

## Stokesley School and Sixth Form Attendance Policy

### Introduction:

Stokesley School and Sixth Form is a successful school and college which plays an integral part within our surrounding community. As part of the Areté Learning Trust we work collaboratively and strongly believe that developing positive attendance and punctuality is vital in preparing young people for life in Modern Britain. The Department for Education shares our ethos and advocates the expectation that all students should maintain at least 96% attendance for each and every school year.

Within school we aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of our community to be the best they can be in every aspect of their lives. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging parents/carers, students and staff to maximise the learning experience in order that all students reach their full potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education and develop essential life skills, it is vital that they attend regularly. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school, on time, every day the school is open; unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

As a school we will work closely with our parents/carers, our attendance and pastoral team and the Local Authority to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together. Our policy applies to all students registered within the school and sixth form and is available to all parents/carers on the school website.

### Regular attendance is so important because:

- any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning;
- any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class;
- students who attend school regularly, over 96%, are most likely to succeed academically in line with their prior attainment data;
- according to statistics, those with less than 90% are most likely to drop below their prior attainment expectations by at least two grades in each subject;
- students who have positive attendance, over 96%, will be more settled, maintain positive friendships and become more involved in the wider life of the school;
- students who establish good attendance and punctuality routines at school age will maintain these throughout life;
- **ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.**

### Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

Attendance Percentage		Days missed over a school year
100%		0 days
95%		10 days
90%		20 days
85%		30 days
80%		40 days



### How we promote and share success:

- We provide information on attendance in our regular Headteacher's Update; our school website, social media accounts, ClassCharts app, letters and meetings where appropriate.
- weekly and half termly feedback on attendance is given through student planners;
- reports are given twice yearly at Key Stage 3 and three times a year at Key Stage 4 on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is and how this relates to their attainment;
- celebrate good attendance at every opportunity by displaying individual, tutor and year group achievements;
- reward good or improving attendance through individual and tutor competitions, certificates and trips/outings/events;
- House Points are awarded by tutors for 100% weekly attendance;
- run promotional events where parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### Understanding types of absence

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which may unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- students who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays;
- any other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance will be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please inform us straight away, don't cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

#### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when his/her attendance drops below 90% at any point during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any students educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all student absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary.

All our PA students and their parents/carers are subject to a Pre-Pace process. The plan may include: allocation of additional support through an in-school key worker via our Ethos Team, referral to external agencies, parental meeting engagement, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to our Education Welfare Officer, the attendance and pastoral team.

#### **Role of the Attendance Team**

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 7%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required and investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%:
- to investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days:
- to ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school:
- to work with the family and school to improve attendance and punctuality to an acceptable level. (96% Attendance and 98% Punctuality.)
- to refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school;



- to work in partnership with students, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

#### **Absence Procedures:**

##### **If your son/daughter is absent you must:**

- Inform school before 8:30am on the first day of absence;
- contact us every day throughout the duration of your child's absence to inform us of their continued absence;
- when your child returns to school it is important that they bring a note of explanation for the attendance team which contains an explanation of the absence. This should include medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school. This will enable us to support your child's needs – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- alternatively you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point;
- for further guidance on how you can support your child in maintaining good attendance please follow this link; NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

#### **Keeping us informed**

Telephone numbers: there are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, therefore up to date contact details are imperative. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and at least two additional contacts. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

##### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone, text or visit you on the first day of absence (and on each subsequent day) if we have not heard from you;
- telephone or write to you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our a member of the attendance team and/or Pastoral Leaders, along with relevant members of the senior leadership team if absences persist;
- refer the matter to the local authority if attendance is a concern.
- in some circumstances, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken by a member of the attendance team or one of our pastoral key workers. They may also be accompanied by a senior member of staff or a representative from an outside agency dependent on the situation.

#### **Circumstances resulting in a home visit include:**

- Absence of two full days without contact from parent or carer;
- concern for the welfare of a student;
- prolonged absence which is not explained and evidenced;
- to check on a students illness / progress if absent for more than two days

The purpose of these visits is to support and assist parents/carers and to support students' reintegration back into school as soon as is practically possible.

