

## Attendance Policy

At Graham School we are unwavering in our drive to continue to improve the attendance of students in order to ensure that every child has the ability to achieve success. We expect the highest level of attendance from students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school.

It is our aim to promote and maintain a culture where excellent, attendance and punctuality is recognised and rewarded. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with Graham School—students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies will do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

### **Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers**

At Graham School excellent attendance and punctuality is our aim for every student. Full attendance maximises learning opportunities and parents/carers have a vital role in promoting good attitudes in attendance. Evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. We ask for support from parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their children are present at every opportunity
- Ensure that their children arrive on time
- Avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily
- Avoid taking them out of school without authorisation.

We monitor attendance closely and will follow up unexplained absence with parents/carers, by telephone or by letter. The Department for Education's threshold at which a student is defined as 'persistently absent' is 90%. Where an attendance record reaches a concerning level, we will contact parents/carers to discuss ways in which the school can support you and your child.

The school attendance target of 96% is the minimum that we expect for all students. Every lesson counts and it is this commitment to learning that will have a positive impact on attainment and progress and as a result every student should strive to achieve 100% attendance. As 100% is our focus this is where we will target our rewards.

### **Reporting Absence**

#### **What to do if your child is ill:**

It is very rare that an illness is so severe that a child needs to be absent from school and we would encourage you to send your child to school whenever possible. However, if your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers should contact the Attendance office as soon as possible.

Telephone on 01723 366451. The telephone system allows callers to leave a message 24 hours a day.

Please give your child's name, Year Group and the reason for the absence, **you must contact school each day that your child is absent**. On your child's return following an absence, we request that parents/carers write a brief note explaining the absence which can be handed to the Attendance Office or your child's form tutor.

### **What to do if your child has an appointment:**

To support positive attendance at school can we request that medical appointments where possible are made out of school hours. When this is unavoidable please ensure your son/daughter returns to school as soon as possible. To allow the attendance to be authorised and coded as medical, proof of the appointment is required.

### **Automated calls/messages to parents/carers:**

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the Attendance Office has received no reason for absence and a student is absent from Form time (8.40 – 9.10) automated calls are made daily to the contact numbers of parents/carers. Calls are made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume that your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending school on time and getting their attendance mark. Parents/carers can also help by ensuring that we hold up to date contact details.

### **Punctuality**

All students are expected to arrive to school on time and be ready and punctual to lessons. This is a minimum expectation. Students should arrive for 8.30am. Students are expected to be in form time by 8.40am ready to start learning. Students who arrive after 8.40am are considered to be late to school and will be placed in a school detention. We would ask that you ensure that your child arrives to school on time.

### **Leave of absence**

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, etc. which may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If parents/carers wish their child(ren) to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family events, or to participate in sporting or musical competitions application should be made in writing in advance.

### **Elective Home Education**

Parents/carers wishing to home school are required to notify the college in writing of their intention to educate at home. The school has a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority (by completing an EHE3 form).

The Local Authority policy on Elective Home Education can also be viewed on the NYCC website, but should you require support in viewing this please contact school.

### **Student registration requirements**

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

**Present** – the student is on the premises at the time of registration.

**Approved Educational Activity** – the student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised Absence** – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.

**Unauthorised Absence** – an absence where the student does not have good cause to be missing from school.

The school will aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a student's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems. If necessary, the Educational Social Worker will be involved in more complex cases.

## Attendance Procedures

### Registration

- Registers must be taken promptly at the start (within the first 5 minutes) of each lesson and during form time. Staff must contact the Attendance Team as soon as possible if there are any concerns about absentees.
- Anyone taking students out of school for any reason must supply the Attendance team with a list of names and email the list to the appropriate staff.
- Staff must inform colleagues/attendance team of any students taking part in events in school that require students to be off timetable.

### First Day Contact

- Attendance team will organise first day contact, even when the reasons for absence are known. This will involve telephoning/texting/emailing all parents/carers when contact hasn't been made.
- There will be occasions when school staff visit homes when we have concerns about persistent or sporadic absence.

