



Attendance Policy

Last Reviewed: Apr 2018 / MAL

Next Review: Nov 2019



1. MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1 Sandringham School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential. **Our strategic objectives aim for an average rate of 97.5%.**
- 1.2 The School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- 1.3 All staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.
- 1.4 The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5 To meet these objectives Sandringham School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2. AIMS

- To improve the overall percentage of students at school;
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors;
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks;
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students;
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions;
- To promote effective partnerships with the Attendance Improvement Team (Hertfordshire LEA attendance service) and with other services and agencies;
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence;

3. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit) on the first morning of any absence
- Parents/carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress
- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children stay at school once they have registered

4. REGISTRATION (INCLUDING LATENESS)

4.1 Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8:30am and at 2:00pm. Morning registers close at 8.40am. Afternoon registers close at 2.05pm. Students should be in their tutor/teaching areas before these times and seated. Each student should be called by name and should respond in the prescribed formal manner. If a student arrives after the registers close he/she should sign-in the late book. Being late, without a note or phone call from a parent/carer will result in a C3 consequence.

4.2 All staff should take a register in each lesson. If there is concern about a particular student's attendance an announcement will be made in morning briefing by the Performance Directors or Assistant Headteacher.

5. AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 The school decides whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the student to be away, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory. Parents may not authorise absence; only the school can do this. Should staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be treated as unauthorised. This decision must be made and communicated to parents by the school.

5.2 Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness,
- Medical/dental appointments,
- Days of religious observance,
- Exceptional family circumstances – bereavement.

5.3 Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- Holidays,
- Unsatisfactory explanations (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc),
- Caring for sick siblings or parents,
- Birthdays.

5.4 Sandringham School emphasises to parents that all medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours.

6. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Persistent absence (PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a PA if his/her attendance is less than 90%, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

7. FIRST DAY RESPONSE

Sandringham operates a First Day Response system. Any student who is registered as absent without an adequate explanation will receive a phone call to their parents/carers before 11.00am to report that their child is not at school. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure they call the absence line to report any absence before the start of the school day.

8. TRUANCY

Sandringham School recognises that a student may truant from school or particular lessons for a variety of reasons.

Truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A number of systems are put in place to inform students that this behaviour is unacceptable. Through investigation, if necessary, support will be offered to the student who has truanted from a lesson. Parents will always be informed and an appropriate sanction will be put in place. In line with the Rewards and Consequences policy this is a C3a, Saturday morning detention. A record will be made for the student's file.

Spot attendance checks are made regularly. These may focus on a particular year group if there is a concern. All information will be fed back to the Performance Directors and ultimately to the Assistant Headteacher. Director of Learning: Subject will be involved if there is a difficulty concerning a curriculum area. The student will be placed on a progress card to monitor attendance.

9. THE ROLE OF THE PASTORAL MANAGER AND STUDENT SERVICES

Daily:

- Produce a daily Absence Report;
- Make calls to students marked as absent;
- Record findings on Absence Report and take appropriate action;
- Email a copy of the Absence Report to all tutor teams, PD's and the leadership group;; and
- PM – Check the registers for absences,

Weekly:

- Percentage Attendance spreadsheet ;
- Assist PD's and Assistant Headteacher in analysis of trends and appropriate strategies.

10. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER (AIO):

The fundamental purpose of the AIO is to maximise attendance rates for individual pupils, individual schools and for the county of Hertfordshire as a whole and to discharge the County Council's legal duty to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. AIOs will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

Referrals to the AIO will be made by the school once it feels it has exhausted all other avenues to improve attendance. The AIO will meet with PD's during visits to the school to monitor students whose attendance is a cause for concern.

