



**Wombourne  
High School**

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**SEPTEMBER 2021**

## **Introduction:**

Wombourne High School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Wombourne High School is committed to the provision of a full, rich and appropriate education for all of its students and acknowledges that education is vital to raising the aspirations of all students.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

**Learning:** - Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses the five outcomes of "Every Child Matters":-

- Being Healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying Safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- Making a Positive Contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social behaviour
- Economic Wellbeing: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life

All children have the right to be educated and we as a school recognise our duty to support our students in matters of attendance, behaviour and discipline. However, failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- Wombourne High School's aims and objectives drive our commitment to establish and maintain levels of attendance at a rate comparable and above the recommendation from OfSTED.
- You and your child have an important part to play in ensuring that we achieve our targets and remain a school that ensure our students take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular, punctual attendance at school.
- We will ensure that our policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and applied consistently in practice.
- We will ensure that registers are completed accurately, to provide reliable data, which will be used to identify those students whose attendance level is likely to impact on their ability to fulfil their potential and achieve their predicted attainment level.
- We will ensure that any student, who has reached or is at risk of moving towards the national Persistent Absence level of 90% and below, is given priority. We will target our resources to identify barriers to these students' school attendance and ensure students and parents are supported to find a resolution.

- We will ensure that we promote a whole-school approach to the management of attendance, with all members of the school community committed to their role and confident of their ability to make an effective and positive contribution to all students.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of the school community.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Recognise the need to reward school attendance and implement a number of strategies such as house points awarded regularly, weekly prize draw for students, weekly prize for best form, rewards trips open to all students with attendance of 95% or above. Positive attendance and punctuality is celebrated regularly during assemblies.

### **The Law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

### **The Law relating to safeguarding;**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (**not by the parents**), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. ***Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason, like illness or medical/dental appointments and emergencies which unavoidably fall in school time.***

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or enforcement proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark or who fail to sign in
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Absence from individual lessons – should your child be present for registration but then fail to attend subsequent lessons (without permission) school reserve the right to amend the register code

for that school session to unauthorised to reflect lesson absence. In the event of this happening parents would be notified by telephone and/or letter by 1<sup>st</sup> class post on the same school day.

Whilst any student may be absent from school due to illness, we recognize that sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons.

Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between the school, the parents/carers and the student. If your child is reluctant to attend, please contact school immediately to enable us to offer support.

Any student in Wombourne High School identified as having **attendance below 93%** will have all further absence **unauthorised** on schools register.

However should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Your child is valued within this school and our commitment and desire to ensure your child achieves their full potential can only be accomplished with your assistance.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and Attendance Officer. We run regular attendance clinics to support attainment and high-light the link to attendance. Should your child's attendance falls to 93% or below you will be asked to attend our clinic, where a support plan will be discussed.

At Wombourne High School through monitoring and attendance clinics we seek to swiftly address any issues so that students can begin to make expected progress. We are keen that all parties are aware of the link between good attendance and positive attainment.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us (telephone/email) as soon as possible on the first day of absence; **preferably by 9.15am.**
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

#### **If your child is absent for 5 consecutive days you must:**

- **Consult with a medical practitioner and provide evidence.** This can include a practitioner note, appointment card and/or labelled medication.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 10.30am. A 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence letter will also be sent if we fail to hear from you directly.
- Telephone you again the following day if the absence persists. If we are unable to contact you by telephone we will write to you.
- We may visit your home if your child is identified as having 93% or below attendance, to establish the reason for absence.

- Invite you in to our Attendance Clinic to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer. Should your child's absence remain a concern, you will be invited in to meet with your child's Head of House/Senior Leader.
- Parents at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice will be asked to attend a Back on Track meeting to try to prevent further absence leading to prosecution.
- Refer the matter to our Attendance Consultant and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below **90%**.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about varying issues, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed or in a medical emergency we may fail to notify you. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year, please ensure yours remains up to date.

### **The School Attendance Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to assist the staff in resolving any problems together. We as a school have an appointed Attendance Officer who will always be happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns you have or that have been identified by school staff.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child, firstly to our Attendance Consultant before the Education Investigation Service (EIS), a statutory intervention service.

This Service was formerly the Education Welfare Service and where they may previously have tried to resolve the situation, their primary role is now Enforcement Proceedings. Therefore, should school fail to reach a resolution with Parents, and a referral is made for intervention from the Education Investigation Service, the new Service will consider sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.

