# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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**Ratified by Governors:** September 2015

**Date of Review:** September 2016

## Attendance Policy

## Wollaston School Attendance Target for 2015 - 2016 is 95.6%

## 1. Process

The process of writing and reviewing this policy should involve consultation between the Headteacher, members of the Leadership Team, Year Teams, parents, students, governors and the Education Entitlement Team.

## 2. Introduction

It is vital to the academic progress of all students that they attend school regularly and take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that high absence rates go hand in hand with poor examination results. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process, not only does a student miss out on valuable teaching but they are less prepared for lessons when they return. A student arriving late to school or class disrupts his/her continuity of learning and also that of others. Currently, the National School picture for attendance sits just above 95% and it is clear those students who have attendance rates above this figure do significantly better at school than those below. Poor attendance also places children at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into anti-social behaviour. The recent expectations from the Department for Education (November 2013) made clear the responsibilities of schools to improve attendance. Central to raising standards in education, students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. As part of the improving attendance agenda, the Persistent Absence (PA) percentage has been changed from 15% (85% attendance) to 10% (90% attendance) and this will be introduced from the start of the 2015/16 academic year. The DFE have stated that their intention is to raise expectations regarding PA and move practice/thinking forward in this respect. Schools will be expected to put support and challenge in place at the earliest opportunity when a student's attendance causes concern and therefore our policy will reflect this change.

| Term | Number of days missed (equal to 10% absence) |
|---|---|
| Term 1 | 3.5 days |
| Term 1-2 | 7 days |
| Term 1-3 | 10 days |
| Term 1-4 | 12.5 days |
| Term 1-5 | 15.5 days |
| Term 1 -6 (Full academic year) | 19 days |

## 3. Attendance Legislation

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's

age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and can be served with a penalty notice by an authorised officer, which includes a Head teacher. Full payment of the penalty discharges the parent from liability for conviction following a prosecution.

Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite for student achievement. Absence whether it is long term, frequent or occasional leads to missed experiences and may cause fractured social relationships which encourage an increased pattern of non-attendance.

"Schools have a responsibility to engage pupils in learning and to promote attendance"
(*DFES Publication –Tackling it together*)

As an educationally inclusive school we constantly monitor and evaluate the progress made by all student. Wollaston School is keen to work in partnership with students, parents and outside agencies to support all families and ensure students make progress with their education and life beyond education. We recognise that students who are absent will miss important educational opportunities which will affect their welfare, progress and attainment.

## AIMS

- To ensure all students at Wollaston School receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for achieving their potential.
- Wollaston School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, so that each member of our community feels safe and valued.
- Wollaston School staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends regularly and punctually.
- Wollaston school staff will follow up absences and lateness with parents/carers and liaise with outside agencies (e.g. Education Entitlement Team and Early Help Team) to ensure all children access a full time and fulfilling education.
- Wollaston School will investigate and monitor absences through our First Day Response/Truancy call procedure.
- Wollaston School will take preventative, disciplinary and supportive action in cases of truancy and lateness *(Also see Climate for Learning and Child Protection policy).*

- Wollaston School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and punctuality and will challenge those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Wollaston school will ensure the attendance figure for each student is regularly shared with the student and parents.
- To meet these objectives Wollaston School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## 4. Wollaston School and Parents

*DFES Publication - School Attendance, Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013*.

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

All children will be required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Securing a high level of attendance requires Wollaston School and parents/carers to work closely together. In order to achieve this it is essential parents/carers:

- Ensure their child arrives on time for morning registration (8.55am) and afternoon (12.00pm) registration.
- If their child is ill, notify the school on the first day and every following day of absence, including an estimation of the likely length of absence.
- Respond to any text sent daily, indicating why their child is absent
- Contact the school at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attendance.
- Recognise that the school will be concerned when any child fails to meet the attendance target and work with us to improve their child's attendance
- Recognise the threshold for Persistent Absence is 10% (90% attendance).