In conjunction with the Attendance Improvement Officer the governors reserve the right to consider requesting Herts County Council to take legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007, schools are empowered to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parent/carer of a child who has irregular school attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school. Fixed Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution. As long as the fine is paid they do not require the parent/carer to appear in court and no criminal record is incurred. An assessment of the circumstances will take place before a Fixed Penalty Notice is served. Parents will receive a warning letter advising that if unauthorised absences total 15 or more half day sessions the school will apply to the Head of the HCC Attendance Team for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

However the authorising officer, (the Head of the Attendance service) has the discretion to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a first offence in exceptional circumstances

A fixed Penalty notice imposes a fine of £60 (per child) to each parent/carer if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the parent/carer may be prosecuted in a Magistrates Court for the offence under S.444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

In the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the Teaching and Learning is of a high standard and the curriculum meets their needs, we review:

- The curriculum will be monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students. Performance Directors will utilise their non contact session to monitor individual student needs.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. These will be shared with the leadership group.
- The school will offer rewards to all students and tutor groups whose attendance/punctuality is either excellent or much improved.
- Students whose attendance falls beneath 90% will be set targets for improvement. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the tutor/Director of Learning: Year.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded through weekly awards made by the Headteacher for tutor groups with 100% attendance.
- Regular structured meetings will be held with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/punctuality is a source of concern.
- Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
- Annual reports will be made by the Assistant Headteacher to the school's governing body on the issue of attendance/punctuality
- Students are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance via LLL and Assemblies.
- Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme.
- All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties are to be promptly investigated by the form tutor/Performance Directors.
- Attendance is reported in every student's report.
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- Prizes for excellent attendance will be rewarded at our annual award ceremony.
- On a termly basis students with outstanding attendance will be presented with an award.

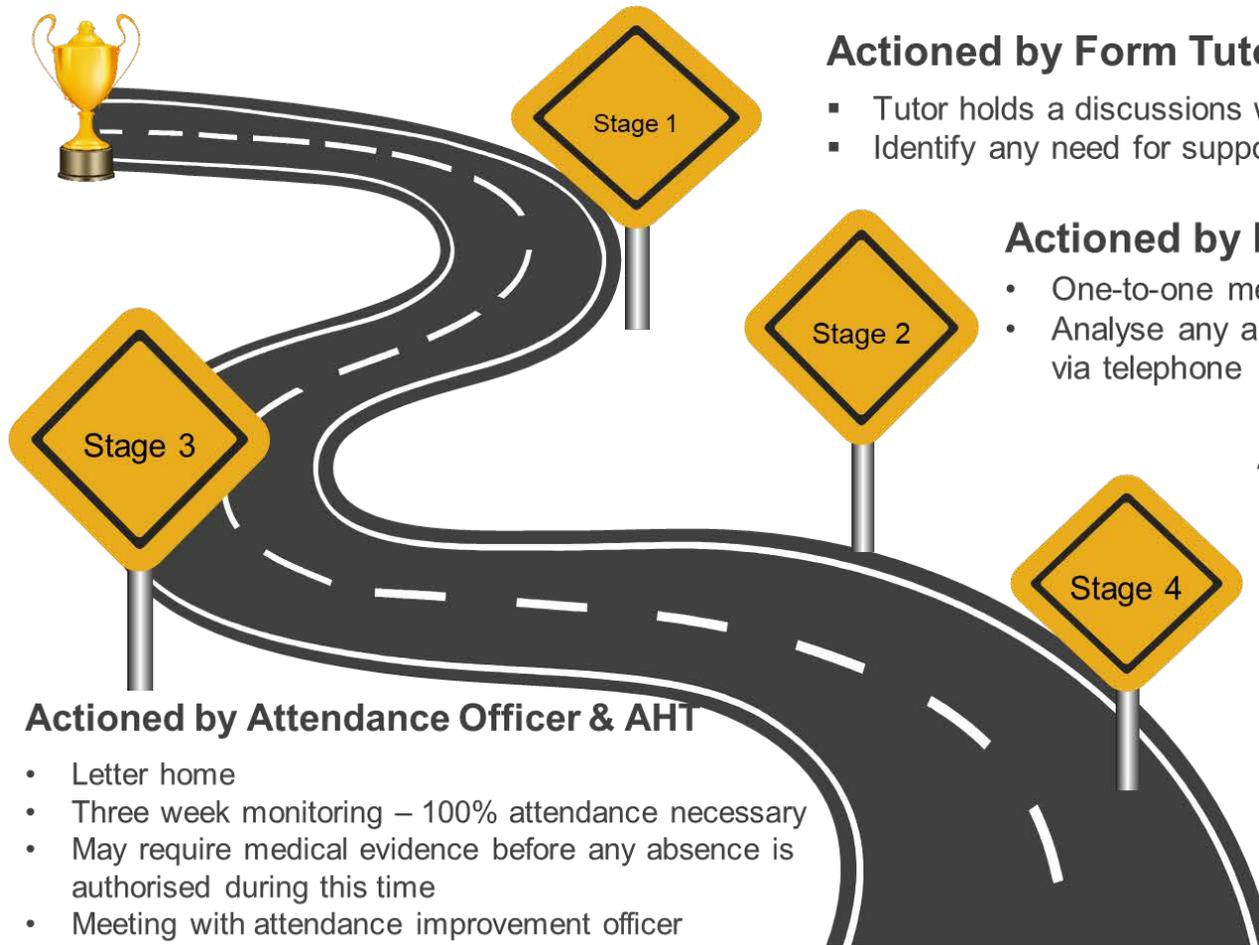
12. 'IN SCHOOL ACTION'

