



## ATTENDANCE

### A Statement of Policy

#### Statement

We actively promote regular school attendance in order to maximise opportunities for each student to realise his/her potential. Wolgarston High School, Staffordshire Education Authority, parents/carers and the wider community all have a role to play in improving attendance.

#### Aim

To meet our statutory duty with respect to a whole school attendance target, while ensuring that we have effective systems and procedures in place to support and encourage regular school attendance from all students.

#### Definition

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at Wolgarston, parents/carers have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

Wolgarston has the initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual students' poor attendance. We must notify Staffordshire Education Authority if a student attends irregularly or is absent continuously without authorisation for ten or more school days.

Staffordshire Education Authority has responsibility under the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty is exercised through the Education Welfare Service and its Education Welfare Officers. They can issue parents/carers with a Penalty Notice or prosecute them in the local magistrates' courts.

School, not parents/carers, authorise absence. We must adhere to DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) Guidelines in authorising absence.

Parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to make sure their child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without parents'/carers' knowledge. They run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being prosecuted.

The decision to issue a penalty notice or prosecute a parent/carer is only taken, in most cases, after the Welfare Service have carried out extensive support work with the child and their family.

Parents/carers should not expect Wolgarston to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time. Parents/carers do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. The law states that schools have the discretion to grant up to ten days' authorised absence in a school year. Each application is considered individually by us and takes into account a number of factors including the child's attendance record and the dates of both internal and external examinations.

If a child is ill or absent for any other reason, a parent/carer should contact us by 0900<sup>hrs</sup> on the first day of absence.

By law, compulsory education for all children in England ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches 16.

## Objectives

- To designate a member of the Senior Management Team and a member of the Governing Body to oversee the management and review of all attendance matters.
- To clarify staff roles and responsibilities for dealing with attendance.
- To recognise the links with our Behaviour for Learning and Combating Bullying Policies.
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Service in order to raise everyone's awareness, access support and respond to challenge.
- To ensure that parents/carers understand their responsibilities, are aware of our Attendance Policy and are encouraged to co-operate with the systems and procedures that the Policy describes.
- To develop, maintain and review effective procedures for :
  - Registering students
  - Categorising absence
  - Collating and analysing attendance data to identify trends and enable action to be taken
  - Determining in which exceptional circumstances leave of absence will be granted for holidays during term-time.
  - Monitoring attendance and punctuality for all lessons using Lesson Monitor.
  - Dealing with late arrivals.
  - Dealing with unauthorised absence (i.e. when contact will be made with parents/carers, how and when standard letter systems will be used, what measures will be taken to re-engage disaffected students, what rewards/incentives will be used to encourage attendance, what sanctions will be taken).
  - Referring cases to the Education Welfare Service (i.e. when, how and by whom).
  - Re-integrating students who have been absent (e.g. providing pastoral support, the role of personalised learning within the Family and Student Services Centre and the use of learning/peer mentors).
  - Engaging other agencies working with young people (e.g. Social Services, Health, Connexions, the Police, Youth Offending Teams, Victim Support etc.) to embrace the vision for children's services contained in 'Every Child Matters'.
  - Recognising excellent or improved attendance through the school's Rewards and Achievements scheme.
  - Engaging parents/carers in discussions about the Attendance Policy through the Parent Focus group.
  - Engaging students through work with the school councils.

## Commitment

As a school we are committed to making continuous improvement in all aspects of school life. We will strive to raise the level of enjoyment and commitment to learning among all our students and foster a high attendance culture throughout the school.

## Responsibilities

Ultimate responsibility for this policy's introduction and implementation lies with the Head Teacher in consultation with the Governing Body. It is important to recognise that all staff, students and parents/carers have an active part to play in the evolution, development and maintenance of this policy.

Date Written: July 06  
 Date of Last Review: July 07  
 Date of Next Review: July 08  
 Reviewed by: Stakeholders (Attendance Steering Group, Parents/Carers, Students, Staff)