



Policy: Attendance

Pent Valley Technology College
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“Children who do not regularly attend school, rarely achieve their full potential. Not only do they miss lessons, but patchy attendance makes it more and more difficult to catch up”

Audit commission.gov.uk: Improving School Attendance

RATIONALE:

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, since not only does a student miss out on valuable teaching but they are less prepared for lessons when they return. Poor attendance also places children at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into anti-social behaviour. A student arriving late may disrupt his/her continuity of learning and also that of others. We believe that we can improve the life chances of all students by ensuring that all staff, students and parent/carers are aware of the importance of, and take responsibility for, regular attendance.

At Pent Valley Technology College we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

- Students are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain at the highest possible level.
- Everyone is valued, praised and rewarded.
- Positive relationships are promoted.
- Everyone has the right to feel safe.
- The curriculum will be designed to reflect the interests and needs of the students ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning.
- There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success.
- The monitoring and evaluating of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals.

Positive Environment

We believe that students will want to attend regularly if they are in an environment which is caring and supportive and which promotes respect for all. Learning opportunities are varied and focussed on individual needs of the student. Lessons are well planned, resourced and imaginative and are delivered with pace, providing opportunities for challenge and engagement and which meet students' needs in terms of differentiation and learning styles.

AIM:

Our aim is

- To maximise attendance rates by encouraging regular attendance and punctuality and by discouraging lateness and truancy.
- To celebrate 100% and improved attendance at Achievement Assemblies
- To investigate and monitor absences through our First Day Response/Truancy call procedure. (Schoolcom)
- To investigate lateness through our registration systems and to monitor and follow up any cases of persistent lateness.

- To follow up absences of truancy and lateness with parents/carers and liaise with outside agencies e.g. KCC Attendance Service to ensure that all children access a full time and fulfilling education.
- To take preventative and disciplinary action in cases of truancy and lateness. This may involve legal action.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

- Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of children of compulsory School age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at School on time.
- The Government has introduced new provisions, contained in section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to tackle poor attendance at school. Parents / carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice, as an alternative to prosecution, if their child has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more during the previous 12 weeks. This includes when a pupil has taken a term-time holiday which has not been authorised by the school or following a Truancy Sweep when the school has not authorised the absence of the pupil. The fine is £60 if paid within 28 days rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay could result in summons to court

ATTENDANCE TARGETS:

The School is set targets for attendance levels annually and figures include authorised and unauthorised absence. Where student attendance falls below 93%, the School's Attendance Officer may become involved. Parents may be visited at home or invited into School to discuss attendance concerns. Targets will be set and if these are not met, a referral may be made to Educational Welfare. This could invoke Fixed Penalty Notices or a Court Prosecution.

The Attendance Service supports schools in improving attendance and tackling truancy. This core strategy is integral to the work of the Attendance Service and is subject to meeting stringent attendance targets set by the DCSF. Staff at Pent Valley Technology College work extremely hard towards meeting these targets and improving attendance rates.

This effort is demonstrated through the rigorous monitoring and consistent efforts of the Senior Leadership team, Mini Schools and Attendance Officer, teachers and support staff. All staff have a key role to play in supporting good attendance by ensuring that SIMs Lesson Monitor and registration is scrupulously done and that concerns regarding attendance, punctuality and truancy are identified, monitored and followed up.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME:

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from School will disrupt a student's learning. Parents may consider that a holiday will be educational but students will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Students returning from a term time holiday are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual students catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in "exceptional circumstances". If a parent considers that a request for a holiday is exceptional parents will need to complete a Holiday Request form which can be obtained from the School reception desk or the Attendance Officer. Once returned to the School the Head Teacher will consider the request and write to the parents to confirm his decision. If the holiday is **not** considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and the parent takes their child out of school for the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In the case of an unauthorised holiday the Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 28 days. Thereafter, the Penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.

TRUANCY:

Truancy from individual lessons is the responsibility of the Mini Schools. In such circumstances students should be expected to make up the time and work missed outside of normal school hours. Parents will be informed and a suitable course of action will be decided upon.