Home visits are ordinarily conducted by our Attendance Support Officer, Attendance Liaison Officer, Pastoral Support Assistant, a member of the Pastoral Team or our Senior Leadership Team. If necessary, we may alert Social Services and/or the Police. This will be dependent upon our level of concern.

### **CME**

Your child will be reported as 'child missing in education' (CME) on the ninth day of absence or at any point before if we are concerned about your child's welfare. NB; Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

### **Local Authority Involvement:**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school prior to or at the outset of any absence and work collaboratively with school staff to resolve issues together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to North Yorkshire Local Authority via a PACE meeting who will support the school in providing additional support to resolve the situation by agreement.

If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of leave of absence that has not been authorised by the school.) Click on the following link to read North Yorkshire Local Authority guidance regarding fixed penalty notices:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-attendance>

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the LA themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on Attendance and Enforcement Officer. Tel: 01609 798013

### **Punctuality:**

We aim to equip all students with the skills and routines necessary for success in further education and employment, punctuality is a key to this. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and vital contact with teachers to obtain vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, causing embarrassment for the child and if left unchallenged can also encourage absence. Your child will not receive a present mark for a session if they arrive after the register has closed.

### **How we manage poor punctuality:**

The school is open from 8am every morning for breakfast club and enrichment sessions. All children are welcome on the school site from this time.

Students are expected to be on school site by 8.40am. They should be in their tutor group line at 8.45am for registration. A pre-registration bell rings in school at 8.40am to allow students a few minutes to get to their tutor meet point on time, signalling that they should be on the school site. Legal registers are marked by 8.50am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school at that time. At 9.20am the registers are closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time without a valid reason or appropriate evidence, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent lateness record you will be asked to meet with a member of the Attendance Team or your child's Head of Year with the aim of resolving the problem. Parents/Carers can contact us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

#### Leave of Absence in Term Time:

Taking a leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by avoiding taking them away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off during school term time to go on any leave of absence. All applications for leave must be made at least 6 weeks in advance of the planned absence, which will then be considered by the Headteacher. Only absences requested under exceptional circumstances will be considered for authorisation.

In making a decision, the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Leave of absence requests submitted retrospectively cannot be considered or authorised. Circumstances to consider before submitting a leave of absence:

- When a student is just starting school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, during GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or a result of taking holiday leave.

#### Action following unauthorised leave of absence:

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents. If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, their parents are guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996. Any unauthorised absences may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence given above. The fine is for £60.00 if paid within 3 weeks, going up to £120.00 if paid between 3 to 4 weeks.

#### School targets, projects and special initiatives:

In our last OFSTED inspection, attendance was highlighted as a strength of the school and we are supporting all families in ensuring their children achieve the best possible outcomes.



**The Attendance target for the school is 96%.  
The Punctuality target for the school is 98%.**

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our assemblies, school website, Twitter and Facebook accounts, parent mailing/newsletter.

Student Registration The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

#### **CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING**

- / Present (AM) Present \ Present (PM)
- Present B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) Approved Education Activity
- C Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) Authorised absence
- D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment) Approved Education Activity
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made) Authorised absence
- G Leave of absence (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) Unauthorised absence
- H Leave of absence (agreed) Authorised absence
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments) Authorised absence
- J Interview Approved Education Activity L Late (before registers closed) Present
- M Medical/Dental appointments Authorised absence
- N No reason yet provided for absence Unauthorised absence
- O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) Unauthorised absence
- P Approved sporting activity Approved Education Activity
- R Religious observance Authorised absence
- S Study leave Authorised absence T Traveller absence Authorised absence
- U Late (after registers closed) Unauthorised absence
- V Educational visit or trip Approved Education Activity
- W Work experience Approved Education Activity
- X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age Not counted in possible attendances
- Y Enforced closure Not counted in possible attendances
- Z Student not yet on roll Not counted in possible attendances
- # school closed to students Not counted in possible attendances

Security of registers Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or microfiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers are safely stored in line with school procedure.

#### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Headteacher  
Deputy Headteacher  
Assistant Headteachers  
Attendance Team  
Head of Year and Pastoral staff

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**Stokesley School  
& Sixth Form College**

Being the best we can be

**Headteacher: Mr M Fenwick**

Policy Author: Mrs J Darbyshire  
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