# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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# 1    PURPOSE

Up Holland High School recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of pupils. The aim of this policy is therefore to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individuals, groups and the school as a whole.  The attendance target for pupils at Up Holland High School is a minimum of 97%
In order to achieve this, all members of the School community have an important contribution to make.

# 2    AIMS

The aims of the policy are:

- to improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at this school;
- to raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, pupils, parents and the Governing Body;
- to ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents, pupils and staff;
- to develop and monitor clear procedure for maintaining accurate registers;
- to develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance related issues; and
- to develop a framework within which all staff can work to provide a consistent approach to raising levels of attendance using relevant agencies as appropriate.

# 3    AN OUTLINE OF THE POLICY

In order to achieve a high rate of attendance it is essential that all staff are aware of the strategies to encourage this:-

- all members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities;

- an appropriate curriculum, including the use of alternative provision for some students, is essential and kept under constant review;
- the need for high quality learning and teaching throughout the school is recognised by all;
- pupils are provided with appropriate support so that problems do not escalate and drive them away from school. Our approach to bullying is of particular importance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a pupil's attendance, an appropriate level of multi agency support will be instigated;
- SEN pupils are identified and given appropriate support;
- effective partnership with parents through regular contact and support is provided. Parents are kept informed by the text messaging service 'Teachers To Parents' if their child is absent from school;
- letters of praise and concern on matters of attendance are sent to parents;
- parents are invited into school to discuss matters relating to their child's attendance, informally or formally and through the Governors' Attendance Panel;
- parents are actively discouraged from taking pupils away from school for holidays during term time.
- a comprehensive system of rewards for good attendance is used including stickers, certificates, rewards points, postcards, recognition at Presentation Evenings etc;
- attendance is given a high profile within the school eg. through assemblies, competitions, newsletter, displays;
- Governors are encouraged to play a role in raising levels of attendance and are kept informed of attendance targets and developing issues; and
- punctuality is also highlighted as an important issue through the use of appropriate sanctions eg. late detentions held at lunchtime.

## 4    IDENTIFYING AND TACKLING POOR ATTENDANCE

Strategies for identifying and dealing with poor attendance include:

- attendance levels for individuals, tutor groups, year groups and the whole school are carefully monitored and action taken to address poor attendance;
- attendance levels of other groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, SEN pupils, ethnic minority and pupil premium are also monitored and action taken to address significant differences;
- long term absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school;

- early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work during transition from KS2;
- Attendance Improvement Monitoring (AIM) provides targeted strategies for pupils with poor attendance, pupils with deteriorating attendance and potential poor attendees;
- written agreements and contracts can be set up to encourage good attendance eg. Parenting Contract, Attendance Monitoring Card, Punctuality Card;
- Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance can be issued in circumstances where a parent is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's attendance (eg. truancy, parentally condoned absence with no good reason, excessive or unauthorised holidays) and/or poor punctuality. This could be issued after 10 missed (unauthorised) sessions. The cost is £120 or £60 if paid within 21 days, payable by each parent or anyone who is deemed responsible for ensuring good attendance at school. Should the child's attendance not improve, school can request action for a prosecution for non-attendance.

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance is only part of the school's approach to this issue. The whole school drive for supporting pupils strive to be the best, such as providing effective pastoral support and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact on attendance.

## 5   REGISTERING OF PUPILS

The school will follow the DCSF: Keeping Pupil Registers – Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulation document.

- pupils must be registered twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon;
- the school uses SIMS.net to register pupils and to track punctuality rates;
- morning registration and afternoon registration will constitute the 2 session marks;
- morning registration opens at 8:45am and closes at 9:30am. If a pupil arrives after 8.55am, they are deemed late; if a pupil arrives after 9.30am without valid reason, an unauthorised absence will be recorded and
- afternoon registration is taken at the beginning of lesson 4, it opens at 12.25pm and closes at 12.40pm.

## 6   UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

An unauthorised absence is an absence that is not covered by any other code or description, such as birthdays, shopping, would not get up, closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes, pupils being kept at home when fit to attend.  (These are examples and not an exhaustive list). It is the school that decides whether an absence is authorised or not.  (See DCSF published guidelines).  If an attendance problem has not been resolved, the school will advise parents when an absence will only be authorised upon receipt of a medical certificate or other proof of illness

eg Appointment Card, copy of Prescription.  The presentation of a note from parent or telephone call may not be sufficient for an absence to be authorised.  Under normal circumstances this would not be sought but where there are concerns over prolonged, repeated or deteriorating attendance, the school may seek advice/support from school medical services. A leave request which has not been agreed by school is regarded as an unauthorised absence.