LATENESS:

Arriving late at School and into lessons is very disruptive for the teacher and the other class members. It also means that the late students themselves miss important input from teachers. Registration is at 8.50am. If a student arrives at School after the registers have closed without an adequate reason, this has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence. 10 unauthorised absences may render parents liable to a Penalty Notice. If the problem is persistent the Mini School CSF leaders will discuss the matter with the Attendance Officer who will decide on appropriate action which could include the parent being invited into School or visited at home to discuss this matter or (in line with the KCC's procedure), a fixed penalty may be issued.

REGISTRATION TIMES:

Morning registration is 8.50 every morning

Afternoon registration is taken with Period 6 Lesson Monitor

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATTENDANCE:

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY:

- It is the students' responsibility to attend School regularly, to arrive punctually to registration and classes and to be fully equipped and prepared to work.
- Regular attendance is important so that students can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them both in and out of the classroom.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY:

- Parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the child attends regularly at the where he/she is registered.
- Parents should ensure that their children arrive at School on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn/participate in all their daily activities.
- It is the parents' responsibility to inform the School of their son's/daughter's absence as soon as possible.
- A letter explaining the reason for absence and the dates of absence should be sent to School by parents on the day the student returns.
- Parents should make every attempt to arrange medical appointments out of School hours. Medical appointments are regarded as an absence for the Legal Register
- Family holidays during term time should be avoided. Apart from important work missed during class, there are also module examinations which are part of GCSE, or other courses. These happen throughout the School year. Parents must be mindful of the legal ruling on leave of absence during term time

MINI SCHOOLS RESPONSIBILITY:

- It is legally required that registers be taken during every registration session. PM registration is automatically updated when P6 register is entered into Lesson Monitor.
- Teachers are also required to take the register during the first 15 minutes of every lesson
- If registers are not taken, the Mini School Information Managers (MIM) may well send out a Truancy Call message to parents.
- If teachers receive a letter regarding absence they should immediately pass this information to the MIM.
- If a student is having problems with attendance Mini School's may wish to invite parents into School for a meeting which the Attendance Officer can be invited to in order to support the family and student.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of the MIM's to monitor attendance and to report concerns to CSF Leader. The CSF leaders meet weekly with the Attendance Officer to discuss pupils causing concern and action agreed.

These actions could include

- 1) A letter outlining the Schools concerns being sent to parent

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- 2) A Home visit by the Attendance Officer to discuss concerns with parents
 - 3) Inviting parents into school to discuss problem with attendance
 - 4) Referral onto the Family Engagement Officer to identify issues to ensure a collaborative approach
 - 5) Referral to appropriate outside agencies i.e CAMHS, Social Services, Attendance Service etc
 - 6) Family are offered the opportunity to agree to the support of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- To celebrate and reward good and improved attendance
 - Mini Schools will communicate students' successes in terms of attendance through assemblies and displays.

ATTENDANCE OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY:

- Work with Mini Schools in the monitoring and early identification of attendance issues and where necessary in agreeing appropriate targets.
- In collaboration with the Mini Schools identify and work with families, students where attendance falls below 90%
- Liaise with external agencies as part of referral process - Attendance Service (AS), Social Services and CAMH etc.
- Liaise with AS as appropriate and meet named EWO once a term to discuss attendance issues and to keep up to date with current legislation relating to attendance.
- Liaise with Parents/carers as appropriate.
- Where there is a sudden change in a student's attendance pattern or where attendance is persistently low, in consultation with CSF Leaders, arrange a pre-referral meeting to discuss the concern.
- Arrange home visits to support parents/carers in improving attendance.
- Devise and implement a range of strategies to support student attendance e.g. identifying alternative curriculum opportunities.
- Attend all open evenings to discuss concerns with parents and students.
- Meet with the individual Mini School CSF Leaders to discuss students causing concern and to agree action
- Hold group meetings with the MIM's and the School's SIMs Co-Ordinator, on a two weekly basis, to discuss attendance and the recording of attendance in SIMs.
- Seek clarification and advice via the KCC Attendance Service Duty desk as and when necessary.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM RESPONSIBILITY:

- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and reviewing the attendance policy.
- A termly attendance report is provided for the governors by the Assistant Head Teacher
- The Assistant Head Teacher will ensure that the relevant Governors' Committee is fully involved in the drawing up, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.
- The Assistant Head Teacher will meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to discuss attendance issues

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:

