



## ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY

Last Review:	February 2017
Committee:	Learning
Date Ratified:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Next Review:	February 2019

### Rationale

Sir William Romney's School seeks to establish and maintain regular student attendance in all Year groups. Regular student attendance is a vital factor in ensuring progress, continuity in education provision and ultimately, success in examinations. **Sir William Romney's School will strive to provide** a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels respected.

### AIMS

- To make attendance and punctuality a key priority for all those associated with Sir William Romney's School
- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at school
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- **To enhance students' attainment levels and external examination results**
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and School
- To promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

### STATUTORY DUTIES

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. Parents or carers have the responsibility for making sure their children attend school daily and on time. **Sir William Romney's School is** responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

### SECTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Good attendance is the shared responsibility of Sir William Romney's School, parents/carers, students and the Local Authority. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents and carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

#### Students are expected to:-

- Be punctual and maintain a high level of attendance
- Attend registration at 8.55am and 2.05pm
- To sign in at the School Office, if arriving late
- Not leave the school grounds without permission and, if permission has been given by a parent or carer, bring a note to sign out at the main office
- Make every effort to catch up with any work missed when returning to school following any absence
- Report to their tutor, Educational Welfare Officer or Learning Manager any issues or problems they are having within the school that may affect their learning and attendance
- Comply with sanctions for poor punctuality

### Parents/carers are expected to:-

- **Ensure that their child attends Sir William Romney's School** daily and on time
- Contact the school by calling the absence line every day of any absence giving reasons on 01666501099
- Provide a note recording the reason for the absence on the return to school. This note should be given to the tutor.
- Provide written authorisation, clearly stating the reason, if their child needs to leave the site during the day
- Not take holidays during term time
- Request, in writing, at least 3 weeks in advance, any absence due to special circumstances, including details of those circumstances
- Be aware of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- Respond to any queries relating to an absence promptly, as failure to do so may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised
- Keep the school updated on any changes to address or contact numbers
- Inform the school of any circumstances **that may impact on their child's attendance**
- Arrange medical and other appointments out of school hours wherever possible

### Tutors are expected to:-

- Attend registration promptly at 8.55am and 2.05pm
- Mark the SIMS register accurately using the computerised system. Students' names need to be called by the tutor
- Ensure that a mark is entered for every student at registration. Blanks should not be left. The student is either present or absent at registration
- Send students with letters explaining reasons for absence to the School Office where they will be put in the attendance tray
- Be aware of the attendance of students in their tutor group and liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer and the Learning Manager regarding concerns
- Inform the Educational Welfare Officer **of any information regarding a student's attendance**
- Send students to the School Office to notify any change of contact details
- **Be aware of home/personal circumstances which affect a student's attendance**
- Highlight attendance concerns to the Learning Manager
- Share attendance figures with students on a regular basis

### Learning Managers are expected to:-

- Monitor the effective completion of registration by tutors
- Liaise with tutors regarding attendance
- Regularly discuss with the Educational Welfare Officer any students causing concern and to implement appropriate intervention strategies for identified students
- Put students on attendance/punctuality report as necessary
- Liaise with external agencies to ensure students receive relevant work during a period of absence e.g. Hospital Education Service
- Collate and arrange for work to go home for extended absences

### Subject Teachers are expected to:-

- Complete a register using Lesson Monitor (SIMS) every lesson in order to monitor attendance and record absentees
- Ask students who are late if they have signed in at the office and send them to the School Office if they have not done so
- Support students on their return to school, following a long period of absence, in catching up with missed work
- Highlight students whose attendance is causing concern at department meetings and to relevant Leaders of Learning
- Provide relevant work, to be collated by the Learning Manager/office, for students with long term absence e.g. those in Hospital Education
- Report suspected truants to the Educational Welfare Officer/EWO as soon as possible

### Heads of Department/Leaders of Learning will be expected to:-

- Include attendance as an agenda item at department meetings

- Inform the Learning Manager of attendance issues

#### **The Assistant Head responsible for attendance will be expected to:-**

- Ensure the full implementation of the Attendance for Learning Policy
- Make attendance a regular feature of assemblies
- Use assemblies to emphasise the direct link between attendance and attainment
- Implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance with students, staff and parents
- **Monitor the school's progress in meeting school attendance targets**
- Follow up missed registers or inaccuracies with members of staff as advised by the Educational Welfare Officer
- Monitor the whole school link between attainment and attendance and share this with staff, students, parents and governors
- Raise the profile of attendance within the school and use assemblies to reward and celebrate good attendance
- Report to the Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body and the LA on matters of attendance
- Meet regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer and Learning Managers regarding attendance
- Chair Attendance Improvement Meeting meetings, alongside the Educational Welfare Officer, with parents and students and implement stage procedure which may result in a referral to the LA who may start a legal process