## 7    FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

If a child's attendance/punctuality falls below the Government's expected figure of 96%, Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually and makes them liable for prosecution if they fail to fulfil this. Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised.  A Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.  Up Holland High School may request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence, which will include leave requests in term time (10 sessions or more) deemed as unauthorised by the school, and/or poor punctuality.  For 2018/19 this fine is currently £120 per parent/carer per child.

## 8    ANY LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.  The local Education Authority works closely with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school, particularly due to holidays, and schools can refuse a request to take a child out of school.

The Government has amended key legislation relating specifically to the authorisation of leave in term time which came into force on 1st September 2013.  As of 1st September 2013, Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances** to warrant the granting of leave.

Parents are actively discouraged from taking pupils away from school for any reason including holidays during term time. Any request for absence must be made on the appropriate Application Form stating the reason why the absence cannot be taken at any other time and include information/supporting documentation regarding the exceptional circumstance, information for consideration must be provided at this point and will not be considered if received at a later date. The request must be returned to school no later than 10 school days before the absence period is due to commence.

- applications for holidays in term time will not be authorised unless the exceptional circumstance has warranted the granting of leave requests for any leave of absence during exam times will not be authorised.

**Important Note**
It will be at the school's discretion whether to accept a reason for absence as exceptional. Proof of reason will be requested.

If an absence is not agreed by the school and you subsequently take your child out of school for the requested period, the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Please see 6: Unauthorised Absences and 7: Fixed Penalty Notices.

# 9    ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## 9.1    Class Teacher

Class teachers will:

- identify, within each lesson, any students who should be present in the lesson but are not and report the absence to the Main School Office;
- ensure that every lesson registration is completed on SIMS within the first 15 minutes of each lesson;
- ensure that afternoon session registration is completed within 15 minutes of Period 4;
- monitor carefully the attendance of individuals within a class and alert the Head of Department and Head of Year where patterns of non-attendance are detected;
- when a pupil is known to have truanted from your lesson, follow this up by making sure they have caught up the missed work in detention time;
- ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long term absentees and when requested for those on exclusion;
- ensure that those pupils who return from a long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access the learning within the lesson;
- welcome back students from long-term absence in a professional manner, avoiding reference to the absence in front of other pupils; and

- actively discourage any adverse comments about the absence from other pupils in the class.

**9.2    Form Tutor**

Form Tutors will:

- ensure that registration is accurately completed on time and maintained;
- chase up absence notes from returning pupils and inform the Attendance Officer if no note is returned after reminders;
- collect and scrutinise absence notes and inform the Attendance Officer if professional judgement suggests any are forged. Tackle any instances of inappropriate absence initially with the pupil and inform Attendance Officer as appropriate;
- absence notes, leave request application forms, notes regarding late arrival or to leave school early to be forwarded to Attendance Officer promptly;
- encourage good attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets and through encouraging pupils to want to be the best attending form in the year/school;
- monitor attendance within the form and use short-term attendance reports and targets where there is any deterioration;
- liaise with the Attendance Officer as early as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual pupils, groups within the form or the whole form.
- mentor pupils where attendance is 95% - 94%.

**9.3    Pastoral Manager**

Pastoral Managers will:

- liaise with the Attendance Officer and Head of Year to ensure pupils with poor attendance are receiving appropriate levels of support as necessary;
- take appropriate steps to support pupils to reverse the trend of absence;
- work with the Attendance Officer to identify ways in which long-term absentees can be reintegrated effectively;
- liaise with parents on matters relating to their child's attendance;
- keep the Attendance Officer and Head of Year informed of issues that could affect attendance in their Year;
- keep in contact with long-term absentees and liaise with the Head of Year to ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying 'catch up' needs;
- implement appropriate action where there have been of instances of truancy, whether from individual lessons or whole days and report to Director of Student Support;
- Attendance Improvement Monitoring – Group 2 (Amber) - to meet with parents and the pupil with Attendance Officer to discuss any issues that could be affecting school

attendance, offer advice and implement suitable measures/strategies to improve school attendance or punctuality;

- Accompany the Attendance Officer on home visits when required and available.

