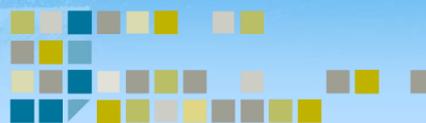# JARROW SCHOOL

Excellence in Education

Policy Title: Attendance Policy

Leader: Lorraine Lobban

Review Date: July 2022

Contents

1. Aims

Jarrow School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We recognise our part in assisting parents to meet their legal obligation to ensure attendance. We understand that for children to attend we need to create an environment that is safe and secure and welcoming so that children may achieve their full potential.

There will, inevitably, be occasional issues that impede full attendance and these will be identified and addressed promptly. Will strive to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and in every lesson after this. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents should telephone the school reception on 0191 428 3200.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/Carers will be informed formally of student attendance at the relevant reporting times.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Parents/Carers requesting a leave of absence for their child must request a 'Leave of Absence' form from the school. This form should be returned to the Attendance Officer at least 2 weeks before the planned absence.

The Head of Year will discuss with the Head Teacher having considered the student's attendance, any previous requests and the examination schedule.

A student leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A covering letter must be provided to accompany the leave of absence submitted and should give details on the exceptional nature of the circumstances.

Absence for the following reasons may be authorised by Jarrow School where Parents/Carers have confirmed the absence:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Interview
- Medical appointment
- Sporting activity
- Performances e.g. Musical performances

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised by Jarrow School when due to:
- Family holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Head Teacher
- Truancy
- Absences which are not properly explained

Jarrow School reserve the right to issue penalty notices to Parents/Carers who take their child out of school for unauthorised family holidays.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Jarrow School we:

- Will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to maintain or improve their attendance and timekeeping.
- Will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Will inform parents/carers by text of student absence after the close of registration.
- Liaise with the Services for Young People (SYP) lead to provide parents/carers with support and advice where necessary.
- Will work in partnership with parents, carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Will collect data on attendance and make it available to the governing body.
- Will inform the LEA each half term of students who have 10 or more unauthorised absences and discuss strategies to support where relevant
- Will inform the LEA if a student is deemed to be a Child Missing from Education (CME) and follow the relevant procedures in relation to this.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents/Carers are expected to call on each day of absence.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school collects data weekly and tracks progress of individuals and groups of students to ascertain where there are causes for concern and how best to support the individual student.

Schedule

Attendance is monitored every two weeks, excluding school holidays. An action may be taken when attendance falls below 93%.

Letter schedule for two weekly attendance monitoring

Initial concern letter:

Initial concern letter is issued if a student fails below the school's attendance specified threshold in school currently 93%

The initial concern letter highlights attendance concerns and offer support to   parents/carers

Ongoing concern letter:

Ongoing concern letter is issued if the student has continued to have attendance below specified threshold and has had the following absence codes in the previous **ten school days - I, 0, N, G, U.** These codes are explained below.

I – illness

O – absent without authorisation

N – absent without a reason provided

G – unauthorised holiday

U – late after registers close

The ongoing concern letter will explain that a student's attendance will be monitored for four school weeks. The criteria to pass this period needs to be 100% attendance with no unauthorised absences. The ongoing concern letter will request medical evidence to authorise absences until attendance is above specified threshold. Parents and carers are asked to provide medical evidence for illness and appointments.

Serious concern letter issued:

The serious concern letter is issued if the student has continued to have attendance below a specified threshold or has failed the four week monitoring period with the following absence codes - **0, N, G, U.**

The letter will include a parenting contract/action plan which will provide a further four weekly monitoring period.

The letter will also offer the parent/carer a school meeting to discuss support. A survey is also included to allow parents to share any concerns with the school that is impacting on the student's attendance.

Referral to the Local Authority:

A referral to the Local Authority will be considered if the student has continued to have attendance below a specified threshold and has had the following absence codes in the four weekly monitoring period   **0, N, G, U**

Home visit schedule:

An initial home visit is carried out if a student's attendance fails below the school's attendance specified threshold in school, which is currently 93%. During the home visit, concerns are discussed with parents and there is an offer to support with improving attendance.

Further fortnightly home visits are carried out if the student continues to have attendance below 93% and has had the following absence codes in the previous **ten school days - I, 0, N, G, U.**

Rapid response home visits

If there is a safeguarding concern for a student or a student has been absent for an extended period with no physical contact with school or other professionals, then a rapid response home visit is carried out to establish the well-being of the student.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data with the Head of Year at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head of Year and the Senior Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for this area
- Works with Local Authority Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information in a timely manner.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Senior Assistant Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day