

# The Angmering School

**Ambition**

**Courage**

**Respect**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 2023

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## The Angmering School Policy Statement

Regular and punctual attendance underpins high achievement and progress and helps to improve a sense of belonging within our community. This policy sets out how The Angmering School will work to achieve the best attendance possible for every student working with parents/carers and outside agencies.

### **Our core values**

#### ***Ambition Courage Respect***

The Angmering School recognises that to be ambitious and make progress maintaining regular attendance is crucial.

Good (regular) attendance is essential. The School defines good attendance as 96% or above. Good attendance ensures: students are receiving a coherent education programme, supports the development of good social relationships, ensures students are safe and their welfare is being monitored. It supports health and well-being, builds confidence and offers a sense of belonging as a member of a community.

West Sussex has a statutory duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children receive a suitable education and for most that requires that they are registered at a school. West Sussex also has responsibility under section the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The duty to enforce attendance is exercised through the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEIT).

It is part of the statutory duty of the school's governing body, to monitor student attendance and to seek ways in which attendance can be improved, particularly for persistent non-attenders, working with school staff and PEIT to secure improvements for individuals and cohorts. School attendance targets are set and monitored by PEIT on behalf of the LA and DfE with the percentage of overall attendance and the number of persistent absentees collected as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used by Ofsted to make judgements about the school.

Attendance is greatly influenced by parental attitudes and behaviour. Parents / carers need to respond to any attendance communication, which are sent out by the school and attend meetings so that they are fully engaged and involved in actions, designed to bring about improvement.

#### **Policy Stakeholders and Users**

West Sussex County Council via the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEIT) All

Governors

All Staff

All Parents

All students

**Aims and Objectives** The aim of this policy is to support the development of the best conditions by which school attendance is sustained at the highest possible level for all students at The Angmering School. This will be achieved by:

- Making clear the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in school attendance.
- Showing in some detail the strategies to be employed to improve attendance.
- Setting out the manner in which attendance is to be regularly reviewed on an individual, group and whole school basis.

The objective of the policy is to improve school attendance for individual students, for tutor and year groups and for the whole school.

### Detailed Guidelines to Implement Policy

**Registration** The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / form tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

**Registration Codes** The school is required to keep an up to date and accurate register of attendance. The following codes will be used in registers:

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
C	Other authorised circumstances
E	Excluded
I	Illness
L	Late (before reg closed)
B	Educated off Site
V	Educational Visit
R	Religious Observance

P	Approved Sporting activity
G	Unauthorised Holiday absence
H	Annual Family Holiday (DfE guidelines and restrictions apply)
O	Unauthorised absence

The register will be called promptly at **8.45 am** and **2.15 pm** by each form tutor/subject teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each student.

The registers will close at **9.15 am** in the morning session. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

### **Categorising Absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

The Angmering School recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, and will potentially send a message to parents / carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, The Angmering School reserve the right to challenge parents / carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

- i) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- ii) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - (a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example
    - a student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
    - a student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,

- In **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents / carers have sought permission in advance
  - (b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - (c) Where the student has a medical appointment (although parents / carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand);
  - (d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. very extreme weather conditions;
  - (e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents / carers belong;
  - (f) The student lives more than three miles and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) The student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, they have attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - (h) In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- iii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- No explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
  - The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
  - The student is staying at home to mind the house;
  - The student is shopping during school hours;
  - The student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a family birthday;
  - The student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
  - The student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

**Approved Educational Activity.** Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

**Class Registers** In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration, and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness.

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up by the Year Team Admin and measures taken to locate the student. If the student is not found on the site, the school will make an effort to inform the parent/carer that their child does not appear to be on the school premises.



**Staff Training** Within the induction programme the school will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **Collection and analysis of data**

The Year Team Admin, Year Team Leader and the link member of the Headship Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headship team, parents / carers and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance.

Attendance is monitored and it is also analysed looking specifically at those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

Due to the importance of attendance, it is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents / carers are regularly reminded in reports, newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment and progress.

The Angmering School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week, sending home a request for information on unexplained absence on specified days.

**Reporting Absence** If your child is unwell and unable to attend school parents / carers must report the absence to the school before 8.30 a.m. Absence should be reported via the relevant Year Team phone line as published on the school website.

**First-day calling** The Angmering School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents / carers will receive a text on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify, at an early stage, students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents'/carers' knowledge.

**Meetings with parents / carers** where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence, with or without explanation; the school will contact parents / carers to discuss the reasons for the absences.

Plans should be put in place with the parents / carers and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents / carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them, for example, a letter from a medical professional stating the student is unfit for school or other appropriate medical evidence as agreed with the school.

**Referral to the PEIT** If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the PEIT. This may result



in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, which incurs a cost payable by the parents / carers. Serious cases of non-attendance may result in prosecution and a fine payable by parents / carers.

