies for improving attendance and potentially to set an internal target. The Attendance Manager will explain that if the internal target is not met then a pre-legal meeting may be scheduled with the possibility of a legal target being set by the EWT service.
  - o If the meeting is not attended by parents or the internal target has not been met and/or there has been no improvement in attendance, the EWT will be notified and a further letter will be sent home.
  - o Failure to meet any external targets may lead to court proceedings.

Data Collection:

Attendance data is collected, collated, analysed, published and used to focus and motivate teachers, students and parents/carers. It is used to show attendance improvements for individuals and groups of people as well as to identify trends.

Data is used to:

- Monitor absence or lateness of students so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Monitor patterns of absence and lateness across the school to identify trends.
- Inform future schools of previous attendance levels for students in order for them to work effectively with their students from the beginning.

- Inform parents/carers of their own children's attendance details.
- Enable the school to publish data in relation to levels of absenteeism for the Proprietor, parents and the local authority.
- Assist the school in setting challenging but realistic attendance targets for the future.

Re-integration Strategies:

Where students have been absent through sickness for any extended period of time, the school will discuss with parents/carers the most appropriate way to re-integrate their child back into school. For some students it may be appropriate to have work sent home to them to work on, with the understanding that appropriate support will be given by the school upon their return. In these circumstances, upon returning to the school, teachers will normally focus on work in the core subjects, identifying the priority needs of the student so as not to hinder future learning. Special needs support will also be available, as appropriate.

For other students, a re-integration package may be necessary, whereby students return to school on a reduced timetable, building up to a full timetable, wherever possible over a specified timeframe.

In all of these circumstances, the focus is on supporting students to re-engage in their learning at the earliest possible opportunity.

Rewards & Sanctions:

Good attendance is often closely linked to good behaviour. Effective approaches to promoting and maintaining good rates of attendance are characterised by good behaviour management systems with clear boundaries and a balance between sanctions and rewards. This policy should be seen alongside our Behaviour Policy.

Schools which are effective in promoting good attendance are also likely to have excellent special needs provision and high-quality pastoral support. Students who have difficulties with school and feel unsupported are frequently those who do not attend. Additionally, students who do not attend regularly invariably fall behind with work and may have difficulties catching up, often resulting in incomplete work and misbehaviour, which carry their own sanctions.

Tackling attendance is the responsibility of all of our school community and is influenced by the whole curriculum and by staffs' awareness of students' response to it.

The following are examples of rewards and sanctions that the school uses with regard to attendance:

Rewards:

Certificates, class rewards, letters and postcards home, attendance prizes.

Sanctions:

Detentions, late marks and attendance percentages recorded on permanent school records which may affect references for the future, meetings with Educational Managers, parental interviews, involvement

with the EWT service, potentially leading to prosecution.

Attendance Guidelines

A school register is a legal document. There is no allowance for making errors.

By no later than 9.30am:

IEP's to notify reception, using the text message service, of all student's attendance. Any student collected or arriving after this time, expected or not should be immediately reported to reception.

Cannock: 01543 622461

Mobile: 07377 340202

By no later than 10am:

Every student should be given a mark regardless of circumstance or where they are. The following marks will generally be entered at this point:

/	Present	E	Excluded
D	Dual Registered	M	Medical or dental appointments
L	Late arrival before the register has closed	R	Religious observance
I	Illness – parent/carer has contacted school to say that the child is ill	G	Holiday not authorised
C	Authorised leave of absence due to exceptional circumstance	O	Unauthorised leave of absence

If a student has an agreed alternative start time, an N is to be used until attendance has been confirmed. If any student is collected or arrives after their agreed starting time, they can be entered into Integris as L but a reason and the number of minutes should also be recorded. Where appropriate, a comment should be recorded on INTEGRIS. e.g. flu, refusal, dentist, etc… If ill, record expected return date and notify a manager. If the child is being taught off-site, by a Peak member of staff, the location and the member of staff providing the tuition should be recorded.

By no later than 10.30am:

All off-site provisions and work experience should now have provided the school with their attendance lists by email. At this time the following marks may be used:

B	Educated off-site	U	Arrived after registration has closed
W	Work Experience	N	Reason for absence not yet provided

If no information is provided then the first contact should be the person responsible for arranging the provision, e.g. Edu' Manager. If problems continue, then The Head of School should be contacted. Each time a B or W is

used, the placement name should be recorded in the comments.

By no later than 11.00pm:

All first day phone calls should have been completed and recorded on INTEGRIS. At this point no student should have an N recorded.

Afternoon starts at 12.00pm

The afternoon session should mirror the process in the morning and by 13:30 no student should be without a mark and there should be no N marks.

Further Codes:

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstance	Snow day, in custody <40days, no transport
Z	Student not on admission register	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Half term, INSET, etc…

Further Actions:

Record, on CPOMS, any unauthorized absence of a student on the child protection register. This in turn will be relayed to their social worker.

Never make any assumptions about where a child is. Always check.

Letters 1 and 2 can be found in the Attendance folder. Letter 3 will be provided by the Local Authority.