#### **The Headteacher will be expected to:-**

- Have overall responsibility for the Attendance for Learning Policy
- Make decisions about authorisation of holidays
- **Publicise the school's position about holidays in term time in newsletters and letters to parents**
- Receive regular reports on attendance
- Act as a signatory for legal proceedings

#### **Governors are expected to:-**

- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance for Learning Policy
- **Ensure that attendance is an integral part of the school's action planning**
- Receive regular reports about attendance via the Curriculum Committee

#### **The Educational Welfare Officer will be expected to:-**

- Implement fully the **School's Attendance for Learning Policy**
- Support the Assistant Headteacher in developing and administering the Attendance for Learning Policy
- Provide attendance data, analysis and reports to relevant staff to enable them to carry out their operational responsibilities
- Monitor the twice-daily completion of registers and report any concerns to the Assistant Head responsible for attendance
- Operate a first day contact policy for any student absence
- Establish personal contact with parents or carers of students who are poor attendees, in order to monitor the situation closely and alert parents to the problem quickly
- In response to SIMS data, regularly send letters to parents/carers of students whose attendance is cause for concern
- Log all telephone calls concerning absence
- Print and store monthly registers for each tutor group
- Liaise with relevant outside agencies and provide attendance data for them
- Appropriately store all letters relating to school attendance
- Make referrals to the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team following the referral process
- Make home visits to meet with parents or carers as necessary
- Issue penalty notice warning letters to parents/carers where 10 sessions or more (5 days) of unauthorised holiday have been taken; and request the issue of a penalty notice, where relevant, by the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team

#### **The Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team will be expected to:-**

- Prepare evidence for court action provided by the Educational Welfare Officer

## SECTION 2: ATTENDANCE – CAUSE FOR CONCERN

The following are deemed as causes for concern:-

- Attendance falling below 90%
- Attendance between 80% and 90% in cases of frequent absences of one or two days duration
- Patterns of absence (same days)
- One or two day absences on many occasions
- Regular unauthorised absence
- Poor punctuality

### Persistent Absence

A student becomes a “persistent absentee” (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level does considerable **damage to a student’s** educational prospects. All PA students (and those close to PA) are tracked and monitored very carefully.

### Punctuality

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect students to be in school at that time. Registers are marked by **8.55am** and a student 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 a student 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 the parent/carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a student is persistently late parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Educational Welfare Officer and/or Assistant Headteacher to attempt to resolve the problem, equally a parent/carer may contact the school at any time to discuss issues with punctuality.

## SECTION 3: INFORMATION ABOUT LEAVE OF ABSENCE (HOLIDAYS) DURING TERM TIME

We request that parents avoid taking students on holiday during term time because it can be **disruptive, both to the child’s education and to the school**. **Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances** (e.g. service personnel).

The school will not be able to take into consideration:-

- the availability of cheap holidays
- the availability of desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- holiday dates that overlap with the beginning or end of term

If a holiday is taken without permission, it will be logged as unauthorised and this will be dealt with according to Local Authority guidelines: If a student has ten unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 full school days) a warning letter will be issued by the Education Welfare Officer. If there are subsequent absences in the following 15 days, a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team.

## SECTION 4: AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

The School will decide whether or not an absence is authorised. The following show some authorised/unauthorised reasons for absence (these lists are by no means exhaustive):

### Authorised:-

- sickness
- unavoidable medical appointment
- days of religious observance (needs prior notification)
- exceptional family circumstances
- going to other schools for visits, interviews or examinations

### Unauthorised:-

- minding a house
- looking after a sibling, parent or family member

- birthdays
- buying school uniform or shoes
- haircuts
- day trips – unless requested in advance and authorised
- family holidays
- students arriving after the register has closed

#### **SECTION 5: ATTENDANCE REWARDS**

- Students with over 98% attendance each term are invited to go on an attendance trip.
- Students with 100% attendance each term are entered into the attendance raffle
- Excellent or greatly improved attendance is rewarded through the house point system