- Pent Valley Technology College has a 6 period day with registration at 08.50am
- Attendance will be administered by the MIMs
- 'Reasons for Absence' will be recorded on SIMs by the MIMs
- Parents are asked to phone or email the school on the first day of absence before 10am. The school number is 01303 277161, messages can be left on the answer phone. Individual Mini School Information Managers can be contacted as follows:-

Mini School	Mini School Information Manager	Extension	Email address
Benz	Collette Collins	3009	Collette.Collins@pent-valley.kent.sch.uk
Edison	Jane Ford	5005	Jane.Ford@pent-valley.kent.sch.uk
Franklin	Luke Richardson	6005	Clare.Smith@pent-valley.kent.sch.uk
Sharman	Gail Pluckrose	7005	Gail.Pluckrose@pent-valley.kent.sch.uk
Dyson	Karen Goldsack	4005	Karen.Goldsack@pent-valley.kent.sch.uk

- If the School do not receive a reason for absence it may be marked as unauthorised and may be referred to the Attendance Service to consider the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

- A student's absence remains unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received by Pent Valley Technology School.

- Students must sign in and out with their Mini schools information manager if they arrive late or attend an appointment during school hours. The MIM will then mark the register accordingly. If students fail to sign in, their absence may be recorded as unauthorised and this could trigger a penalty notice.

Medical appointments should be made out of hours wherever possible

- Parents/Carers will be encouraged to send absence notes directly to the Mini School Information Managers.

- Reasons for absence will be recorded by the MIMs and comments entered onto SIMs

- The MIMs will follow up 'unauthorised absence' ('N's) in consultation with Parents/Carers and will record reasons for absence on SIMs

- Letters will be sent to parents from the MIMs requesting that 'reasons for absence' be given within 7 days. Failure to respond within this time will result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised and could result a Penalty Notice being requested from the LA

- MIMs will edit attendance marks when they are satisfied that students' absence is authorised

- Teachers/cover teachers to ensure that they register their class within 15 minutes of the start of the lesson. Any concerns are to be reported to the appropriate MIMs and noted on SIMs

- Teachers will deal with lateness and internal truancy by alerting MIMs who will follow up by informing parents. Heads of Mini School will decide on appropriate action to be taken so that the student 'catches up' on missed work.

- In consultation with the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer and EWO, Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by Pent Valley Technology College

- MIM's will monitor the use of Lesson Monitor by staff who are recording students' attendance at lessons and will make Head of Mini School aware so appropriate action can be taken
- Appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged out of School hours. If this cannot be avoided, written evidence must be produced, e.g. appointment card, letter from doctor, these appointments are recorded as an absence.
- Mini School Leadership team, Deputy Head and Assistant Head will receive weekly reports from the Attendance Officer of students whose attendance is causing concern i.e students whose attendance is below 90%
- When School interventions have failed to improve a student's attendance; the Attendance Officer will consult with the LA's Education Welfare Officer and if appropriate make a referral to the Attendance Service for Fast Track court proceeding to be commenced.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

- The School will complete registers daily and activate Truancy Call for all students who are unaccounted for. However parents must be aware that in the event of technical failure or staff absences this may not always be possible.
- Attendance is updated during the day depending on the parent's replies.
- The class teacher/cover teacher will take the register electronically during every lesson and pass on any concerns or suspicions regarding absence or truanting to their Head of Department or the students Head of Mini School.
- Mini School CSF leaders to meet with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis to monitor attendance and address individual issues within their Mini School.
- Bi-weekly meetings to be held between the Mini School Information Managers, SIMs Co-Ordinator and Attendance Officer.
- Weekly reports of students whose attendance is under 90% will be circulated by the Attendance Officer to all Mini School Leadership teams, the Assistant Head and Deputy Head.
- Where an attendance issue is identified, Mini School and the Attendance Officer will intervene and take remedial and supportive action including, where appropriate, referrals to outside agencies and/or School Nurse
- Attendance data will be used to inform the targets set by Local Authority.
- School nurse to telephone parents/carers on the third day of a student continuous absence for illness to offer support and advice.

This policy has been equality impact assessed to consider all members of the school community and especially the vulnerable groups in the school.

Consideration has been made for age of staff and students, disability (physical, learning and mental health needs), gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. Pent Valley Technology College believes that this policy does not affect any group adversely.

Pent Valley Technology promotes equality and good inter-group relations at all times.

As this policy is a major policy of the school, it will be subject to a review by the governors of the school.