

# **CHULMLEIGH ACADEMY TRUST**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Philosophy**

Chulmleigh Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from an effective education, good attendance is crucial. Good attendance is a major priority. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor for a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems, which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

## **Objectives**

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

## **Statutory Duty of Schools**

### *The Law:*

- *Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that children between the ages of 5-16 should attend school regularly.*
- *Schools must keep 2 registers: an admission register, which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register.*
- *Attendance registers must be called twice a day; at the start of the morning and once during the afternoon.*
- *The register must show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent.*
- *When a pupil is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.*
- *Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation was given afterwards.*
- *Compulsory education for all children in England ends on the last Friday in June, in the school year that the child reaches an age of 16 years.*

## **Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence will ensure regular evaluation of attendance policy and procedures by the Senior Leadership Team and the directors.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

## **Procedures**

This element of the policy will be consistently applied by Academy staff in order that there is a sense of ownership and responsibility, which will ensure maximum engagement in promoting attendance.

Information which staff need to ensure consistency includes the following:-

- Clear start and finishing times of registration.
- Guidance on the accurate completion of registers.
- The importance of punctuality and the response to lateness.
- First day contact between parents and the Academy.
- Clear guidance on authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Referral routes with roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems.
- Consistent reward/celebration schemes to acknowledge good or improving attendance.
- The target setting process.
- Monitoring progress towards targets.
- Working practice with other colleagues i.e. Education Welfare Officers
- The inclusion of attendance information in school documentation e.g. the prospectus, reports, home-school agreements.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Responsibility to promote attendance is the responsibility of the whole Academy community.

## **Authorisation of Absence During Term Time**

In cases of compassionate leave or similar exceptional circumstances, the Executive Headteacher may authorise leave in term time, but requests for holidays in term time shall not be authorised.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY- Appendix 1 (Chulmleigh Community College)**

Strategies we use to improve attendance:

1. Reward good attendance by individuals and groups of students.
2. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for attendance and follow the guidelines set out in the college's attendance policy.
3. Have an appointed attendance officer who keeps an attendance file, used by herself teachers and the education welfare officer. This attendance file details actions that have been taken as well as action plans that have been drawn up with the Education Welfare Officer.
4. Discuss individual attendance issues with the Heads of House and EWO.
5. State our policy in the pupil organiser.

*Subject teachers will monitor attendance by:*

- Maintaining a consistent approach to this issue.
- Marking a class register for every lesson they teach. It is a statutory requirement that the register is taken at registration in the morning and afternoon. Class teachers should also make concerns about absence or punctuality known to the pupils tutor.
- Mark a pupil in using the correct procedure if they are late.
- Refer an attendance problem to the tutor if it is affecting learning.

*The tutor will monitor attendance by:*

- Marking a register during tutor period.
- Keeping absence problems up to date. Particularly if an absence has not been authorised.
- Discussing attendance concerns with tutees.
- Passing attendance concerns to the attendance officer for a phone call if appropriate.
- Discussing attendance concern using the telephone if appropriate, after consulting the Head of House.
- Passing to the Head of House any serious concerns regarding attendance or punctuality.

*The School attendance Officer will monitor attendance by:*

- Keeping the attendance file up to date.
- Printing an attendance record for a child causing attendance concerns on a half termly basis. Attendance records will be sent with reports.
- Work with the member of the leadership team responsible for attendance to produce an analysis of the attendance situation at The Community College every term.
- Provide each Head of House with a table showing the comparative attendance figures for the individuals within each Tutor Group every term. The Head of House will use this information to give a prize to the best attending Tutor Group.

- Oversee the attendance file (see appendix 2) that is a working document for the Heads of House , the EWO and the Senior Manager responsible for attendance.
- Liaise with the EWO on a weekly basis.
- Keep a file of summary information, termly and annually.
- Keep the House attendance file up to date.
- Check on the signing in/ signing out system.
- Keep up to date with the new technology.
- Discuss individual lateness with Heads of House, who will review for sanctions if there are 5 instances of lateness without good reason in a half term

*The Head of House will:*

- Monitor attendance of the House Group, particularly noting students with special educational needs and those who have a poor record of attendance &/or punctuality.
- Discuss attendance and lateness issues with colleagues in the pastoral team they work with.
- Discuss attendance and lateness at the SMT liaison meetings in the scheduled times, every half term.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer regularly to discuss attendance. Informal discussions should take place on a weekly basis.
- Reward students with exemplary attendance records each term
- Liaise with both the tutor and the Educational Welfare Officer to investigate poor attendance and/or punctuality with the view to improving the situation.
- Give a student an appropriate sanction when he/she is continually late, if appropriate.
- Discuss attendance issues with senior managers at liaison meetings.

*The member of the school leadership team responsible for attendance will:*

- Liaise with the police and work with them to organise truancy sweeps.
- Prepare an attendance analysis every half term for discussion at SMT, which will be calendared in the school diary.
- Discuss attendance and lateness at the HoH liaison meetings in the scheduled times, every half term.
- Ensure that the tasks associated with the attendance strategy are included in the calendar.
- Randomly look at a pupil with attendance problems, once per half term, to audit the effectiveness of the system.
- Report to the Directors Teaching and Learning Committee when appropriate.

*The Educational Welfare Officer will:*

- Meet with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis, to identify students giving cause for concern.
- Offer advice and support to students and parents in order to improve the situation and develop an action plan
- Access additional support from the Social Services and the LEA Psychological Service, when necessary.
- Institute prosecution procedures.

*Students are expected to:*

- Arrive and register in for school at 8.55 and 1.20pm, promptly each school day.
- Register at the office, if for any reason they are late.
- Obtain a pass-out slip from the tutor if the student needs to leave college during the day. This is issued on receipt of a request note or telephone call from the parent/guardian. The student should then sign out at the college.
- Attend all lessons assigned to them. Truancy, (i.e. non-attendance of lessons *in or outside* the school grounds), will be investigated and appropriate measures taken.

*We request that parents/guardians:*

- Ensure that their child arrives at college on time properly equipped. Phone the college office before 9.30am on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence and an indication of when the student will be returning to college. If unable to phone in college hours, an answer service will be available outside college hours.
- Phone again if for some reason the student is to be absent longer than was originally indicated.
- Supply a note to the tutor explaining absence only if a phone call has not been made.
- Contact the HoH if the reason for absence is caused by something other than illness; e.g. worry about schoolwork, friendship problems etc.
- Understand that The Community College has to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Support us in only allowing students to be absent for reasons that the college would authorise e.g. illness, bereavement, family problems, emergency dental work etc.
- Not allow students to stay home for reasons that the college would not authorise e.g. shopping trip, hair appointment, birthday treat, shopping, agricultural show.
- Make all routine dental and medical appointments out of college hours or in the holidays.

*If attendance or punctuality is a concern we will:*

- Discuss the problem with the student to try and improve the situation.
- Inform the parent/ guardian and include them in discussion about remedying the problem.
- Contact the Educational Welfare Officer who may want to phone or visit parents to ascertain the reason for absence/lateness and offer support where necessary.
- Advocate prosecuting a parent after all other avenues have been pursued.

*During the next three years we will:*

- Monitor, evaluate and review this policy. The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This will be done by monitoring and evaluating attendance figures on a termly basis, with the leadership team and between Heads of House and their liaison link from the leadership team. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.
- Improve our monitoring system by re-enforcing guidelines to students and parents and setting up a mentoring programme.
- Monitor this Policy annually.
- Improve punctuality by
- Annually request local doctors, dentists etc. to arrange routine appointments after College hours.
- Regularly inform parents about attendance issues through Optime, or an appropriate new communications system.