## 5. School Systems and Procedures to promote good attendance

The accuracy of the register is of paramount importance both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions that may be required.

## 6. Start of Sessions

AM registration is 8.55am
PM registration is 12.00pm (During the period 4 lesson)

It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for every student. Every student must fall into one of three categories of present, absent or late. We all have a duty of care and are responsible for safeguarding students; therefore it is vital that the information is accurate.

The member of staff responsible for maintaining the system of recording accurate reasons for non-attendance is Mrs Steadman who works with the learning and student managers to ensure a rigorous system of liaising with parents to code absence correctly.

Any letters passed to form tutors must be given to the Head of Year without delay.
All registers must be completed on Go4Schools and where there is a problem completing an electronic register a paper copy should be completed by the member of staff (Tutor or class teacher) and sent to Mrs Steadman or Mrs Halliday immediately for electronic input.

A student is late when they arrive after the form tutor has finished calling the register. Students arriving after 9.10am or 12.30pm must sign in at student services. Form tutors should not mark students who attend during registration as late, but they should include a red flag comment, including the number of minutes late, and sanction the students appropriately.

Students leaving or entering the site during the day must sign out/in at Student Services once their authorisation has been approved.

## 7. Staff Roles and responsibilities: During Lesson

All staffs are responsible for completing electronic registers for every lesson. If a student is present mark with /, if they are absent mark with N, if they arrive late mark with L and record minutes late.

NB. When a student arrives after the electronic register has been "saved and sent", staff MUST remember to resend the amended register as soon as possible.

## 8. Use of Data:

The efficient and speedy collection of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. At Wollaston School we have a colour system (see 9.1 '*How Wollaston School Manages Attendance*) for identifying those students whose attendance is falling below an acceptable level. This information is used by the Tutor, Student Manager and Head of Year weekly to ensure intervention takes place and should be used by all form tutors to inform their discussions with children. An attendance sticker is issued to every student once a half term. Form tutors should ensure stickers are placed in the student's planner and know their current and target attendance levels. This system also keeps parents abreast with their child's attendance level. The tutor will ask their tutees to get them signed from their parent to ensure the information is being shared.

8.1 Data is required to monitor Individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons.
Patterns of lateness and absence are used to identify trends by:

- Student
- Tutor Group

- Subject
- Year group
- Seasonal patterns
- Patterns and nature of unauthorised absence
- Vulnerable groups e.g. SEN, EAL, LAC, FSM, PP

All staff need to be alert to changes in attendance patterns and raise any concerns with the form tutor, Student Manager and Head of Year who will investigate. Teachers concerned about a child's poor attendance should check with the relevant Head of Year before contacting parents to discuss their concerns.

