

# **Tring School**

## ***Attendance Policy***

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**Issue No: 3**

**Approved by: Full Governing Body (*Students, Learning & Community Committee*)**

**Approved on: July 2017**

**Review due: June 2018**

# Attendance Policy & Guidance

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## 1. PRINCIPLES

Tring School acknowledges that regular attendance is a major factor in ensuring all students take full advantage of the learning experiences made available to them and thus achieve their full academic potential.

As a School we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and students – to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Tring School acknowledges the need to ensure that accurate and up-to-date attendance statistics are kept. The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the school, parents and students. Each of these groups is required to understand the expectations which the policy contains. Our strategic objective is to aim for an overall rate of 96 % across the school.

## 2. AIMS

With regard to attendance Tring School aims to:

- 1) Provide a safe learning environment
- 2) Continually look to find ways to improve the overall percentage of students at school.
- 3) Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- 4) Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- 5) Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- 6) Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data.
- 7) Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- 8) Implement a system of rewards and sanctions for attendance.
- 9) Promote effective partnerships with other professional services and agencies.
- 10) Recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## 3. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- 2) Parents of registered students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.
- 3) Parents are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence (by letter, email, phone call, text or personal visit), on each day of absence.
- 4) Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress
- 5) Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for students during school hours.

## 4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons.
- 2) All students are expected to be punctual to school and to all lessons.

3) Students are expected to be ready to learn.

## **5. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) Ensure a legal register is taken at designated times during the school day (a.m. and p.m.).
- 2) Keep accurate records relating to student attendance and monitor data closely to ensure appropriate communications and intervention work is implemented where necessary.
- 3) Provide students with a safe and stimulating educational environment.
- 4) Communicate with parents regarding attendance issues on a whole-school level and on an individual basis.
- 5) Work in close partnership with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer.
- 6) Recognise and reward excellent attendance rates of students through certificates and prize draws.

## **6. MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Responsibility for day-to-day monitoring of attendance falls to tutors, subject teachers, and the Attendance Manager. Staff who are engaged in the position of class teacher (permanently or temporarily), should ensure that registers are accurately completed as they are **a legal document and are used for health and safety purposes**.

Heads of House will have an overview of attendance within their House, and will liaise closely over attendance issues with the Attendance Manager and Assistant Headteacher responsible for Student Support, meeting as prescribed by the Attendance Improvement Officer, to monitor the attendance of all pupils in Years 7 – 11. The attendance of Sixth Form students is the responsibility of the KS5 Student Support Manager.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the Attendance Policy and for liaising with the Governing Body, to whom a report on attendance will be made termly. The general responsibility for daily implementation of the policy lies with the Assistant Headteacher responsible, together with Heads of House, and the Attendance Manager, who will contact parents and co-ordinate contact with outside agencies.

## **GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE**

### **1. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason, such as:

- 1) Sickness
- 2) Medical appointments which are unavoidable
- 3) Days of religious observance
- 4) Exceptional family circumstances – bereavement

**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. The Headteacher and Assistant

Headteacher, Heads of House and the Attendance Manager, will make the final decision regarding the classification of an absence. Unauthorised absences include:

- 1) Parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily
- 2) Truancy before or during the school day
- 3) Absences which have never been properly explained
- 4) Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9.30)
- 5) Shopping
- 6) Looking after other children and/or parent unless registered as a carer
- 7) Birthdays
- 8) Day trips and holidays (unless deemed an exceptional circumstance by the Headteacher) in term time
- 9) A pet going to the vet/death of a pet

While any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Exceptional Leave for students with sporting/musical excellence**

Students who are performing at a national level in sports may receive additional leave or adaptations to their timetable in order to support them with their accomplishments. Where this is required a letter is necessary from the board or organisation that they are performing with so that careful liaison can take place between school and the sporting clubs. This will then be assessed by the Leadership Team.

## **2. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance rate falls below 90 % at any time of the school year, **for whatever reason**. Absenteeism of this level will considerably damage any child's educational prospects and we will need the parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk or moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by our, Heads of House and the Attendance Manager. Parents will/may need to come into school and meet with the Head of House and/or Attendance Manager ~~on~~ on a regular basis to discuss their child's attendance and the progress being made.

