



Pendle Community High School & College

Whole School Policy for Attendance – January 2021

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to set out Pendle Community High School & College's policy and procedure on attendance.

At Pendle Community High School & College we believe that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning and progress. We will encourage excellent attendance for all our students, by offering a broad, balanced, relevant, stimulating and personalised curriculum, within a supportive and caring environment. Through this provision we strive for all our students to lead a happy and fulfilled life, which maximises all future opportunities.

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school – as detailed in this policy.

Current COVID 19 circumstances influence attendance expectations and Government are updating guidance as the need arises. PCHSC will follow Statutory Guidance.

Aims:

At Pendle Community High School and College we will:-

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school; including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets.

Attendance Mission Statement

At Pendle Community High School and College we will:

- Ensure that all of its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each individual to realise his/her true potential.
- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each individual feels a sense of purpose, belonging, value, achievement and security.
- Continually engage with students and their families to ensure each student attends school & college regularly and punctually.



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- Establish an effective, efficient communication system to provide guidance, advice and support to students and parents/ carers in relation to all attendance related matters.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities:

At Pendle Community High School and College we have a procedural framework which includes specific guidance in relation to supporting regular and punctual attendance. The procedural framework defines agreed roles and responsibilities for:-

- Parents and Carers
- Students
- School Staff
- Governors

This procedural framework also includes guidance on:-

- Registration
- Punctuality
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for students
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Early Intervention Team
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and action planning
- Appropriate alternative curricular arrangements
- Holidays in Term Time / Extended Leave

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. In PCHS & C the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers) are the people authorised by the governing body to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings

Pendle Community High School and College actively discourages the taking of any holidays in term time. Any parents/ carers who wish to take leave of absence during term time (other than those related to specialist respite care), must formally request permission in writing from the Headteacher (via the request form obtained from the School Office). For '*exceptional reasons*' only



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(e.g. a family bereavement), absence may be approved during term time of up to ten school days in any school year. Generally, up to 5 days unauthorised absence per academic year would not trigger a fine. However, 6 or more days would, unless exceptional circumstances e.g. going abroad for specialist medical treatment not available in this country.

Pendle Community High School and College will authorise one day's leave per religious festival e.g. EID, but no more than 3 days in one academic year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/ carers must request this leave of absence in advance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Use of Penalty Notices

Pendle Community High School and College will (unless there are exceptional circumstances) request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes Leave of Absence which are taken without a prior request being made and those taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised by the holiday being taken regardless of this advice. Generally, up to 5 days unauthorised absence would not trigger a fine. However, 6 or more days would, unless exceptional circumstances e.g. going abroad for specialist medical treatment not available in this country. Pendle Community High School and College will also request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave without good reason, (once again unless exceptional circumstances are evident).

Persistent Absence

The minimum attendance level which is expected by all students nationally is 95%. If an attendance falls below this level the school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support in order to improve the situation or to make an allowance for exceptional circumstances i.e. ill health or particular special needs applicable to the named student.

Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of students who fall into the absence category (PA). A student becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 80% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level children miss significant amounts of schooling and their education progress may be put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. The school recognises that a percentage of pupils have a higher absence level due to complex medical conditions and consequently will not be referred. However, if for any other reason a child's attendance does fall into this category, parents will be asked to do what they can to improve the situation.

Families will be supported to improve the attendance of their child by the school's senior leadership team and direct support from the Family Liaison officer or if appropriate school nurse. The support may involve the need for parents, and children of an appropriate age, to agree to a parenting contract. Due to the seriousness of PA status it is highly likely that such cases will be referred to a local government attendance officer in the Early Intervention Team. All absence (including persistent absenteeism) is reported to LCC through the termly 'census'.



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Truancy

Truancy is being absent for any part of the day without permission or authorised reason. In addition to regular attendance, Pendle Community High School and College staff are concerned about each student's safety, welfare and happiness. Therefore, in the unlikely event that there is a concern that a young person might be truanting, parents/ carers will be contacted immediately by phone. Parents/ carers are then actively encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Deputy Headteacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the Form/ College Tutor and appropriate action is taken. If this support does not improve the truancy with immediate effect, clear bespoke plans will be negotiated and agreed between the student, parent/carer and Deputy Headteacher/ Headteacher. A pupil's truancy may come to light through a Truancy Sweep, which is a joint operation undertaken by the Police and Lancashire County Council.

