

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by Phil Kruse: Reviewed date: November 2020

The Law states as a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child attends school. Failure to do so may result in legal action. Missing school causes severe disruption to a child's education and affects their performance in exams and chances later in life. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence.

Aims

At John Ferneley College we recognise that regular attendance is crucial for our students to reach their full potential. It influences the levels of attainment, relationships with peers, enjoyment of college and future opportunities. Every single day is an entitlement for each student.

The college will consistently work towards high attendance figures for all our students. We recognise the need for students, parents and the college to work in close partnership to achieve this. In addition, to support these efforts we employ an Attendance Officer.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and guidance set out by The Department of Education.

Procedures

Registration (** See amendments for current change to structure of the day)

Morning registration takes place in tutor time at the start of school and will be taken at 8.45am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late unless there is an acceptable explanation. Afternoon registration takes place at the start of lesson 3. Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson.

Absence

All absences will be marked as either authorised or unauthorised. If an explanation for an absence is not received or the explanation deemed unsatisfactory then that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents/carers are asked to contact the college on the absence line before 8.30am to report an absence providing a reason. If no contact is made explaining an absence then the college will send a text home to secure an explanation. A phone call should be made on each day of absence unless previously agreed to by the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer or in exceptional circumstances. A doctor's note or medical evidence will be needed for absences of more than 5 days. Evidence will be required for all absences where possible to support students throughout their time at John Ferneley College.

If attendance falls below The College target of 96% a letter will be sent home to inform parents/carers of the current level and possible further actions this may lead to if attendance does not improve. Support will also be offered to help improve their attendance. For example in college meetings/phone calls home and home visits. It is the role of the Attendance Officer to monitor, be aware of and bring to attention any emerging attendance concerns.

Persistent Absence (PA) defined in legislation as 10% or more absences. Either authorised or unauthorised, a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential in college. At this point an absence will only be authorised with evidence to back up why a student is not in college such as an appointment card, prescription or medicine labels.

If attendance continues to fall without sufficient evidence The College will send a second letter informing parents that unless there is an improvement the case will be passed on to The L.E.A. where appropriate action and support will be implemented.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the close of register at 8.45am will be marked as late. Any student that arrives late must sign in at reception or the attendance office. The college keeps a record of lateness and will use appropriate sanctions or support to reduce this.

Absence from college

All requests for students to be absent from college must be requested through writing, email or a telephone conversation with the attendance team. This is necessary for all absences except for illness.

Term-Time Holidays

Legally Term Time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and **will not be authorised** as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. If parents/carers take their child out of college the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be referred to The L.E.A. and could result in a penalty notice.

Parents/carers may request permission from the Head to take their child out of school during term time. In turn a response will be made. It is at the Head's discretion whether absences may be authorised but this would only be in exceptional circumstances and in line with DfE guidelines.

The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer (AO) reviews the attendance regularly and supports students in order to improve their attendance. The AO works closely with those students with attendance concerns and investigates students who are consistently absent, which is taken very seriously. Furthermore the AO sees and supports students at school, visits home and is a key component in our efforts to secure high attendance.

In extreme cases the Attendance Officer also initiates legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility for getting their child into college. Before a case goes to court attendance levels will be monitored, setting targets for attendance levels; their intervention may also lead to a fixed penalty notice. The main aim of all action is to get a child to attend school on a regular basis.

Responsibilities

In order to achieve high attendance figures the college endeavours to work closely with parents/carers. To this end we ask parent to:

- Ensure that their child attends regularly. Parents of students must by law send their children to college and risk prosecution if they do not do so.
- Parents must ensure that their child arrives on time form morning registration, it is a legal obligation.
- Parents/carers must notify the college on each day of absence by 8.30am.
- Parents should not organise holidays during term time.
- Make contact and inform the college at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude towards college

In return the college will:

- Contact home over any unauthorised absences or attendance concerns
- Follow up promptly any concerns raised by students/parents that could impact on a student's attendance.
- Offer support and advice to improve a child's attendance
- Keep parents and students regularly informed of the child's attendance figures.
- Reward excellent or improving attendance.

Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum

This addendum supports our college's attendance policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring college attendance is maximised for those groups expected to be in.

There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the college to close to some or all groups of students, i.e. where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority/PHE or the Trust in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the college closure.

Our Guiding Principles

- 1) We will follow Government guidance on the opening of our college; however, we have made local decisions about the extent of provision that can be offered to families. This is to maintain the health and safety of our children and staff and is a function of the college building(s) as well as the resources available to us.
- 2) We will continue to provide educational childcare provision for students with EHCPs and those identified as vulnerable even during times of a wider college closure.
- 3) The college will continue to open the college to students where possible and where all limitations have been taken into consideration. Parents and carers will be informed of any changes to those eligible.

College responsibilities and guidance

- Resume taking the attendance register using college admin systems like SIMs.
- Contacting parents when absence (for eligible groups) is not known/pre-arranged.
- Continue to submit daily attendance figures using the educational setting status form by 2pm every day or at the earliest opportunity afterwards.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

New for 2020 to 2021 - not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance - 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I - illness, as would usually be the case.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine⁵. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

**** Registration**

Morning registration CURRENTLY takes place at lesson ONE and will be taken at 8.45am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late unless there is an acceptable explanation. Afternoon registration takes place at the start of lesson 3. Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson and during tutor time at the end of the day at 2.40pm