## 9. All staffs have a role to play in encouraging students to attend regularly.

### 9.1 How Wollaston School Manages Attendance:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Attendance 96% - 100%** (96% is approaching 8 days out of school)<br><br>**Attendance level**<br>5*=100%<br>5=99.9 - 98%<br>4=97.9 - 96% | Pupils whose attendance is within these parameters should be congratulated and receive positive encouragement to maintain high levels of attendance.<br>**Actions** at this level are the responsibility of the tutor, Student manager, Head of Year and Leadership Team. | **Tutor**<br>• Celebrate Tutor Group achievement **(Tutor/Yr assembly HOY).**<br>• Tutor and Year attendance notice board updated with 96-100% students/TG league **(Tutor/SM/HOY).**<br>• Celebrate individual achievement **(All).**<br>• Regular termly attenance in planner, signed by parent.<br>• Verbal praise to children **(All).**<br>• Attendance praise, Letters to parents.<br>• Certificate of achievement end of term achievement assembly **(HOY/SLT link/GOV.).** |
| **Attendance 95% - 94%** (94%= Is approaching 12 days off school in a year)<br><br>**Attendance level 3** | There is a high relationship between attendance and attainment and it is important that attendance stays above 95%. Early intervention is a preventative measure.<br><br>The Tutor/Support staff/Student Manager have a key role in ensuring communication with parents via letter.<br><br>The Head of Year to provide advice to Student Manager and coordinate support to ensure the students' needs in school are being met. | **Tutor/Support staff/Student Manager**<br>• Speak to child about reasons and **record** – Tutor<br>• Set individual attendance **target in planner** and inform SM/HOY for recording -Tutor<br>• Speak to parent about attendance if there are concerns and record.<br>• **Warning letter: Notice to improve letter sent out by student Manager/administrator** |
| **Attendance 93.9% - 91%** (91% = Is 17 days off school in a year) | There are serious concerns over attendance at this level and the pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent (PA). A more formal approach and support is required. | **Head of Year/Student Manager**<br>• Formal warning letter sent out.<br>• Set up EHA and refer<br>• Set up Parenting Contract - Speak to child and parent about barriers and record.<br>• Set individual attendance targets.<br>• Monitor and review over 4 weeks. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Attendance level 2** | A Formal warning letter (2) is sent to parents**.** **All** parental contacts to be recorded. Attendance is monitored and reviewed.<br><br>The Head of Year takes the lead role in liaising with parents to ensure they support their child's attendance. | **Head of Year – To consider alternative interventions**<br>• Peer support<br>• Curriculum groupings<br>• Teacher deployment<br>• Learning mentor or Teaching Assistant support<br>• If appropriate, booster class/1:1 tuition |
| **Attendance 90% and below Level 1** (90% = 19 days out of school) | This level of attendance is at **Persisent Absence Threshold** and of serious concern. A pupil with this level of attendance is in a high risk group and will be identified as persistently absent (PA) once their attendance has fallen to 90%.<br><br>Parenting Contracts should be in place: All further absence requires medical evidence.<br><br>An Education Entittlement referral form needs to be completed with intervention information and % attendance.<br><br>A Formal warning letter is sent to parents, indicating Education Entitlement involvement and possible legal proceedings or (fixed penalty notice). | **Head of Year**<br>• Attendance contract review meeting - Set attendance targets.<br>• Home Visit<br>• Completion of EHA - Make sure this has already been referred before 90%.<br>• Formal warning letter sent out.<br>• Inform Education Entitlement<br>• Posible referral to social care, CP issue – discuss with CP team.<br><br>**Head of Year - To Consider Alternative interventions**<br>• Identify key TA/learning mentor to support pupil<br>• Modified timetable and support for catch up on work.<br>• Peer support.<br>• Curriculum groupings/Teacher deployment.<br>• If appropriate, booster class/1:1 tuition. |

## 10. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where Wollaston School accepts there is good reason for absence. An authorised absence requires communication from the parent/carer. Any student whose parent does not provide a reason for absence will be deemed to have truanted, a sanction given and the absence recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:

- Absence due to illness or other unavoidable cause
- An absence for religious observance sanctioned by the religious body to which the parents belong
- There is no acceptable transport and the school is not within walking distance
- Situations where the school authorises absence

Only Wollaston School can authorise a student's absence, and the school is not obliged to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason.

## 11. Department for Education Legislation

In April 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) amended the legislation surrounding absence in term time and applied the legislation with effect from 1st September 2013 for all pupils of statutory school age.

The law gives **NO entitlement** to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers are not expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school (Initial Fixed Penalty Notice of £60.00 is issued to each parent for each child - two parent family, two children = £240.00).

Northamptonshire Local Authority expects Wollaston School to have firm policies and stringent checks to ensure that there is a significant reduction in the number of absences being authorised during term time. The Local Authority monitors all school absences during term time and will challenge Wollaston and the parents of Wollaston children who do not adhere to the legislation (DFES Publication: August 2013)

**Missing school due to illness (not medical or dental appointments)**
**Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment only.**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, **schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness**. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given where confirmation has been provided by the parent/carer (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or by the production of an appointment card. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Students leaving the school site must sign out at Student services and must sign in at Student services on their return.