Children Missing from Education

A child missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect. The following guidance is therefore adopted by PCHS&C – based directly from Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016.

PCHS&C will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, class based staff will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

If pupils have missed ten school days or more without permission, and/or pupils' have ongoing significant poor attendance, PCHS&C will inform Lancashire County Council.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or remains absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days (with no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause), PCHS&C can remove the pupil from the admission register. This will only take place once the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Partnership Working

Pendle Community High School and College will work with the Early Intervention Team, and other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

Monitoring, Analysis , Action Planning:

Pendle Community High School and College use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school



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attendance matters. In addition to the follow up of absences on a daily basis, attendance is monitored weekly by the Deputy Headteacher or Family liaison officer and issues are discussed and actions planned as part of the safeguarding supervision group.

Review of the Whole School Attendance Policy:

Pendle Community High School and College and Governors will review this policy annually.

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the document forms part of PCHS & C's Whole School Attendance Policy. It sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for parents/ carers; students, school staff and Governors, and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

PCHS & C believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. Commitment to our successful partnership is dependent on an effective, efficient system of communication; realistic expectations, mutual respect; trust and cooperation.

The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parent/ Carers(s) are expected to:-

- Provide updated contact details
- Contact school/ college by telephone on the first day their child is absent and with a clear reason for absence
- Promptly return reply slips attached to letters sent home
- Follow the procedures for requests for Extended Leave of Absence
- Attend school events, meetings (including Annual Reviews) and parents' evenings
- Support/ participate in school activities

Students are expected to:

- Attend school/ college regularly and punctually
- Wear the correct school uniform or appropriate clothing for college.
- Have the correct equipment for PE and swimming
- Be a positive member of the school/ college community
- Make the most of the opportunities school/ college has to offer



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Pupils and parent(s) can expect school to:-

- Have in place an accurate and efficient system for recording absence
- Have designated staff who initiate/ follow up enquiries if a student is absent without known cause
- Offer appointments to discuss/follow up areas of concern
- Treat information confidentially and with respect i.e. shared only on a 'need to know basis'
- Actively encourage and reward regular attendance and punctuality
- Advise, assist and support students and their families; enlisting the professional help of other agencies if and when required
- Keep students and parents/carers aware of progress

Office Administrators are expected to:-

- Record and notify Form/ College teams when taking a message from parents/ carers
- Keep accurate records to assist with the collection of absence data
- Provide with each Annual Review 'an Attendance Register'

Form/ College Teams are expected to:-

- Make contact with Parent/ Carers on the first day of absence if no information has been received
- Record attendance in the class registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and to return the register to the office on both occasions.
- Use the appropriate symbols to record absence in line with LA Policy and as stipulated in the register
- Contact parents directly if they have any concerns about attendance.
- Report any concerns about absence to the Deputy Headteacher
- Circulate information to the Deputy Headteacher and the Administration Team by email or if appropriate a Record of Discussion

Deputy Headteacher is expected to:-

- Regularly liaise with the Local Authority concerning attendance issues
- Contact parents/ carers if the reasons are not known for a student's absence and the absence has been for more than 3 consecutive days
- Assist the administrative staff with the compilation of attendance data
- Monitor registers regularly to ensure they have been completed correctly
- Report attendance concerns to the Headteacher
- Meet with parents regarding attendance concerns

Headteacher is expected to:-

- Actively promote the high importance of attendance with parents/ carers and students from non-prejudicial visits and from transitional meetings onwards, and regularly throughout their education.



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- Develop and implement agreed policies, annually updated following consultation with Governors, School Staff, Parents/Carers and other appropriate agencies
- Encourage inter-agency and parental participation in supporting pupils to gain maximum benefit from the educational system
- Be kept informed about attendance issues
- Reinforce positive attendance through the awarding of prizes and rewards throughout the school year.
- Report back to Parent/Carers, Governors, Staff and appropriate others re progress
- Oversee the School Attendance Policy
- Report to Governor(s) on a termly basis

Governors are expected to:-

- Attend Governors' Meetings
- Liaise with Headteacher re attendance
- Discuss attendance issues and devise improvement strategies during Curriculum and / or Staffing & Finance Committee meeting(s)
- Attend meetings with parents to discuss attendance, if required
- Report attendance issues to the Full Governing Board
- Attend prize-giving ceremonies

Policy approved by Governors: 11th February 2021

Review date: February 2022

Signed: _____

(Chair of Governors)

Signed: _____

(Headteacher)