



# **REACH SCHOOL**

## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**Date of Issue: September 2018**

**Date of review: September 2019**

## **Purpose**

This policy is in place to ensure that students receive a full-time education which maximises the opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential and supports the raising of standards of achievement

We will endeavour to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby all students thrive and work with students and families to enable each student to attend REACH School regularly and punctually.

REACH School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping but we will challenge those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

**Safeguarding:** Students may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of students is everyone's responsibility within the context of this school. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

## **Statutory Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. Parents have the responsibility for making sure their children attend REACH School and on time.

## **Register Codes**

Students' attendance will be marked using an electronic system (SIMS) and the government's suggested codes will be used (see Appendix 1).

The school is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, one at the start of the morning sessions and once during the afternoon session.

## **Aims**

1. To improve the overall percentage of students attendance
2. To reduce the level of persistent absence (PA)
3. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
4. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
5. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
6. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
7. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the school.
8. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions

## **Roles and responsibilities regarding attendance**

### **Students**

REACH School expects all students to be punctual and maintain high levels of attendance.

All students should arrive on time and ready to learn.

### **Parents**

Parents/carers are expected to know what absences are acceptable. Any absence will only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should be aware of the legal consequences of non-attendance (see below).

Parents/carers should be aware that poor punctuality may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded which could lead to intervention by the Education Welfare Service.

Parents/carers are asked to inform REACH School of any barriers to their child attending the school.

REACH School asks that all parents/carers inform the School Office on their child's first day of absence. Medical evidence may be requested by REACH School if non-attendance is due to illness.

**It is a legal responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends school every day** of the school year. The only circumstances in which they may be absent are as follows:

1. **The student is so unwell that they cannot cope with being at school.** In such cases, it is hoped that absence will be as short as possible to avoid impact on learning and progress. Parents/guardians are asked to telephone the School on the first morning of illness and on every subsequent day that a student needs to be off school ill.
2. **The student has an urgent and serious medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside of the school day.** We normally expect, where possible, that routine and non-urgent appointments will be made during the school holidays or for after the end of the school day.
3. **Unavoidable family and other holidays/visits abroad during term time that have been authorised by the Headteacher.** Students have 13 weeks' holiday per year, and should not therefore be missing time from school. In unavoidable circumstances where a student needs to be away during term time, parents/guardians are asked to write to the Headteacher at least six weeks in advance or as soon as possible beforehand to seek permission. Such absences cannot exceed 3 days. Permission is discretionary and will not always be granted except in exceptional circumstances. The student should also see their teachers for appropriate work to reduce impact on learning and progress.
4. **Religious Observance or Celebrations.** We expect that students should normally be absent for no more than one day during the school year. Absence for shopping prior to a celebration is not allowed as students can do this at weekends or at the end of the school day.
5. **The school authorises a student's absence for reasons other than those stated above.** This could include visits, work experience, residential trips, bereavement or other life crises. It is vital that families inform school of any difficult circumstances for a student that may lead to absence.

#### **Subject teacher**

REACH School expects all subject teachers to encourage punctuality through the appropriate meeting and greeting of groups.

All lateness to lessons must be challenged appropriately.

Subject teachers should support students who are returning to REACH School following an absence by ensuring that adequate resources are provided for their positive re-integration.

Subject teachers are expected to monitor their class attendance and identify patterns and report any concerns to the students Personal Tutor.

The link between attendance and attainment should be actively promoted.

#### **Personal Tutor**

REACH School expects all personal tutors to support the regular attendance of their students by addressing any barriers that may prevent their good attendance.

Having analysed data, tutors should set realistic attendance targets with each member of the tutor group.

Tutors are expected to encourage good punctuality.

All assemblies must address attendance and PTs must ensure that % attendance for each student is printed off and given to students. Discussion around attendance and personal targets must then take place

Student's absence letters must be passed, promptly, to the appropriate admin staff.

Tutors are expected to act on the attendance data to monitor the attendance of their students and report any concerns to the Inclusion Leader and parents.

Tutors should support students who are returning to REACH School following an absence.

### **Inclusion Lead**

The Inclusion Lead will implement intervention strategies in consultation with the Headteacher and personal tutors for all students with attendance figures below 90%.

With tutors, the Inclusion Lead should set attendance targets for each tutor group.

It is the responsibility of the Inclusion Lead to promote and celebrate good attendance through the use of the schools reward system.

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher, alongside the Inclusion Lead, is expected to promote the regular attendance of students by addressing any barriers that may prevent good attendance.

The Headteacher should rigorously monitor attendance and liaise, regularly with the school's Inclusion Lead.

Attendance should appear as an item on all Pastoral meeting agendas to allow staff to monitor the progress made towards the meeting of agreed attendance targets.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to oversee the school's attendance policy and practice.

In collaboration with other relevant staff, the Headteacher will monitor, evaluate and review the policy and its impact annually.

All attendance related action will be recorded in the school's termly report.

The Headteacher will produce an annual report to Governors on matters of attendance.

### **Governors**

Governors should monitor and evaluate attendance and ensure the policy is carried out.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

It is the Headteachers decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A telephone call on the first day of absence followed by a letter on return from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only REACH School's acceptance of the explanation authorises the absence.

### **The legal consequences of non attendance**

Legal proceedings and Penalty Notices have been introduced to try and ensure the regular attendance of children in education, this is in line with Birmingham City Council's 'Fast Track'

### **Legal Proceedings**

Legal proceedings will be considered after the School have tried to engage with, and offer support to, a family of a student who has attendance issues. If the poor/non attendance of a student is not resolved REACH School may decide to take legal action against the parents or responsible adult of the child. If found guilty by a Magistrate a parent/responsible adult could be fined up to £2,500, or a Parenting Order could be issued, which lasts for up to a year.

### **Legal Proceedings Criteria:**

- 1) Concerning levels of absence either authorised or unauthorised – (once a year schools should send the 'School Attendance' whole school letter to parents by pupil post, email, or by placing it on their website/in their prospectus)
- 2) The pupil has at least one session of unauthorised absence - Early Help has been refused (this includes 'no response' to attempts by the school to engage the family); the circumstances of the family do not meet the threshold for Early Help/Social Care support; Early Help/Social Care strategies have not resulted in sustained attendance improvement

- 3) The pupil has further unauthorised absence adding up to at least 10 sessions in total over the previous 12 calendar months
  
- 4) The pupil has a minimum of 10 further sessions of unauthorised absence within 12 school weeks of the warning notice being issued

### **Penalty Notices**

The School can seek support from the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) for parents who are not actively trying to support/improve their child's attendance. The FAST TRACK procedure will be initiated and followed with the hope that attendance will improve. Failure to see any improvements could result in fixed penalty notices being issued.

### **Attendance Reward System**

Attendance will be rewarded at the end of each term with an external trip

Students with 100% attendance for that term will be entered into a raffle where they have an opportunity to win a prize.

At the end of the year all students with 100% attendance for the whole year will be given a reward.

Attendance focus weeks will be held once every half term and 100% attendance for that week will result in a reward being earned

### **Punctuality**

Every student is expected to be at REACH School for 9.25am (9.30am is the start of the first lesson).

Class teachers are expected to be in their teaching spaces for 9.15am. Students are encouraged to go to their first lesson from 9:15am onwards.

First lesson starts at 9.30am and all students will be formally registered at this time, registers will be closed at 10am.

A record of late comers and reason for lateness will be kept and discussed weekly by personal tutors.

Any student's lateness will be recorded and patterns of lateness will result in students needing to make-up the lost time.

## Appendix 1

Attendance codes:

/\	Present at registration
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended family holiday
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before the register
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils