

## Attendance

### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the LA's stance on attendance with regard to:

- the 5 outcomes of "Every Child Matters" (ECM)
- the DfES overview
- the legal framework
- the Human Rights Act 2000
- responsibilities of parents, schools and the Local Authority
- guidance is also provided for schools on the development of a whole school
- attendance policy.

In drawing up the policy, statements have been informed by either statutory requirements, as referred in the Education Acts and Regulations, or by government advice Council policy and Ofsted expectations.

Attendance at school is clearly an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and result in considerable long-term disadvantage to children and young people. Pupils who do not attend regularly may be placed at considerable risk and, in some cases, may be drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

It is recognised that pupils may have difficulties in attending regularly for a variety of complex and often inter-related reasons. These may include:

- the pupils' educational, social and emotional development.
- the pupils' medical history
- social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- factors operating within school
- availability of appropriate support from statutory and voluntary

agencies within the community.

It follows that the Local Authority, schools, parents/carers, pupils and the community at large need to work collaboratively in order to maximise attendance. In pursuit of this key task, a positive approach is needed which promotes access to education within an ethos which values learners, promotes equal opportunities and encourages the involvement of pupils and their parents/carers.

### Child and Young Persons Entitlement

The following rights have been selected as they are of particular relevance to this policy:

- Every Child Matters (ECM)
  - Be Healthy
  - Stay safe
  - Enjoy and achieve
  - Make a positive contribution
  - Achieve economic well being
- the right to education, play, leisure and cultural activity.
- the right to protection from work exploitation.
- the right to special care and social integration for children and young people with disabilities.
- the right to have a say in issues that affect them.

### Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996

444(1) Failing to ensure that a child attends school regularly.

444(1a) Knowingly failing to ensure that a child is attending school regularly. There are legal obligations on:

- The Children's Act 1989 (Section 39). A child who is not being properly educated may be referred to the Family Proceedings Court and an application made for an Education Supervision Order.
- Parents who must secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise (Elective Home Education), to send

them to school regularly once they are on roll at school.

- LA to provide education and to enforce attendance; and
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA of irregular attendance, unauthorised absence or any pupil who has unauthorised absence of 10 days or more.

### Responsibilities

Please see appendix.

### Key Principles

- Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that students of compulsory school age attend regularly.
- All students are expected to be punctual to school each day and to fulfil the statutory requirement of registration.

### Key Objectives

- Each student should attain a minimum attendance of at least 95%.
- Each student should strive for 100% punctuality.
- Each Form Tutor, or their substitute, is required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.
- If the student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.
  1. **Authorised** absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered as satisfactory justification for absence.
  2. All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.
  3. Since all absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until a

satisfactory explanation is accepted, procedures for chasing up explanations and amending registers will be consistently applied. (Social Inclusion).

- Every endeavour will be made to dissuade parents from removing their child(ren) during term time for their annual holidays.
- Irregular attendance and truancy that are signs of disaffection (Social Inclusion document) will result in early intervention by the school to prevent the problem from worsening.

### Lates after registration closes

Students arriving to school 30 minutes after registration closes will receive an unauthorised late mark unless they can produce medical evidence (e.g. dental appointment card) that explains their lateness.

### Holidays in term time

See attached letters.

### Strategies for the improvement of attendance

- Develop a school culture in which regular attendance retains a high profile through positive reinforcement in assemblies and end of term celebrations.
- Raise the profile of attendance among parents through the home-school agreement, parents' evenings, the half-termly newsletter and Friends of Uxbridge High School Committee.
- Scheduled and unscheduled attendance checks.
- A senior member of staff to be responsible for attendance.
- Produce certificates of 100% attendance on a termly basis both at KS3 and KS4.
- Raise profile of good attendance through awards / certificates issued to Tutor Groups

- Reward good attendance.
- Continue to use "Truancy Call", an automated "first day" calling system, to improve monitoring of attendance.
- Review current systems and explore other IT packages to further enhance procedures
- Develop a partnership between the school, the Education Welfare Service and the Connexions Service.

