

## Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College



### **POLICY : STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Our aim at Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College is for every child and young person to aspire, learn and achieve. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Parents and carers should make sure that their child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how parents/carers and the school will work together to achieve this.

#### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

##### **Learning**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is parents' or carers' legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

##### **Safeguarding**

A child may be at risk of harm if he or she does not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for every child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

#### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, students and all members of school staff.

**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give parents and carers details on their child's attendance via the Learning Gateway;
- Report to parents and carers termly on how their child is performing in school, and what their attendance rate is
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying and rewarding individual and class achievements;

### **The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school.

### **The Law relating to safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

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

Authorised absences are mornings and afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes a child can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never in that child's interests 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.

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 sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the headteacher.

### **Leave of Absence from School**

Amendments to the **Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, in force from **1<sup>st</sup> September 2013**, make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances, when leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child or young person can be away from school.

**Parents should not plan for their child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement. Requests for a planned leave of absence under exceptional circumstances should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the start date of the requested absence, by completing the Leave of Absence Request Form. The Headteacher cannot retrospectively authorise a planned absence.**

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Overlap with the beginning or the end of a term or a half term

In deciding whether to allow parents/carers to take children out of school in term time, the Headteacher will consider factors such as:

- Purpose of absence
- Circumstances of the request
- Amount of time requested
- Nearness of examinations or tests

- Overall attendance record
- Any previous term time holiday absences

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

There is **no** entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

## **Penalty Notices**

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence you may be liable for a penalty notice (one days absence equals two sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc).

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post directly to the home of a parent after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes students caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration **or absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances**. In these cases the warning is given on the absence request form and no written warning will be given. Fines are issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence of 5 or more days and each school day is divided into 2 registration periods.

**For example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions.**

If a request is declined and the child is still taken out of school, each parent within the household may be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child that has been taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 21 days it will increase to £120. If after 28 days it remains unpaid parents may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

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

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA students and their parents are subject to an Action Plan (*Are we doing this/do we want to?*) All PA cases are also automatically made known to the School Attendance Officer.

### **Absence Procedures; Guidance for Parents:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the School Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. You can update your information using the SIMS Learning Gateway or alternatively please contact us at school using the following address [contact@tarporleyhigh.co.uk](mailto:contact@tarporleyhigh.co.uk)

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital

information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.45am** with a five minute warning bell before lessons begin at 8.50am. By this time, we expect your child to be in class, ready to learn.

Registers are marked by **9.05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Year Achievement Leader to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

#### **Mrs J. Lovelock – Attendance Officer**

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Year Leader</b>	<b>SLT Link</b>
7	Miss Cheshire	Miss Watterson
8	Miss Blackhurst	Miss Watterson
9	Miss Louis	Mr Nuttall
10	Mr Pryor	Mr Martin
11	Mr Hutchinson	Mr Martin

In the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, Mr Lowe, Director of 6<sup>th</sup> Form, is responsible for attendance, supported by Mrs Everton, Pastoral Support Manager.

### **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

**Date of Policy: October 2013**