



Sandbach High School

and Sixth Form College

Our Academy, Our Future

Attendance Policy

The Importance of Regular Attendance

We have always been proud of the close, cooperative relationship which exists between school and home over the matter of attendance. Clearly, both parents and teachers want students to attend lessons regularly and only to be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary. The students themselves also find that they get more out of their years of education if they are good attenders.

- 17 days missed from school each year equates to a whole GCSE grade
- Attendance affects learning, future earnings, wellbeing and a personal sense of belonging

What we promise to do to help girls achieve good attendance:

- We will take form registers at the start of every morning.
- Teachers will take an electronic register during each lesson and note any absentees.
- We will contact parents/carers if we have any cause for concern over attendance.
- We will undertake home visits to support parents/carers in making sure their child attends school
- We will contact parents/carers on the first day of any unexplained absence.
- We will give you regular reports about your child's attendance, and about the attendance levels of the school as a whole.
- We will respond sensitively to absence if it is caused by short-term family difficulties.
- We will work closely with the Education Welfare Service, particularly if difficulties with attendance seem to be more than just temporary.
- We will notify you by letter of our concerns should your child's attendance fall below an acceptable level in any school year. This would normally be below 95%.
- We will positively and publicly reward full attendance for one, two or three terms in any school year by awarding a Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate of Attendance to the student concerned. A lapel badge is presented to those achieving a Gold Award.

What we ask you to do:

Please let the school know on the **first day of absence** if your child is going to miss school. A note to the form teacher or a phone call to the school office is sufficient. A note is required if the absence is for more than 2 days.

Please try to make any medical and dental appointments, as far as possible, for holidays or after school.

Categories of Absence

Absence is either authorised or unauthorised. In basic terms, an *authorised absence* is one which the school is allowed by the DfE to give permission for. All other absences will count as *unauthorised absence*. The more common word for this is *truancy*. Below are a list of absences

which can be authorised, and another list of absences which have to go on your child's record as unauthorised.

After consideration of individual circumstances, the following types of absence from school can count as **authorised**:

- Illness
- Dental or medical appointments
- Interviews
- Work experience
- Approved public performances (including elite sporting activities)
- Approved educational visits organised by individual students (Visits organised by the school count as attendance in the normal manner)
- Approved study leave
- Exclusion from school
- Off-site education (e.g. certain students with special needs)
- Family bereavements
- Holidays (only in exceptional circumstances, please see below)
- Days of required religious observance

The following types of absence have to count as **truancies (unauthorised absence) from school**:

- Absences for which we receive no explanation
- Shopping during school hours
- Minding the house/looking after younger brothers or sisters
- Private visits to concerts and similar events, including travel time to and recovery time after the visit
- Holiday leave
- Absence from work experience without good reason
- Lateness to school after the register has been closed

**PLEASE NOTE: THE GOVERNMENT NOW CATEGORISES STUDENTS
THOSE WHOSE ATTENDANCE FALL BELOW 90% AS
“PERSISTENT ABSENTEES”**

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important and we are often asked to comment on this when writing references for employment and further education courses. We find when students arrive promptly they are able to have a calm and settled start to their day.

We will record the names of students who arrive after the 8.30 am bell and those who are late on three or more occasions in a half term will receive an after school detention.

If students are late for reasons such as medical/dental appointments they will be marked with an 'L' code, which is counted as late but present, with a comment noted. This will allow students to maintain their 100% attendance record.

Holidays

Amendments to the 2006 regulations make it clear that Headteachers may **not** grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This includes holidays. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The following question and response have been taken from the DfE's FAQ section and may help with further understanding regarding the amendments.

If you do need to request term time exceptional absence from 1 September 2013 you will need to write to the Headteacher at least 14 days before the absence/holiday explaining the reasons. Each request will be considered carefully on an individual basis.

What about holidays in term time?

Each request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances, such as the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling and the proximity of key dates for tests and examinations. While leave of absence might be granted for a term time holiday, it is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

If we do not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take their daughter on holiday, the absence is unauthorised and will be recorded with a 'G' code.

Children in Entertainment

Students are encouraged in their extra-curricular activities and when involved in performances where the public is charged to have access e.g. Pantomimes with professional companies an entertainment licence will be necessary.

To obtain a licence, an application must be made by the producer or organiser of the event to the Education Welfare Service from whom further details can be obtained.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

A FPN may be issued in cases of unauthorised absence and may be considered appropriate in any of the following circumstances.

- In cases of overt truancy
- In cases of parentally condoned absence where this can be demonstrated
- In instances of unauthorised holidays in term time
- In cases of persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed

Further details can be obtained from the Educational Welfare Office on 01270 375277 or on the Cheshire East website.

In Conclusion

We hope that this information will be useful to you and that students, parents and the school can work together to bring student's attendance as near to 100% as possible. If you would like to ask about anything in the leaflet, please feel free to contact your daughter's Form Teacher, Achievement Coordinator or Miss R Darlington, Deputy Headteacher.

The school telephone number is **01270 765031**.