



POLICY: Attendance and Punctuality Policy

STATUTORY: Yes

DATE AGREED: October 2021

REVIEW DATE: October 2022

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF STAFF: D Wyatt

GOVERNOR COMMITTEE: Personnel and Welfare

SIGNED HEADTEACHER: A Evans

SIGNED CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: L Potter



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Aims:

JMHS is committed to providing a full and effective education for all our students where excellent and enjoyable learning is at the heart of the success we enjoy as a school. We will do all we can to ensure that all students attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. We understand the link between attendance and welfare as well as attendance and progress and are therefore committed to ensuring students attend school as much as possible.

We aim for every student to achieve at least 96% attendance throughout the school year. To put this in context a student would achieve this level of attendance by being absent for no more than 7 days across the school year.

Rationale:

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement and improved social and emotional well-being of students.

Principles:

We believe a positive attendance and punctuality culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other.

	Expectations
Students We expect that all students will:	Attend school regularly. Arrive to school and to lessons on time and fully equipped and prepared for the day. Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and on time so that we can provide effective support.
Parents/Carers We expect that all parents/carers will:	Encourage their children to attend school every day and on time. Ensure that they contact school by 9.30am every day that their child is unable to attend school to provide a full explanation for absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a satisfactory explanation is not provided. An explanation should include symptoms, reference to medication if appropriate and details of any medical advice sought or received. Ensure that their children arrive in school fully equipped and prepared for the school day. Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers. Not arrange family holidays during the school term.

	Make medical appointments outside of school hours, where possible. Where appointments are made during school hours, students should only be absent for the duration of the appointment.
School Parents/carers can expect that the school will:	<p>Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs via a published timetable which necessitates regular and punctual attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete attendance registers at the beginning of each session using SIMS ATTENDANCE.</p> <p>Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason.</p>

Physical and Mental Health:

JMHS recognises that attendance can be affected by both physical and mental health and accepts both equally as reasons for absence. JMHS has access to a number of agencies, including the school nursing team, CLD counselling and CAMHS, to offer support to students for mental health difficulties. We will always look to work collaboratively with students, parents and carers and outside agencies to support high attendance.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

Our policy is to place more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective sanctions are necessary. We will encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- following-up absence without explanation each day
- undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times
- recording good attendance on students' records, e.g. school report
- acknowledging individual's improvements in attendance
- providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and, where necessary, parents
- encouraging liaison between the school, attendance advisor and other agencies wherever appropriate
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance during the induction process for new students and throughout their school career
- provide support to overcome barriers to attendance, including collaboration with medical professionals

Responding to poor attendance:

When a pupil fails to attend school without a satisfactory explanation, or if attendance levels fall below expectation we will use a range of strategies including:

- contact the parent on each day of absence
- send a letter home to the parent/carer of a student where attendance is a concern
- form tutor to provide weekly attendance mentoring
- invite parents in to meet with Year Leader and external attendance advisor or carry out home visits, where attendance is a concern.
- request evidence that medical appointments are taking place

- request medical evidence where there are high levels of absence for illness
- refer to Herefordshire Local Authority for legal action under the Education Act 1996, section 444 (1(A)).
- consider a referral to Herefordshire Social Services in line with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Unauthorised Absence

JMHS will not authorise absences in the circumstances identified below. If a student accrues 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in an academic year then we are likely to refer to Herefordshire Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or take other legal action. The fixed penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child if paid before 28 days. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1(A)).

- No explanation provided for absence.
- Insufficient explanation given for absence.
- Absence extending beyond what is considered reasonable for the reason given.
- Whole day absence for local medical appointments.
- Failure to seek professional medical advice for persistent health issues.
- Planned absences that do not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality and Lateness:

The times of morning and afternoon registration have changed as a result of Covid-19. The morning register will close at 8.55am, after which a student will be recorded as 'Late'. Arrivals after 9.15am will be coded as 'Late after Registration', which is an unauthorised absence. Students who are persistently late for school will be subject to school sanctions and will receive support from a designated member of staff.

Planned Absence

Parents/carers contemplating planned absences during school time should first discuss the implications with the school before making any commitments.

Parents wishing to apply for a planned absence should do so not less than six weeks before the planned absence by writing to the relevant Year Leader.

Parents/carers have no automatic right for their child to be absent from school. In accordance with Government guidelines, leave in term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Where planned leave is taken without authorisation and amounts to 10 sessions (5 days) or more a referral will be made to Herefordshire Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or take other legal action. The fixed penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child if paid before 28 days. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1(A)).

Roles and Responsibilities:

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the students the importance of the education being provided.

Role	Responsibility
Governors	To ensure that the school has in place a whole school attendance and punctuality policy. To monitor the effectiveness of the whole school policy.
SLT member with responsibility for attendance	To collate and share attendance and punctuality data. To allocate mentors and to monitor effectiveness of strategies. To liaise with School Attendance Advisor to support students who are persistently absent or in danger of being persistently absent. To liaise with outside agencies and families where required. To liaise with School Attendance Advisor on requests for planned absence and communicate decisions.
Student Support Assistant with responsibility for attendance	To ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time. To ensure that all reasons for absence are recorded in the register. To follow-up any unexplained non-attendance. To initiate contact with parents/carers in the case of prolonged and unexplained absence. To liaise with Year Leaders, Student Support Assistants and the Attendance Lead on a regular basis.
Year Leader	To receive the analysis of attendance and punctuality data from the SLT member with responsibility for attendance. To ensure that good attendance and punctuality is embedded into all members of the Year group. To share success and effectively deal with breaches of punctuality and attendance. To ensure effective liaison with outside agencies and families where required.
Class Teachers/ Form Tutor/Mentor	To complete registers accurately and on time. To inform relevant staff of any absence patterns or concerns. To provide effective support to identified students, including mentoring of individuals where an improvement in attendance is needed.

Covid-19:

In the academic year 2021-2022 JMHS will follow local and national guidance in relation to attendance matters. We will endeavour to inform parents/carers of matters that impact the application of this policy.

Where students are experiencing any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new and persistent cough, loss of taste and/or smell), or test positive on the twice weekly lateral flow tests, parents should arrange for a PCR test and inform the school. Students should isolate until the result of the PCR test is returned. Work will be set for students who have to isolate or are absent due to a positive PCR test. Whilst isolating and waiting for the result of a PCR test students' attendance is recorded so that there is no negative impact. If a student tests positive on a PCR they are recorded as ill until they are able to return.

Links:

Behaviour for Learning policy, Anti Bullying policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Review:

This policy will be subject to review on an annual basis.

John Masfield High School and Sixth Form Centre
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