## 12. Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £60/120 imposed on (each) parent per child. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

These will apply to any parent who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age (18 years from September 2015) who is registered at a state school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not found in a public place during schools hours without a justifiable reason.

When Wollaston School considers a Fixed Penalty Notice they will balance it against the option of giving a further warning notice dependent on the level of unauthorised absence i.e.:

a. 18 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
b. 10 consecutive day's unauthorised absence
c. An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 90% or less

Any queries about decisions made by the Headteacher regarding authorisation of absence, need to be taken back to the Headteacher or school governing body, using their complaints procedure if necessary. The local authority are not part of the authorisation process and their decision to consider the issue of fixed penalty notices is based on information submitted by schools.

## 13. First Day Absence system

If a child is unavoidably absent from Wollaston School, parents are asked to contact the school on 01933 418844 giving the reason for the absence. The parents of any student not marked present during morning registration i.e. not in registration will be sent a text message. Parents are asked to respond by text or phone call explaining why their child is absent.

## 14. Punctuality

A student arriving late not only disrupts his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. Persistent lateness is often a significant indicator of underachievement.

Students arriving after 9.00am and 12.30pm must sign in at Student Services. Students are expected to be punctual to registration and lessons. Lateness is not accepted and parents are expected to support Wollaston School where students are regularly late without reason. Poor punctuality will be addressed through detentions after the school day or if necessary before the start of the school day. Parents will be notified of any school detention issued and will be required to arrange collection and/or transportation to carry out the catch up time.

## 15. Rewards

The importance of good attendance and punctuality is regularly promoted through the tutorial programme and assemblies. To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance Wollaston rewards good attendance and punctuality as part of its House Points and rewards system. Celebration and rewards include;

- Celebration of Tutor Group achievement every half term
- Celebrate and praise individual achievement
- Attendance praise Letters to parents
- Post cards home
- Non-uniform day reward for 100% attendance in a term
- Certificate of most improved attendance
- Certificate of 100% attendance in a term
- Recognition year board for 100% attendance in a half term

## 16. Return to school after long term absence/integration

Wollaston School is committed to ensuring that all students achieve their potential. Any barriers to learning are considered on an individual basis and we therefore make flexible arrangements to integrate students back into lessons after prolonged absence, whatever the reason for the absence and this will take a staged approach.

Initially a meeting will take place with the student, parent/carer, Head of Year, SENCO and any other relevant staff and or outside agencies. A plan will be drawn up which will acknowledge the reasons for student's absence and may involve a reduced timetable in the first instance and temporary additional support arranged by the SENCO. All teaching staff and form tutor will be advised in advance of an anticipated return so they can plan how to re-introduce the student successfully. Any barriers to re-engagement will be discussed and possible solutions explored. A key member of staff may be appointed to act as a mentor to support the student and family.

Wollaston works effectively with a variety of external agencies such as; Education Entitlement, Service 6 and CAMH to ensure students who are experiencing difficulties are well supported. All options available to support students in improving attendance levels will be considered.

## 17. Implementation and Review

- This policy will be made known to all staff including part-time staff, additional needs staff, cover staff, newly appointed staff, peripatetic staff, students on teaching placements, parents, guardians and governors.
- This policy will be taken into consideration when updating School Development Plans
- Reference to this policy will assist in the identification of in-service training.
- This policy will be reviewed and updated September 2016.

## 18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on: September 2016

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Governors)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Headteacher)

**Location**
Main Office Policies
Senior Team with responsibility for Attendance
Website

**Accessibility status**
All members of staff including Additional Needs Assistants and Cover Supervisors; Governors, students and parents

**Restrictions:**
None

**Relevant Governors: Committee**

**References and Sources**
DFES School census 2014 to 2015 guide, version 2.1 April 2015
DFES Publication - School Attendance, Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013
DFES Publication - Tackling it together
Education Act 1996

**Links to other policies**
Child Protection
Climate for Learning