### Outstanding Absences

- Any outstanding or unexplained absence will be followed up by the Attendance team via contact with parents/carers/tutors.
- Until contact is made the absence will remain unauthorised.

### Exit/Entry to School during the Day

- Students who need to leave during the school day must bring a letter from home and/or an appointment card. Students should bring the note from home to the Attendance team.
- Students must sign out and sign back in at the Attendance Office on their return.
- We would encourage all appointments to be made after 3.10pm, so as not to impact on your child's learning.

### **Late arrivals**

Students who arrive after 8.40am are considered to be late to school and will be placed in a school punctuality detention. They will be expected to sign in at the Attendance Office after 8.40am. All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on site at any time

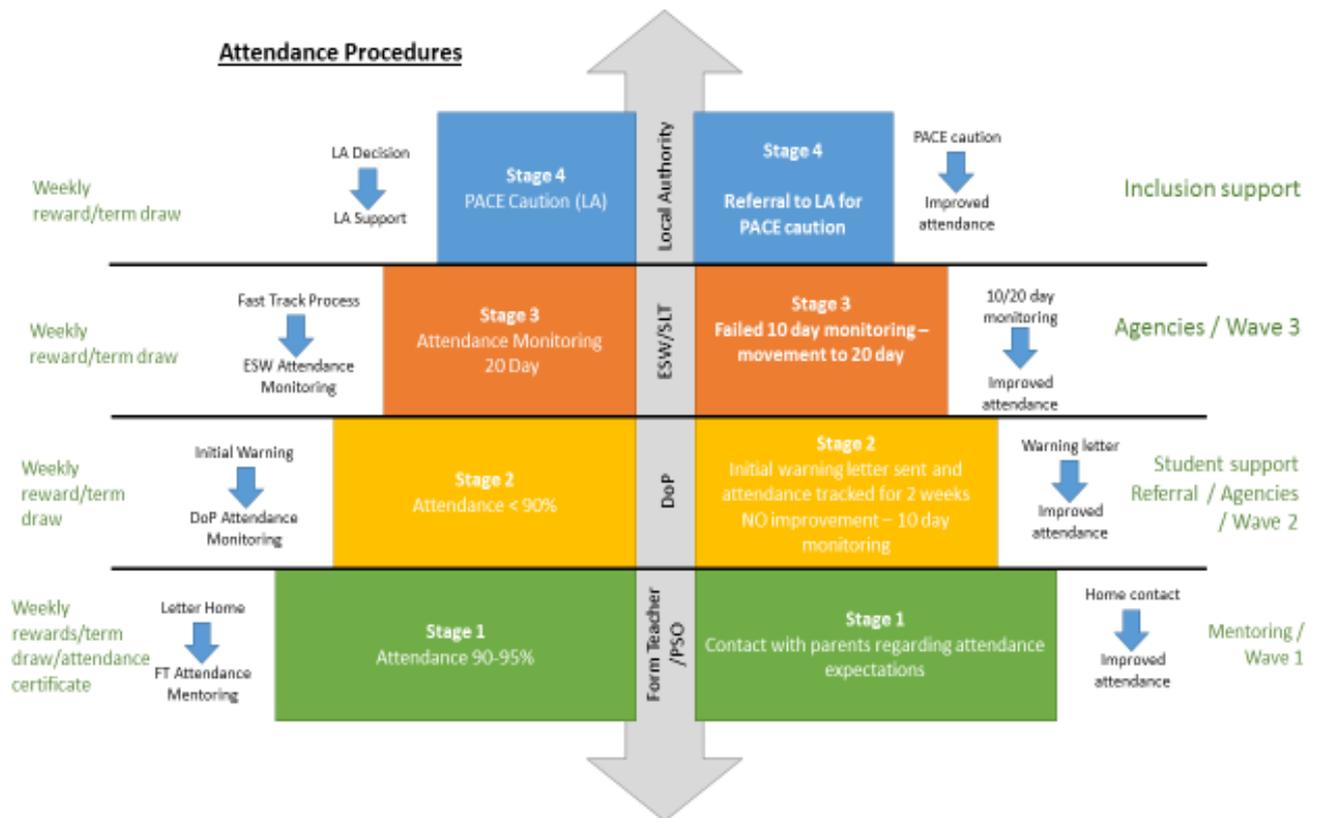
### **Attendance Concerns**

The Attendance team will meet fortnightly to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns. During this meeting the attendance of all students will be tracked and the school's Attendance protocol will be followed to ensure consistency across the whole school. The protocol has been developed around early intervention and constant communication with parents in order to maximise and maintain good attendance.

- **Medical Concerns and appointments** – we would ask that if there are concerns of a medical nature that would impact on the attendance of your child that parents/carers make us aware of them as soon as possible. We would encourage medical appointments to be made out of school hours at all times, but if this is not possible would encourage parents/carers to send their child to school both before and after their appointment.
- **Long term absence** – students who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which students may need time to overcome. For some students this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by the appropriate member of staff and may include the use of, a partial timetable, pastoral support and timetable changes. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed of the re-integration plan.
- **Leave of Absence Requests and Holiday Absence** –From September 2013, government guidance states that **no absence should be authorised** in advance except as a result of 'exceptional circumstances'. Bereavement and life threatening illness are considered to be exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence forms can be downloaded from the school website or obtained from the school office. Where a parental request has been refused, and parents/carers continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school responds to all holiday requests with a letter to inform parents/carers of the school's decision. Please note that unauthorised absence can result in Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