### **Fixed Penalty Notice**

If a student has 10 school sessions of recorded unauthorised absence, for whatever reason, in a 10 week period, their parents / carers can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Each school day consists of 2 sessions ( am and pm registration mark )..

For example this would apply to 10 or more school sessions marked as unauthorised holiday absence. FPNs may also be used for students who are persistently late for school.

The first FPN carries a fine of £60 per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid within 28 days. If no payment is made the Authority is required to begin proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor school attendance and if proven the fine could be up to £2500 and/or a parenting order or a community sentence may be imposed. There is no right of appeal once an FPN has been issued.

**Lateness and punctuality** Students are expected to arrive on time and be in the correct room, for TUTOR, DEAR and lessons every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the PEIT.

Students' who arrive late for school, but before the register closes will be marked with the L code.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. **Students arriving late should therefore report to the Year Team Admin office.** It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason **it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign in and out at Year Team Admin office.**

### **Term Time Holidays**

In September 2013 the policy changed following amendment to the Education Act 2006. Time off school for family holidays is not a right and is now actively discouraged by the legislation. An application must be made via our absence request form which can be requested via Year Team Admin or downloaded from our website, with appropriate evidence of the exceptional circumstances which the parent/carer is requesting the school take into consideration.

The decision is made at the discretion of the Headteacher. However, it is important to note that, in line with the new regulations family holidays are only allowed in very exceptional circumstances e.g. Military Leave. Not being able to afford a school holiday break is not considered an exceptional circumstance. If an unauthorised holiday is taken, then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if the absence is 10

sessions or more. The Headteacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence giving the reasons for the decision.

**Persistent Absence** A student who is attending 89.9% or less is deemed to be persistently absent. This level of absence is highly detrimental to a student's progress and achievement and therefore the school will take at least one of a variety of steps to encourage improvement in attendance. Students with this level of absence could be referred to the PEIT for intervention.

Other actions may include:

- Close monitoring of attendance by Form Tutor, Student Support Officer, Year Team Leader and Year Team Admin.
- These %s can only be used as a guide as it depends at what time of the academic year these attendance %s are occurring.
- Below 96% absence- Initial concern/alert letter sent home.
- 94-90% - alert letter sent to arrange an initial meeting.
- 89.9% absence: Persistently absent letter sent and request for parents / carers to attend a meeting in school. An action plan will be agreed at this point between the parent/carers, student and the school. A further fall in attendance will require evidence from a medical professional before any further absence will be authorised.
- If a student reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. If a student reaches 20 sessions of unauthorised absence then a referral will be made to the PEIT.
- Incentives can be offered to acknowledge regular attendance and improved attendance and break the cycle of absence.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

### **Form Tutor**

- To ensure register is accurately kept
- To work with parents / carers and student to ensure their responsibilities are met
- To work within the school to ensure that the conditions exist for the student to feel safe and comfortable in school
- To monitor their tutee's attendance on at least a fortnightly basis. For key students this will also include return to school meetings.

### **Year Team Leader/Student Support Officer:**

- To support the attendance of all members of the year group
- To support parents / carers and students in ensuring their responsibilities are met
- To celebrate good regular attendance within the year group
- To authorise alert letters to parents / carers
- To particularly support students who fall into the persistent absence category to improve their attendance

### **Year Team Leader/Student Support Officer/Year Team Admin**

- To inform parents / carers of their child's absence if no prior notice is given
- To support students who have difficulty maintaining good attendance





- To support parents / carers and students in ensuring their responsibilities are met
- To work within the school to ensure that the conditions exist for the student to feel safe and comfortable in school
- To particularly support students who fall into the persistent absence category to improve their attendance
- To provide the Headship Team with data on attendance as required
- To liaise with outside agencies concerned with attendance
- To change codes after the register has been taken

### **Headteacher and Headship Group**

- To ensure procedures are in place across the school to support good and improving attendance for all students so that targets for attendance are met.
- To review attendance regularly and ensure that action is taken to maintain good attendance levels across the school for all students.
- To agree targets for attendance at a Full Governing Body meeting.

### **Parent/Carer**

- To ensure that student arrives at school regularly and on time
- To support attendance by keeping absence requests to a minimum
- To not condone unjustified absence from school
- To notify school on first day of absence (and each day thereafter) by 8.30 a.m. – failure to do so could result in the absence being unauthorised
- To contact the school without delay if they have concerns about any aspect of their child's life which might affect attendance

### **Student**

- To be aware of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality at school
- To attend all lessons, DEAR and START on time and ready to learn.
- To follow the procedures of the school if they are late arriving or if they are signing out

### **Governors' responsibilities:**

- To ensure that an appropriate Attendance Policy is in place and is being implemented
- To review attendance regularly and ensure that action is taken to maintain good attendance levels across the school for all students
- To agree targets for attendance at a Full Governing Body meeting

**Monitoring the Policy** The Assistant Headteacher or link Headship Team member will report on attendance in the Report to Governors on a termly basis.

### **Document Information**

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years unless there is a change in operational or legislative procedures.