### **Intervention strategies for students with irregular attendance and truancy**

- Parents contacted on any day an identified student is absent without explanation using Truancy Call automated system.
- Student Support staff to contact parents on any day any student skips lessons after registration. A lunchtime or subject detention may be issued as a sanction as well informing or meeting with parents.
- Letters are to be sent by Student Support staff to highlight concerns, emphasise legal requirements of parents and flag up levels of intervention that will be put in place if improvements are not observed. This includes an outline of the Fast Tracking procedure.
- Students causing concern identified and reported to the appropriate Guidance Leader
- Involve the Education Welfare Officer with the student and their parents at an early stage, through a formal referral procedure.
- Parents may receive an informal warning about the possible implementation of the "Fast Tracking procedure.
- In liaison with the EWO, provide support work with irregular attenders and their parents.
- In liaison with the EWO, monitor patterns of unauthorised absence and act upon it with parents.

- If a problem persists with an individual student, the Fast Tracking procedure may be implemented.
- Work with the EWS, police and other community groups to support truancy initiatives such as the Hillingdon Truancy Watch Scheme.

### **The Fast Tracking Procedure**

- The Fast Tracking procedure involves an initial Attendance Panel meeting with the student and their parents.
- Appointments are made and parents are requested to attend. If the parents do not attend, the Attendance Panel meeting takes place in their absence.
- Parents are informed by the EWO of the issues involved, the support on offer and the expectation that the attendance of the student involved must improve by a certain review date.
- At the review meeting the attendance of the student is evaluated. If the targets have not been met, the EWO and the school may well decide to follow up the concern at a higher level.
- This can involve a fixed penalty fine being imposed on the parent(s) of the student involved.
- Failure to pay this fine can result in parents being required to attend court. In extreme circumstances the court has imposed custodial sentences for parents of students whose attendance has not improved.

The main aim of this policy is to work positively with all students and parents to improve the attendance and maintain a good standard of punctuality for all individuals.

However, this document also outlines the interventions and strategies that will be implemented should concerns persist.

## Responsibilities

The following lists the responsibilities of key persons in promoting attendance

Parents	Schools	Local Authority
To meet the needs of any child in their care.	To provide an education suitable to the child's age, aptitude, ability and special educational needs and to contribute sensitively to the child's social, emotional and moral development.	To ensure that parents across the authority are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
To provide an education that is fulfilled through state provision, private schooling or education other than at school (Elective Home Education).	To provide a welcoming and safe environment which encourages attendance and promotes the full potential of the child.	To provide education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.
To ensure regular attendance of children of compulsory school age.	To advise parents of statutory obligations and possible involvement of EWS in every case of non-school attendance.	To uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, employment of young persons, Child Protection and involvement in entertainment. To advise parents of the law with regard to non school attendance and possible sanctions. (Fast Track and Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecution through either the Magistrates or Juvenile Court).
To meet any social and emotional needs which affects access to education; these needs can be met either by the parent/carer or in partnership with other people/agencies.	To establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and to work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.	To identify, develop and establish good practice in respect to child welfare and access to education throughout the authority.  To enable all Local Authority Services with responsibility for children to work together effectively in the best interest of the child.
To ensure a good attitude to learning – this could be achieved by ensuring punctuality, appropriate dress and by fulfilling expectations of schools, e.g. homework.	To clearly state their expectations of parents/carers and children and make it explicit what they can reasonably expect from school, including help available within school and elsewhere.	To develop collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector in order that the interests of children are met.

Parents	Schools	Local Authority
To work in partnership with school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing school about significant changes or influences in the child's life which may impact on learning.	<p>To promote both good attendance and the welfare of the child.</p> <p>To establish good working practice with the Education Welfare Service, the key LA agency in supporting attendance, based on clear expectations.</p>	<p>To ensure that the Education Welfare work is clearly targeted with a staged approach to support children, parents/ carers and schools in relation to improving attendance.</p> <p>To ensure that the criteria for accessing the Education Welfare Service are clear and that the allocation of resources is per service agreement.</p>
	To work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties e.g. Child Protection.	To consult with schools on the provision of Education Welfare Service and to establish good working practice based on clear expectations.
	To keep accurate and up to date records on children's attendance and punctuality as required by legislation.	To monitor attendance across London Borough of Hillingdon from information provided by schools and the DfES.
	To notify the LA in accordance with legislation, of irregular attendance or of continuous absences of more than 10 days that are not covered by a medical certificate.	<p>To evaluate Education Welfare Service work intervention.</p> <p>To ensure accountability to Hillingdon communities through the Council's committee process.</p>