



**SMITHDON HIGH SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**September 2018**

## **Rationale**

Smithdon High School under the West Norfolk Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We have developed a policy in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

We want to do our best for all our children and believe that regular attendance at school is vital as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and friendships. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by a parent.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the West Norfolk Academies Trust will examine their attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Norfolk attendance targets. The West Norfolk Academies Trust will discuss their attendance figures and the success of this policy on an annual basis and will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure it is achieving the set goals.

## **Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). If there is no known reason for the absence at registration then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30am and the registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after 30 minutes will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, such as delayed school transport. Where absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Medical evidence may be required to support the absence.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of registration period will be treated as present but will be coded as late before the register closes. Students who arrive after registration should report to reception to sign in and record the reason for lateness.

## **First Day of Absence**

On the first day of absence, parents and carers should contact the school, you can do this by telephoning 01485 534541 before the registration period closes at 9.00am. If no contact has been made, the Pastoral Team will endeavour to contact parents via the automated messaging service called Truancy Call. We will continue to make daily contact until a response is received and will also make general enquires during this time and try other contact numbers. If we have any concerns we may use staff or Police to visit the home address.

## **Ten Days' Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education', by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Children in Need Team. This is a legal requirement and the school will include details of the action they have taken.

## **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

We monitor attendance closely and if a pupil's attendance falls lower than the national average, their parents will be contacted by the school. We will look for patterns and reasons for absence making parents aware of the number of absences and the importance of good attendance. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Local Authority Attendance Team where action may include Fix Penalty Notice and/or Attendance Fast Track System.

## **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupils receive help to catch up on missed work and updated on any important information that may have been given out during their absence.

## **Promoting Attendance**

Smithdon High School works actively together with the West Norfolk Academies Trust to improve attendance in our area and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers of their responsibility to ensure their children receive a good education and will make clear links between attendance and attainment.

The school will use a computerised system for maintaining attendance records.

Information regarding attendance and procedures can be found on the school's website.

## **Attendance Awards**

Smithdon High School will reward pupils who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and by awarding certificates for 100% attendance on a termly basis.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

Leave will not be granted for the purpose of a family holiday, which will be recorded as unauthorised. Latest Government guidelines do state that Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave but only in exceptional circumstance

Government guidelines also states that 'Parents can be fined for taking their child/children on holiday during term time without consent from the school', Department for Education July 2013.

Request for authorised absence should be made using a Leave of Absence form which is available from the school reception.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

Parents no longer have a legal right to take their child out of school for a family holiday and the Headteacher can only permit holiday leave during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absence will affect your child's education. National statistics show five days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence, however some schools may choose to do this.

The Government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court. If a student is absent for ten consecutive sessions (one week) of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time, it may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child, this must be paid within 21 days. If unpaid a further notice for £60 per parent per child is issued, both individual invoices must then be paid within 28 days. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.