How can it be used?

- The diagram below suggests a process of in-school action that may lead to an improvement in attendance.
- We recommend that intervention begins with the tutor, and progresses to involve Performance Directors, and Senior Staff (such as Assistant Headteacher) if appropriate.
- The member of staff who undertakes any intervention should indicate this has been done on a centrally managed Google Sheet (make a brief comment from discussions with the student and/or their parent/carer). All relevant letters to and from parents etc. are issued by the Assistant Headteacher and kept in the Year file for easy reference.
- If all attempts have proved unsuccessful and the AIO accepts the student as a referral, the sheet and attachments (or copies of) will go to the AIO.
The benefits of this system are:
- Improved attendance across the board, as concerns spotted tend to be addressed more quickly.
- Prevention of some entrenched non-attendance, as it should prevent the 'drift' that tends to happen if no process is followed. Any deterioration should here be met by further action.
- All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and will be aware who has already done what. (Information kept together and accessible, rather than Performance Directors not knowing what, if anything, the form tutor has done).
- Consultation visits should be more focused and productive, since it will be clear what has already been done, and time can be spent deciding on further action and over more 'difficult' cases.
- The AIO is responsible for keeping a record of each meeting held with a student. Meeting details and actions are logged on Bromcom and shared with the appropriate members of staff.

When the AIO accepts a student as a referral, the information provided on the Google sheet alongside any copies of home-school communications will assist the AIO in making an accurate assessment, ensure that the family sees that school and AIO are in good communication and prevent duplication of work. The information will also enable more efficient court action, if appropri

Attendance intervention roadmap



Actioned by Form Tutor

- Tutor holds a discussions with student
- Identify any need for support or further monitoring

Actioned by Performance Director

- One-to-one meeting with Performance Director
- Analyse any absence patterns and discuss with parents via telephone

Actioned by Attendance Officer & AHT

- Formal parenting contract meeting held with AIO and/or AHT
- Three week monitoring – 100% attendance necessary
- May required medical evidence before any absence is authorised during this time
- Meeting with attendance improvement officer
- If attendance remains irregular, school can refer to HCC attendance referral team. May result in fixed penalty notice or legal action.

Actioned by Attendance Officer & AHT

- Letter home
- Three week monitoring – 100% attendance necessary
- May require medical evidence before any absence is authorised during this time
- Meeting with attendance improvement officer

