



ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY

Last Review:	June 2017
Committee:	Learning
Date Ratified:	July 2017
Next Review:	June 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. It is our collective duty to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity is used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. It is our aim that we support all our pupils so they can continue to attend school even though they may be facing challenging personal circumstances. 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