## **3. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER (AIO)**

As a school, we expect parents to contact school at an early stage if their child is experiencing difficulty in attending school. Only then can staff help to resolve any problems within school. A united approach to this type of problem is extremely beneficial and is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Improvement Officer from the Local Authority. Tring School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual students and the whole school. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's

attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or students may wish to contact the AIO 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.

#### **4. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

A Penalty Notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. Tring School follows the Local Authority and Department for Education guidelines when issuing a Penalty Notice.

#### **5. HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

The school's Governors took the decision at the start of the 2007 academic year to not accept holidays as a legitimate reason for students to miss school; all parents were written to at the time. There is no automatic entitlement, in law, for students to take time off school to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to work with us, by not taking students away in school time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

#### **6. TRUANCY**

Truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A number of systems are put in place to inform students that this behaviour is unacceptable. A record will be made in the student's school file.

The school follows the following procedures for following up truancy:

- 1) The Head of House or Attendance Manager will phone a parent to inform them of the truancy and the student will spend the next school day in the Internal Exclusion Room.
- 2) The local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) is informed of the truancy.
- 3) The student will be placed on an Attendance Report and will make up the work they have missed. Support will be offered to the student who has truanted from lessons if necessary.
- 4) The PCSO and AIO will work with the school on serious cases of repeated truancy.

#### **7. REGISTRATION**

Registers will be marked by tutors and teaching staff using Go4Schools at the beginning of each session (8:40, 9:05, 10:05, 11:35, 12:35, 2:20)

Registers will 'close' at 9.30am and 2.30pm respectively. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers 'close' they will be marked 'absent'. Students who arrive after the registers close should report to the Attendance Manager's office and sign the relevant House Signing-In Book.

All class teachers should check attendance at the start of each lesson on their lap top and consult with the appropriate tutor where an absence gives cause for

concern. Class teachers, too, should insist on punctuality. Persistent or wilful lateness should usually result in sanctions being applied via the SIMS behaviour management system.

## **8. LATENESS**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work. Students arriving late to lessons also disrupt lessons and learning. This can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage further absence. There is also an administrative burden on the school.

## **9. MANAGING LATENESS**

The school day starts at 8.40am and we expect students to be in their lesson at that time to register. Registers are taken between 8.40 and 9.05am. Students will receive an N code if they are not present after the last name has been called on the register. At 9.30am the registers are officially closed in accordance with regulations; if a student arrives after that time 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.

Students should be through the school gates by 8.35am or they will receive a detention.

### **Sanctions:**

The school will use a range of sanctions to change the behaviour patterns of those students who are regularly late to school.

## **10. LEAVING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

If a student needs to leave the school during the school day the following procedures must be adhered to:

- 1) Students will require a note from a parent or an official appointment card (medical) ...and this
- 2) Must be shown to the subject teacher to leave their lesson, and the Attendance Manager's Office to sign out (**a Health and Safety must**).

### **On returning to school the student must:**

- 1) Sign in at the Attendance Manager's Office
- 2) The Attendance Manager will provide this information in the event of a fire drill

## **11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

- 1) Tring School will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed.

The school's ethos must demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow-up action will be taken.

- 2) A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- 3) Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
- 4) Good attendance will be recognised at the end of each school term in 'House' Celebration Assemblies.
- 5) Students whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The form tutor/AM/HoH will monitor and review these targets.

- 6) Parents will be reminded regularly (via Newsletters, information booklets, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- 7) Students who are absent for any extended period of time will have work sent home to them after 3 days absence and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return where appropriate.
- 8) The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies (eg Attendance Team (St Albans and Dacorum District Children's Services), Education Support Team for Medical Absence, Educational Psychology Service, Children, Schools and Families) when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- 9) Visits will be made to feeder primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with primary school teachers will seek to identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.
- 10) Attendance checks will be made regularly to ensure that students who register attend lessons.

## **12. REWARDS FOR STUDENTS**

- 1) Students will be encouraged to have high attendance through rewards and achievement points.
- 2) Their success will also be celebrated in assemblies.

Tring School  
Governing Body  
June 2017

Reviewed Annually by Students, Learning & Community Committee