## Rewards and Incentives

Outstanding attendance is acknowledged and rewarded throughout the year in a variety of ways. Details of the ways in which we will reward attendance are outlined in the Attendance Rewards Protocol. Attendance is monitored weekly and students achieving above year group targets are recognised. We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people.



## Roles and responsibilities

### Parents/Carers

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time
- Contact school on each day of absence
- Provide a note explaining absence on return to school
- Not take holidays in term time
- Respond to queries relating to absence promptly
- Keep school updated with any change of address or contact numbers
- Arrange appointments outside of school hours

### Tutors

- Mark registers accurately with names called by the tutor
- Ensure information regarding absence is received and passed to attendance office
- Monitor attendance of the tutor group raising any concerns with the DOP
- Be aware of personal circumstances which affect student's absence
- Mentor students during form time who are experiencing attendance concerns

### DOP

- Monitor accurate and effective completion of registers
- Liaise with tutors regarding attendance
- Liaise with ESW/Assistant Headteacher to identify students causing concern
- Establish personal contact links with poor attendees in order to support families
- Use assemblies to emphasise the link between attendance and attainment
- Promote positive attendance

### Subject teachers

- Complete register every lesson in order for attendance to monitor absentees
- Mark the register accurately by calling names
- Support students on their return to school following periods of absence
- Provide the work missed for students who have missed lessons
- Highlight students causing an attendance concern with heads of faculty/curriculum

### Head of faculty/curriculum

- Ensure department set catch up work for missed lessons
- Inform DOP of any patterns of absence

### Assistant Head

- Ensure full implementation of this policy
- Monitor schools progress in meeting school target
- Follow up missed registers and inaccuracies with members of staff advised by attendance team
- Raise profile of attendance within the school
- Report to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body on matters of attendance
- Meet regularly with ESW and DOP's

### Headteacher

- Have overall responsibility for this policy
- Receive regular reports
- Act as a signatory for legal proceedings

### Governors

- Monitor the implementation of the attendance policy
- Ensure attendance is an integral part of school's action plan
- Receive regular reports

ESW (Education Social Worker)

- Implement fully the school's attendance policy
- Support the Assistant Headteacher in developing and administering the policy
- Provide attendance data and reports
- Monitor registers with support of SLT
- Liaise with external agencies
- Act as Liaison between school and home
- Write reports for attendance monitoring and maintains records on attendance concerns
- Prepare evidence for court actions

Policy adopted: September 2017

Reviewed:

Next review date: July 2019