



The John of Gaunt School
Attendance Policy April 2016

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INDEX

1. Vision Statement
2. Core Principles
3. Attendance Expectations
4. Expectations of Students
5. Expectation of Parents
6. Responsibilities of Tutors
7. Responsibilities of Subject Teachers
8. Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team including the Assistant Head Teacher with Responsibility for Attendance
9. Responsibilities of Attendance Officer
10. Responding To Student Absence
11. Requests for leave during term time – Exceptional Leave
12. Celebrating and Encouraging Attendance

Appendix 1 – Attendance concern flow diagram

1. Vision Statement

‘Creating an irresistible climate for achievement’

- We challenge, support and encourage every student to **achieve their potential**.
- We believe **effort** and **dedication** lead to success and we **raise aspirations**.
- We **personalise our provision** to meet the needs of individuals.
- We enable our students to flourish as **confident learners and leaders** of our community.
- We create a culture where all stakeholders **feel valued, supported and proud**.
- We **work collaboratively** to improve outcomes for our students and support other schools to improve.

2. Core Principles:

Government Guidance states:

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time”

*School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities
October 2014*

We believe that good attendance at school increases a child’s ability to achieve and attain in line with their potential. Good attendance also enables students to fully participate in school life.

Research indicates that students with poor school attendance are more likely to have poor mental health, be involved in anti-social behaviour and be vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

The British Psychological Society - Behaviour Change: School attendance, exclusion and persistent absence

The legal requirements:

Under the Education Act 1996 parents/carers have a duty to ensure their children regularly attend school. The Act states: "If a registered student is absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 441(1)

3. Attendance Expectations

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. The school has an established system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and

timekeeping. For the benefit of the school community, we will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

We expect all students to attend school in line with Government expectations, reaching a minimum of 95% attendance. Some absences are unavoidable but we would ask that parents and carers support the school in ensuring that their child's attendance meets both the school's expectations.

4. Expectations of Students

- That they will attend school every day.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for lessons, following the B4L expectations.
- That they will speak to their Tutor and/House Leader if experiencing any problems in school.
- That they will accept help, support and guidance when offered if it is deemed appropriate.
- That they will not leave the school site during the school day for any reason without authorisation from a member of staff and without signing out.
- All students arriving after the start of the school day will sign in at Wingfield reception.

5. Expectations of Parents

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To be aware of their legal requirements.
- To ensure their child attends school every day and on time.
- To telephone the school on the first day of absence by 9:00 a.m. and send a note into school on their child's return to school.
- To ensure that they contact the school daily if their child is unable to attend.
- To avoid making routine medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours. (Where this is not possible, to provide school with a copy of medical appointment).
- To provide medical evidence when their child is absent from school for a period of 3 days or more, in line with Local Authority guidance.
- To ensure that family holidays are only taken during the school holidays.
- To ensure that they contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

6. Responsibilities of Tutors

- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- To be aware of the whole school target and to reward good and improved attendance.
- To keep an accurate record of attendance and absence using class registers on Sims at the start of each tutor period.
- To take the register promptly at 13:40.
- To record and deal with lateness to registration after the initial register has been taken at the start of the lesson.
- To record a register on paper in the event of an ICT issue resulting in SIMS being unavailable and pass this to the Data Manager as soon as possible.

- Use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance.

7. Responsibilities of subject teachers:

- Take the register for period 1 by 9am.*
- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- To take class registers at the start of each lesson.
- To record on SIMS and deal with lateness to their lesson according to the B4L policy.
- To inform their Director of Learning, The Head of House and the Attendance Officer of patterns of lateness or absence.
- To advise students and parents of the impact of non-attendance on attainment and progress.
- Where possible and practical to ensure students complete work missed due to absence and where requested provide work for students on long term absences.
- Use praise which emphasises the importance of attendance for learning.
- Meet and greet all students at the beginning of each lesson to make them feel valued.
- Integrate late arrivals quickly and smoothly by planning appropriate starter activities.
- Integrate returning students and inconsistent attenders by using tools such as seating plans, differentiation and peer support. This links to the school's Behaviour 4 Learning policy.
- Inform Attendance Officer of known specific absences if not already coded on SIMS class registers.
- Use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance. Relate it to improved learning.