### 9.4 Head of Year

Head of Year will:

- monitor carefully the attendance of pupils within their Year Group, taking note of any patterns amongst pupils from particular groups, particular times of the week;
- take appropriate steps to support pupils to reverse the trend of absence;
- liaise with the Attendance Officer to ensure pupils with poor attendance are receiving appropriate levels of support as necessary;
- monitor the attendance rates of forms within their year, taking action alongside Form Tutors where particular forms are identified as having poor attendance;
- monitor/mentor pupils who have been identified as those with deteriorating levels of attendance, using monitoring cards, short term targets and other strategies to improve attendance;
- foster a positive attitude to school attendance within their Year Group through assemblies, notice boards and constant reinforcement with pupils;
- encourage a spirit of healthy competition between forms and individuals and issue rewards as appropriate;
- regularly monitor the punctuality of pupils within their Year Group and implement the appropriate sanctions eg. late detentions held at lunchtime;
- work with the pastoral team to identify ways in which long-term absentees can be reintegrated effectively;
- liaise with parents on matters relating to their child's attendance, including servicing the Governors' Attendance Panel for pupils at risk of being poor attendees, including follow-up review meetings;
- keep Form Tutors informed of any action in relation to particular pupils;
- inform the Attendance Officer and HOLS/HOUS of issues relating to attendance in their Year Groups.

### 9.5 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- administer the SIMS.net registration system, noting where registers have not been completed or have not been completed accurately and taking appropriate action;

- ensure that the school's official registers are in line with legal requirements and that any anomalies are reported to the Director of Student Support;
- operate the Teachers to Parents system to notify parents by text message of absent pupils;
- provide weekly/monthly/termly data on attendance for the Head of Year, Director of Student Support, Headteacher and Governors;
- provide administration of – letters to parents, agencies etc;
- provide the Pupil Data Officer with any information obtained relating to pupil data, keeping the school roll up-to-date, adding or removing pupils as required;
- use attendance data to identify pupils for support and close monitoring with the Head of Year/Director of Student Support;
- investigate instances of suspected truancy and report, making parental contact, home visits as necessary;
- work closely with parents of targeted students to provide support and pressure to get pupils to return to school;
- contact parents where absences have remained unexplained despite previous intervention;
- liaise with the Head of Year/SENCO/Director of Student Support and use attendance data to identify pupils requiring intervention;
- work with targeted pupils to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short-term targets and rewards;
- prepare cases with the Director of Student Support for referral through, where court action is required. Liaise with the Court Officer to initiate proceedings and follow protocol;
- prepare requests for Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences, including unauthorised holidays.  Inform parents of proceedings and liaise with Court Officer to process any further action if required:
- work with the Head of Year/Pastoral Manager to involve outside agencies with individuals and groups of pupils;
- investigate and implement agreed strategies to encourage improved attendance;
- implement Parenting Contracts when necessary and Review when required;
- assist the Local Authority by providing data for persistent absence and attendance;
- carry out home visits as and when required;
- make arrangements to ensure that parents who wish to take their child out of school during term time are contacted and the potential consequences explained;
- co-ordinate Governors' Attendance Panels as and when required.

### 9.6    The Director of Student Support (Attendance)

The Director of Student Support, as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) lead for attendance will:

- take overall responsibility for developing the Attendance Policy within the school;
- provide line management for the Attendance Officer and ensure there is good communication with Governors on issues relating to attendance;

- oversee, monitor and evaluate the Attendance Improvement Monitoring Project (AIM);
- using attendance data, analyse this for patterns of poor attendance amongst particular year groups or groups of pupils and take action to address any anomalies;
- oversee the efficient running of the SIMS.net registration process and Teachers to Parents text messaging service;
- take a lead in promoting the need for good attendance through assemblies and work with staff and pupils to build a strong ethos;
- decide upon any new admissions and any initial action required to encourage good attendance, including attendance contracts if necessary;
- co-ordinate and chair meetings of the Governors' Attendance Panel, following up on any pupils for review with the Head of Year/Attendance Officer;
- together with the rest of SLT, actively discourage parents from taking students out of school during term time;
- supervise the Pastoral and SEN Team to ensure issues around the child are dealt with effectively so as not to affect school attendance.