### **Punctuality:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and is also an offence in law if your child attends school after the close of register. If your child is late at the start of the school day they can miss valuable learning time. They are prevented from spending time with their class teacher which can result in vital information and news for the day not being received. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the student and can in our experience also encourage absence.

Good routines within the home are essential to assist students in establishing and maintaining punctuality, we rely on Parents to assist their children in formulating routines and any difficulties that Parents have should be brought to schools attention.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

If they arrive at the school entrance after this point they will be issued a late mark, and given a 10 minute after school detention.

Student on site before 8.50am should be in tutor time and registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **10.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice payable up to £120 or prosecution in the Magistrates court if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but please contact us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Should school be unable to resolve a persistent late issue, we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This would mean that your child's lateness would be recorded as unauthorised in schools register. This could result in the Local Authority considering enforcement proceedings against you. Should this action be necessary with your child, you will be informed in writing.

### **Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's learning as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students out of school during the academic year. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 No 756

Wombourne High School operates a '**no leave**' policy. All applications for leave in the school year will only be authorised for special/exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Head teacher). All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least five school days prior to the requested leave date. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parents/ carers in writing.

On any occasion that a school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/ carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a G (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register. Failure to notify and/ or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least five day notice will result in all absence being recorded as O (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

Should parents proceed with a term time holiday contrary to this policy, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised holiday and will result in referral to the Education Investigation Service for their consideration to enforcement proceedings.

### **Managing Reintegration**

From time to time it is necessary to reintegrate students who have been experiencing problems, school staff will identify if and when this is appropriate.

Where this is agreed with parent and student, the Pastoral Team and possibly Student Support Centre will play an integral part in managing such practice.

Where a reduced timetable is agreed with Parent as a solution to absence and/or truancy, an agreement will be drawn up which will require the signatures of all parties. Any period of the school day that a student is identified as not being required to attend will be recorded as authorised absence, however where a student fails to attend the required session, the whole day will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the Attendance Officer will be informed.

School reserve the right to withdraw any reintegration programme at any time.

### **Managing illness during the school day**

If a student is unwell or has an accident and is considered unfit to continue in lessons, they will be asked to report to the medical office located in the main building. Here the student will be assessed by the medical officer. Where necessary parents will be contacted and asked to make arrangements to collect their child.

## **Education off school site**

On occasion students may be involved in educational activities off the school site. Any provision agreed that requires attendance at another site will still be reflected within schools register. Failure to attend any other educational activity will result in an absence on the school register. The coding of the absence will depend on the explanation provided by parents

## **Roles & Responsibilities/School Procedures**

### **STUDENT**

- Attend school every day – arrive and be on site no later than 8:50am
- Arrive on time
- Arrive punctually to registration periods/lessons
- Write attendance percentage for this academic year in planner every Monday

### **FORM TUTOR**

- Registers to be completed by 9.10am
- Late mark after 8.55am
- Challenge all absences and lates
- Collect notes and forward to Attendance Officer
- Refer students for 10 minutes late detention at the end of the day
- Chase unresolved absences

### **HEAD OF YEAR**

- Regular assembly highlighting attendance
- Support unresolved absences
- Look for trends and pass to Form Tutors: Call parents/speak to student – Liaise with Attendance officer and PP leads re persistent problems
- With the support of the PSO Speak to students if attendance falls to 93%

### **SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Oversee HOY / Attendance officer and PP leads to tackle attendance
- Designated member of SLT to review whole school attendance daily and weekly
- SLT to sit in on Attendance Clinics & link to Attendance Officer
- Visible at registration
- Weekly visits rota – challenge lates, etc.
- 'Stop & Ask' used effectively

### **Attendance Officer**

- 95% & below – informal letter to parents of their obligation and outline consequences
- 93% and below – Invited in to attendance clinic via more formal letter
- 90% & below – letter inviting to attendance clinic & advising medical evidence required to authorise all future absences – copy letter to relevant Head of House & relevant SLT advised. Students may also attend clinic on their own.
- Send letter home regarding punctuality

### **Pastoral Support and PP Leads**

- Liaise with Attendance Officer
- Attend relevant meetings with Attendance Officer

- 90% & below – home visits where required
- Speak to students in school

#### MIDDLE LEADERS

- ‘Stop & Ask’ used

#### LESSON TEACHERS

- Take registers accurately and in a timely fashion. Raise any concerns immediately with the attendance officer.

#### Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child’s welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

#### Reviewed by Mr J Crook, September 2021 – Next review September 2022

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorized absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorized absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorized absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorized absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorized absence
S	Study leave	Authorized absence
T	Traveler absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances