



# Peacehaven Community School

NO ORDINARY SCHOOL

## Peacehaven Community School

### Attendance Policy and Targets

This policy has been read and adopted by the Governing Body on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

For and on behalf of the Governing Body

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Austen Hindman

Headteacher

Date of Policy: October 2016

Review Date: October 2017

Website: YES

## **Aim**

To raise the level of achievement by ensuring the highest possible level of attendance at school.

## **Introduction**

The school will strive to provide a welcome, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

This policy reflects the aims of Peacehaven Community School by encouraging students to maximise their learning experience in order that all students reach their full potential. This is achieved by providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers, students and other relevant agencies relating to attendance.

## **The Law**

The 1996 Education Act states that it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children receive an education and, if registered at a school, that school attendance is regular and punctual.

## **Policy Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Safeguard our students by ensuring that they are in school, or their whereabouts is known and authorised.
- To improve the overall attendance rate of our students.
- Create a culture whereby good attendance and punctuality are valued and promoted by parents/carers, teachers and students.
- To support those students whose non-attendance is for serious illness.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to Parents and Pupils by developing positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.

We expect all Students to come to school every day. Evidence shows that the biggest threat to progress is poor attendance.

Students who attend school consistently are more likely to achieve their potential, have fulfilling and stable friendships and, therefore, feel happy and secure. Similarly, student-teacher relationships benefit from continuity and learning is more effective when students can build on, and follow, an incremental curriculum as planned and delivered by their teachers.

## **Understanding the types of absence**

**Authorised Absence:** These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (where medical evidence is provided) or another unavoidable cause. An authorised absence requires communication from the parent/carer. This is accepted verbally by telephone or via email to [office@phcs.org.uk](mailto:office@phcs.org.uk). For the attention of the Attendance Officer

**Unauthorised Absence:** These may include parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or a holiday; truancy during the school day; absences which have never been fully explained. Children who arrive to school late, after the register has closed also get an unauthorised mark.

**Medical appointments:** We ask that all medical/dental appointments are made outside of school time if possible. We do realise that sometimes this is beyond parents/carers control. We ask that a copy of the appointment card/letter is handed into the main office.

**Half Day Absences:** This is where a student misses a morning or afternoon session away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable.

**Low Attendance:** Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved, the school may refer the child to Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Service (SBAS). SBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this service can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision order on the child. The maximum penalty is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## **Responsibilities**

The school operates an electronic registration system including Lesson Monitor and SIMS in Touch. Absences are coded according to DFE and CSA policies. Teachers must take the register accurately or risk disciplinary action. We work alongside, and in constant communication with SBAS and we are required to send attendance statistics to DFE and CSA every term. All staff through their own behaviour, must promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality.

The school has an Attendance Officer to monitor and track attendance who works closely with the Senior Leadership Team to improve attendance.

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. The school expects that all parents communicate with the school giving a reason in advance of any planned absence.

## **Punctuality**

Punctuality is vital, if your child misses the start of the day they may miss important notices and disrupt learning when they do arrive. The school day starts at 8.40 and the morning register is taken at 8.50 and the afternoon register is taken at 13.00. If your child arrives after the register is closed they will receive a late mark.

If students are late into school in the morning they will have to sign in on a late list register and will be given a 30 minute after school detention on the same day. Persistent lateness will result in your child being required to attend Saturday school or an equivalent alternative.

## **Withdrawal from Learning Application**

**Government legislation no longer allows head teachers to authorise requests for leave for children to be taken out of school unless there are considered to be exceptional circumstances.**

In determining whether or not a withdrawal in such circumstances can be authorised it is for the head teacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Time away from school will have a direct and negative impact on your child's educational progress.

If you withdraw your child from learning during term time (unauthorised or authorised), we are unable to allow the student to participate in residential trips within the following 12 months.

In order to request authorisation of an absence, you must complete a Withdrawal from Learning Application form, which can be downloaded from the school website. This form must be submitted 14 days before the proposed date of absence. Should the school not agree the absence and you proceed with the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidelines.

If you book your child out of school for an absence and subsequently your child is off sick before the absence is due to start or has extra days off after the absence is due to finish, we will ask you for a copy of the holiday booking or a Doctors certificate, to confirm either your absence dates or your child's sickness. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the School referring you to the Local Authority for a penalty notice.

**In the case of an unauthorised absence the Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.**

### **Attendance Procedure**

We work to achieve and maintain good attendance rates and therefore our response to absence needs to be consistent, swift and effective. The school applies the following procedure in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

A parent should contact the school daily with a reason for their child's absence on 01273 575832 or via Studybugs. Truancy alerts are texted to parents if their child is not in school and no contact has been made by their parents. These are followed up by a letter requesting a reason for the absence. If no reason is provided then the absence will remain as unauthorised.

### **Promoting Good Attendance**

Your child's attendance is rated as:

**Excellent:** 98 -100%. **Good:** 92-98% **Satisfactory** 90-92%. **Cause for Concern** 85%-89%. **Serious Concern** 85% and under.

The Attendance Team will:

Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality and recognise the efforts of individuals with difficulties.

- Provide the opportunity for students to take responsibility to monitor their own attendance.
- Provide opportunities for communication with students and parents and for enhancing home school links.
- Provide information for students and parents about the level of attendance, or degrees of improvement expected.

The schools attendance target is 95% and we have the following systems to meet this. The school rewards students for good attendance in the following ways:

- Students will receive termly certificates in year assembly for 100% attendance or improved attendance.
- Students with attendance of 100% in a term will receive contact home and an achievement point.
- Attendance certificates are included in the school reward system.
- Percentage Attendance Information is included on each Academic report (four times a year)
- Attendance is promoted in mentoring every term with each student assessing and monitoring their own attendance.
- Tutor group attendance is displayed on the school attendance board. The tutor groups with the highest attendance percentage and the most improved tutor group will be able to choose a prize from the mentor reward store.
- There are 3 rewards for high attendance and improved attendance. For each reward, students will be able to choose a prize from the Reward Store.
- Bronze rewards will be given for students improving their attendance by 10% in a long term.
- Silver rewards will be given to 5 students from each year group yrs 7-10 with 100% attendance. These will be awarded every long term.
- Gold rewards will be given to 1 student from each year group yrs 8-10 with 20% improved attendance in an academic year and 1 student from each year group in yrs 7-10 with 100% attendance in an academic year.
- Any year 11 student that has 100% attendance at the end of May will receive a discount on their prom ticket, contact home and a 100% attendance certificate.
- The school will regularly look at other ways to reward students for excellent attendance.

### **Summary**

Parents/carers are legally obliged to ensure the attendance of their children in full time education up until the last Friday in June in the academic year of their sixteenth birthday. If a parent/carer has concerns over issues that might affect their child's attendance they should contact the Attendance Officer.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.