### 9.7    Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers will:
- encourage children to attend school regularly;
- encourage children to attend school on time;
- notify the school on the first day of any absence;
- confirm all absences in writing on the child's return to school from any absence;
- notify the school of any expected future absence;
- notify the school, in writing of any medical appointment which has caused the child to arrive late;
- provide any request, in writing, for a child to leave school early stating the reason, the time of departure and whether the child will be collected by parent/carer or other arrangements;
- attend any meetings as requested if child's attendance is cause for concern.

Whilst any absence during term time is discouraged, parents/carers will:
- complete the correct Leave of Absence Form no later than 10 school days before an absence is due to commence and including any supporting documentation with the application;

**Please Note**

- Requests for any leave of absence during exam times will NOT be authorised;
- Applications for any leave of absence during term time will NOT be authorised unless due to exceptional circumstance which the school has approved in advance
- As a parent/carer you do not have an entitlement to take your child out of school during term time;
- If an absence is not agreed by the school, and you subsequently take your child out of school for the requested period, please be aware that you may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. For 2018/19 this fine is £120 per parent per pupil (£60 if paid within 21 days).

**9.8    Pupils**

Pupils will:

- attend regularly;
- attend on time;
- bring a note of explanation, from parents, on the day of return after any period of absence;
- report to the Main School Office when arriving at anytime other than at Registration Period (Morning Registration period opens at 8:45am and closes at 9:05am. Afternoon Registration period opens at 12.25 and closes at 12.40pm;
- report to the Main Office, with completed Exit Slip from Form Tutor, when leaving at any time during the school day;
- work towards his/her individual attendance target.

# 10    ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT MONITORING (AIM)

## 10.1  Attendance Indicators

Pupils will be divided into 3 identified 'groups' each half term based on their percentage attendance to date.

- GROUP 1:  RED              Attendance below 93.9%
- GROUP 2:  AMBER                Attendance of between 94 – 96%
- GROUP 3:  GREEN                Attendance of 97% and above

## 10.2  Strategies For Red Groups

This group contains those pupils who are a persistent absence (PA) pupil and those who are at risk of becoming PA.

A variety of the following could be employed:
- attendance warning letter to the parents/carers, with monitoring improvement period outlined;
- personal phone calls in addition to the Teachers to Parents text system by the Attendance Officer;
- the pupil to be met by the Attendance Officer, Head of Year or Director of Student Support and short-term targets set/attendance report implemented;
- a formal requirement for parents/carers (and the pupil) to attend a meeting consisting of the Director of Student Support / Head of Year and Attendance Officer,  and
- if there is no improvement, a further requirement to attend meeting of the Attendance Panel and/or a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice could be made.

### 10.3 Strategies For Amber Groups

This group contains those pupils who are at risk of becoming a persistent absence (PA) pupil. The aim is prevention, with support being the key.

- the Head of Year to meet with the Attendance Officer to scrutinise data to assess possible patterns/reasons for absence;
- the Pastoral Manager and the Attendance Officer to meet with parents and the pupil to discuss any issues that could be affecting school attendance, offer advice and implement suitable measures/strategies to improve school attendance or punctuality;
- Attendance Officer to monitor attendance carefully;
- a telephone call in addition to the Teachers to Parents text; and
- rewarding pupils who exceed their targets.

### 10.4 Strategies For Green Groups

This group contains pupils who have been identified by Attendance Officer and Head of Year, who would initiate some or all of the following:

- set individual targets and rewards as necessary;
- make contact with parents/carers, if appropriate;
- encourage pupils to exceed their half term targets; and/or
- give suitable rewards.

The aim is for numbers in the Red and Amber groups to decrease. There clearly will be movement between groups as individual attendance deteriorates or improves.

## 11 REWARDS

### 11.1 Half Term Attendance Rewards
- Any pupil who achieves 100% attendance over a half term period will receive a sticker for their Homework Diary. All other pupils should enter their attendance percentage to promote awareness and encourage improvement during the following half term;
- Every half term, the highest attending Form Group is rewarded in Assembly.

### 11.2 Full Term Attendance Rewards
- Any pupil who achieves top 5 Most Improved in each year group will receive an award from the Attendance Officer.

### 11.3 End of Year Rewards
- By the end of each academic year, any pupil with 100% attendance will receive a Certificate and reward from Attendance Officer in Final Assembly.

**11.4 Presentation Evening Awards**

- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance during Year 11 will receive a certificate presented at the annual Key Stage 4 Presentation Evening;
- Pupils who achieve 100% in all 5 years at Up Holland High School will receive a Certificate and significant reward at the Key Stage 4 Celebration Evening.