*** Registers close at 9.15. Students arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late After Close of Register' – this will generate an unauthorised absence mark on the student's attendance record.**

8. Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team including the Assistant Head Teacher with Responsibility for Attendance:

- To promote, encourage and praise good attendance and punctuality through house and year group assemblies.
- To promote positive attendance through strategies such as the Prom Pledge and School Rewards.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer on whole school attendance. To monitor progress against attendance targets.
- To monitor the impact of intervention strategies.
- To support the Attendance Officer and House Leaders where needed in producing and monitoring individual support plans for persistent absentees.
- To ensure that attendance is a known priority for all staff through sharing information at briefings and via staff bulletins etc.
- To regularly report to Governors on attendance.

9. Responsibilities of Attendance Officer:

- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.

- To monitor the taking of accurate registers.
- To monitor attendance of students who persistently arrive late – in particular after the registers have closed.
- To liaise with the Data Manager and update registers and to input absence codes.
- To operate Truancy Call first day contact system when no reason for absence received by 9:30 a.m.
- To contact home by phone if a student has been absent for 3 days to request medical evidence.
- To contact home if there is doubt about the reason given for absence.
- To involve the Education Welfare Officer when a student's attendance or punctuality continues to give cause for concern.
- To liaise with the Assistant Head with Responsibility for Attendance to review year group attendance and report to Senior Leadership Team and Governors on actions taken.
- To ensure effective communication on attendance issues with the whole school community.
- To provide attendance data for all Persistent Absence students (less than 90% attendance – absence threshold) to the Senior Leadership Team as requested.
- To liaise with Assistant Head with Responsibility for Attendance, the relevant member of the Student Development Team and the when appropriate the Education Welfare Officer when a student's attendance triggers the absence threshold.
- To hold School Attendance Meetings (SAM) where a student meets the absence threshold in order to offer support, set targets and continue to monitor the attendance of individual students.
- To work with the Education Welfare Officer and meet weekly to review all students with low attendance.

10. Responding To Student Absence

When a student does not attend school we will respond in the following manner if a reason has not been provided by the parent or carer:

- Make parent/carer aware that student is absent through the use of Truancy Call.
- Truancy Call should be sent by 10 am each morning. This will request for explanation for absence.
- The Attendance Officer will log parental responses in order to determine appropriate registration coding.
- An unexplained absence letter will be sent to parent/carer asking them to contact the school with a reason for the absence if a parent / carer does not respond to truancy call.
- If an acceptable reason for absence is not provided the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
- Where necessary school will work with parents/carers and students to support and overcome any barriers to attendance. This may involve working with external agencies including health professionals or social care.

Persistent non-attendance will be referred to the *Education Welfare Officer* (See *Appendix 1 Attendance Concern Flow Diagram*).

Note: If a student's attendance falls below 90%, we reserve the right to ask for doctor's notes to confirm the absence from the first day.

11. Requests for leave during term time – Exceptional Leave

The Head Teacher is the only person able to authorise exceptional leave during term time however they may delegate this to another member of staff if appropriate such as the Attendance Officer. The school is unlikely to authorise exceptional leave as The John of Gaunt School discourages parents taking their children out of school during term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law for schools to allow absence during term time for the purpose of holidays. If a parent / carer wishes to take their child out of school for extenuating circumstances they must make a request in writing to the Head Teacher with a minimum of two weeks' notice using the absence request form available from the school reception.

12. Celebrating and Encouraging Attendance

Good Attendance is celebrated and rewarded regularly examples include:

- Twice a year letters are sent out from the Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for Attendance to all students who have 99% attendance and a separate letter to those with 100% attendance.
- Three times a year letters are sent to parents and carers of students who have attendance between 95% and 90% (the threshold for persistent absence) informing them of their child's current attendance percentage and what this will mean over the year.
- Attendance is a regular topic in assemblies for house leaders. At the end of each half term the House with the highest Attendance wins a non-uniform day.
- A display with up to date attendance information is situated outside Gloucester Hall.
- Parents and carers are informed about the importance of attendance as part of the schools transition and induction process.

