



Attendance and Absence Policy

November 2019

Introduction

The Phoenix School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all our pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. Under the 1996 Education Act (section 444) a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are registered.

The Phoenix School is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. An absence will only be authorised if the school is satisfied that the explanation offered is valid.

This document gives guidance to our learning community on the subject of attendance and punctuality in school.

School Officers Responsible for Attendance as follows: Charlotte Whysall (Head Teacher - HT), Anthony Skipworth (Deputy Head Teacher – DHT), Sarah Norman and Shana Mozejko (Heads of School – HOS) co-ordinate regular and timely monitoring via Family Liaison Workers and the School office.

Aims and Principles of Good Attendance

- The school is committed to maximising the achievement of all students.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities which are offered to them within the school.
- Parents/Carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging students to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.

What the school expects of its students:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, ready for the School day.

What the school expects of parents / carers

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day with what they need for the day.
- To contact the class teacher or Headteacher in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To inform the class teacher and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and where possible arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- To ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period except in exceptional circumstances.
- To produce documentation supporting appointments and absences.
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What parents / carers can expect of the school

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parents / carers when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason.

- Prompt action on any problems notified.
- Close liaison with the Educational Welfare Service to assist and support parents and students where needed.
- Notification to parents / carers of their child's attendance record through an annual report home.

In addition the Headteacher reports termly to governors regarding whole school attendance.

Attendance monitoring is part of safeguarding procedures in school and is a whole school accountability.

Use of registers

Morning Registration

- Registers are completed by staff.
- Registration is the period from 9.00 -9.20. Registers should be marked on time. Examples of valid explanations for lateness may include:
 - Problems with travel between home and school due to unforeseen/unexpected traffic issues
 - Problems with transport provided by the local education authority
- Any pupil who is not present at 9.20am must be recorded as absent, no reason yet provided (N). Pupils who arrive at school after 9.20am must sign in at the office and are recorded on the main attendance register by a member of the school office team

Afternoon Registration

- Afternoon registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon session. Our registers should be completed straight away. Pupils present should be marked present with a /.
- Registers are legal documents and should never be marked by pupils.
- Once the register is closed late pupils will be recorded as 'u' unless a relevant reason is given. School registers close at 9.20am in the morning and 1.30pm in the afternoon.

Absence – authorised and unauthorised

Procedures for following up absence:

- Absence may be initially authorised by a telephone call to the class teacher / office. However, there is an expectation that a note will be written in the home school book for the teacher to read on his/her return. At the end of each week unaccounted absences will be investigated by the office and referred to the AHTs or HT if necessary.
- If pupils are absent and parents / carers have not contacted the school the office/Family Liaison workers will attempt to make contact by telephone. If parents are not on the telephone a letter will be sent direct to the parents that day. (See appendix 1)
- For children who are suspected to be "Missing in Education" we give due regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Absence should be authorised if:

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils' parents belong.
- The pupil does not live within walking distance of The Phoenix School and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority (LA) for any of the following:
 - The pupil's transport to and from school
 - Accommodation for the pupil at or near school
 - The LA has not facilitated the registration of the pupil at a school nearer to their home
- The pupil is the child of traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education or for a place at another school.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. a family wedding of immediate family members). In authorising such absences the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance should be considered.
- No family holiday can be granted during term time – this is at the head teachers discretion

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming from parents.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house or look after siblings.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions, e.g. the pupil's birthday.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that permitted by the LA or which has not been taken in accordance with the attendance guidelines/head teachers authorisation.
- School may request medical confirmation of absence.

THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) REGULATIONS 2007

Fine

Your local council can give you a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

Prosecution

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.

TRIPS OUT OF SCHOOL / WORK EXPERIENCE

- Educational activities (including work experience (W), educational visits (V), link courses (B) or sporting activities) are deemed to be 'educated off site', and they are therefore recorded as in **attendance** but marked accordingly.

REWARDING, PROMOTING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- The Phoenix School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that the pupils and their parents/carers feel that their presence in school is important, so they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. Early intervention often prevents more frequent absences.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks and success criteria are matched to pupil's needs.
- Parents are reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents' evenings, school website etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- The school is required by law to set an attendance target. This has been set annually.

REGISTER CODES- Taken from DfE School attendance Guidance September 2018

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence.

The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil

were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site

educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

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 veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents 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.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

EVALUATION

- Attendance is discussed weekly by AHTs, Family Liaison and Office staff responsible and fortnightly with SLT weekly figures to SLT meeting.
- These figures will be analysed by SLT and discussed at sub-committee level termly with Governors
- The policy will be reviewed regularly.

Attendance statistics for the school are submitted to the Local Authority on a regular basis. The schools attendance target is set in the Autumn term for the academic year.

Written by: Charlotte Whysall	Date: November 2019
Approved by: DRAFT	

Appendix I.

XX ber 2019

Parents of XXX

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Absent from school

XX was absent from school on XX 2017.

As you will no doubt be aware it is very important that we know the reason for this absence and would therefore appreciate it if you would tick the relevant box below indicating the reason and return this letter to school as soon as possible.

Sickness

Hospital/Doctor's Appointment

Dentist

Other circumstances

If other, please state

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely