



Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPROVED BY: Governing Body

DATE: Sept 2018

LAST REVIEWED ON: Sept 2014

NEXT REVIEW DUE BY:

REVISION HISTORY

DATE OF REVIEW:	CHANGES MADE:
Sept 24	In line with Working Together To Improve School Attendance, Aug 24

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Introduction

This is a successful college and your child plays their part in making it so. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important.

Any absence (including lateness) 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 your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

Contact you on the first day and subsequent days your child is absent if we have not heard from you.

Share important information on attendance through a variety of communication channels, such as our newsletter

Provide you with termly reports on how your child is performing in school which includes their attendance and punctuality and how this relates to their attainment

Celebrate good attendance by praising individual and class achievements

Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and other events

Organise opportunities when parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school

Regularly share the importance of good attendance through assemblies.

Understanding types of absence

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time and emergencies.

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 the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained

- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all student 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. Many of our PA students and their parents/carers are subject to an attendance support plan and this may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor or a Connexions worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedure

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- If you do not contact us, please respond as soon as possible to our first day absence text.
- If your child is absent for 3 or more days, you will be required to provide medical evidence.

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write or telephone you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with your child's Associate Head of Year/Head of Year or If absences persist this may be with our Attendance Improvement Officer.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern;
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This could be by a Police Officer.

NB Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we do not, then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents/carers are expected to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful but if difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, or the fall in attendance is sudden, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 4545510. They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they will 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 which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked at **8.45am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. If your child receives a late mark, they will automatically be given a breaktime detention the same day. You will be informed of this via text message.

If they do not attend the detention, they will enter the whole school detention system and will need to complete a 30-minute detention the same day at 3pm. You will also be notified of this via text.

At **9.30am** 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 Associate Head of Year/Head of Year to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Government legislation from September 2013 means that we no longer grant holidays for any year group. Leave of absence may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents.

Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers must be safely stored.

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.

Date of Policy Review
September 2025