



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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It is fundamental that regular school attendance is essential if children and young people are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

## **Mission statement**

Unity College seeks to ensure that all its students receive an education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their full potential.

Unity will encourage good attendance for all students by offering a welcoming, safe and caring environment where each member of the college community feels valued and secure

## **Aims**

At Unity College we will

- ❖ Promote a culture across the college which identifies the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and strive to improve the overall % attendance of students
- ❖ Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the college including students, parents, teachers and governors
- ❖ Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- ❖ Provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents
- ❖ Implement a system of rewards and incentives for improved and outstanding attendance
- ❖ Promote effective partnership between college, LEA and all other appropriate services and agencies
- ❖ Develop a procedural framework which defines roles and responsibilities and gives guidance on attendance issues
- ❖ Recognise the individual needs of the student when planning reintegration following a significant period of absence or when implementing in-school support for those students with deteriorating attendance
- ❖ Challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to good attendance and punctuality
- ❖ Refer to the LEA for the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices and/or Prosecution in cases where attendance/punctuality does not show considerable improvement.

# **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parents**

Parents will be sent a letter at the beginning of the school year which will detail their role and responsibilities with regard to attendance. Parents should;

- ❖ Ensure their children attend regularly and on time
- ❖ Contact school on first day of absence
- ❖ Not arrange holidays in term time as this will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher All holiday requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to booking the holiday (Pro-forma available on college website if required)
- ❖ Contact school as early as possible when concerns with attendance become apparent
- ❖ Support the school when agreed interventions/action plans are put in place

### **Students**

All students will be encouraged to

- ❖ Attend college regularly and punctually
- ❖ Attend all lessons punctually
- ❖ Endeavour to work towards the 100% attendance draw each half term
- ❖ Aim to meet the government and college attendance target of 95%+

Time will be devoted to Attendance issues every week during PD Sessions. All students should know their % attendance and have a target to work towards.

### **PD Tutors / Teaching staff**

All staff are responsible for promoting and encouraging good attendance and punctuality and should

- ❖ Register students accurately on Pars every lesson
- ❖ Follow procedures with regard to registering students and deal with students who are late to school or to lessons according to guidance set out in staff handbook
- ❖ Encourage good attendance/punctuality within their PD group and lessons
- ❖ Set aside time in PD sessions to monitor and discuss attendance issues
- ❖ Ensure students in PD group are aware of their % attendance and have a target to work towards. Reward improvement
- ❖ Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for students
- ❖ Provide a sympathetic response to students' concerns and refer them to the appropriate person if they are unable to deal with concerns themselves

### **Attendance Team**

The Attendance team will:

- ❖ Monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the school
- ❖ Manage the first day absence contact system including home visits where necessary.
- ❖ Establish procedures to deal with students with poor attendance
- ❖ Generate all attendance data required by SLT
- ❖ Track specific target groups and initiate support where needed
- ❖ Identify students causing concern by computer data analysis on a half term basis. Students below 90% to be monitored by Attendance team.
- ❖ Meet with target students on a regular basis with a view to promoting improvement
- ❖ Display attendance information on allocated notice-boards and TV screens

- ❖ Set up a rewards system for improved and excellent attendance / punctuality
- ❖ Promote the importance of Attendance/Punctuality via House assemblies, House and Attendance notice-boards and notices in PD rooms
- ❖ Circulate and file all paperwork regarding attendance to the appropriate staff
- ❖ Communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding attendance, punctuality and related issues and invite into school for discussion when necessary
- ❖ Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher regarding in school support e.g. SSC, amended timetables, alternative curriculum etc
- ❖ Work in partnership with external agencies to support students
- ❖ Deal with admin issues relating to attendance and punctuality
- ❖ Set up Governor Panel Meetings when appropriate
- ❖ Be involved with transition work from Yr 6 to 7
- ❖ Collate evidence and refer to LEA when no improvement is forthcoming with a view to the instigation of warnings, fixed penalty notices and/ or court proceedings in line with LEA procedures
- ❖ Do home visits when appropriate
- ❖ Monitor PA students and initiate procedures to encourage improvement, including informing parents if their child has fallen or is likely to fall into this category

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

- ❖ Statutory Registration will take place at the beginning of period 1 and period 5
- ❖ Registration procedures are to be found in the staff handbook.
- ❖ Students who are late after 9.00am should sign in at the appropriate place
- ❖ Lists of registration symbols are available for staff on request
- ❖ Staff will register every lesson using Pars.net
- ❖ Students arriving after the register has closed (9.30am) without good reason will be coded as 'U'. This is an unauthorised absence and may incur a penalty notice

### **PENALTY NOTICES**

- ❖ Unity College will request that the Local Authority issue Penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence including any holidays where permission has been denied by the Headteacher
- ❖ Penalty notices will also be considered for persistent and excessive lateness to college. ('U' code)
- ❖ Referral for PN's will be after a period of monitoring (except in the case of holidays where there is no monitoring period) and where a student has shown no consistent improvement despite meetings with parents and home visits. Parents will be invited to a Governor Panel Meeting and given a period of time after this to improve – any unauthorised absence during this period will result in immediate referral to the Court Officer.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

- ❖ Each Friday a letter will be sent to the parents of all students who have 2 or more late marks in a week
- ❖ Students with 2 lates in a week will be issued with a 15 min detention . PD tutors will be responsible for conducting this detention and, in accordance with the behaviour policy, referring on any students who do not attend.
- ❖ All students who have 3 or more lates in a week will be given a 60min Attendance detention. Students who do not attend without a valid reason may be give the chance to do a whole college detention or may receive a days isolation
- ❖ Lateness to lessons will be dealt with by subject staff.

### **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME/EXTENDED LEAVE**

Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised holidays and/or other unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more sessions in one term or 20 sessions over two consecutive terms will incur a penalty notice. All requests for holidays should be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to booking the holiday. There is also a Proforma for Holiday requests on the college website.

## **REWARDS/INCENTIVES**

- ❖ At the end of each half term all students with 100% will be entered into a prize draw. Vivos will be awarded to winners in each House
- ❖ Each term students are awarded with a Gold, Silver or Bronze certificate for Attendance above 95% and given Vivos.
- ❖ Targeted students are seen on a regular basis and given a % target to aim for over a short period of time. Success in achieving the target will be rewarded with Vivos
- ❖ Each term students who show considerable improvement in attendance will receive a certificate and Vivos.
- ❖ Each term certificates will be sent home to students who are maintaining +95% attendance and a letter of concern to those who are dropping below this %
- ❖ Occasional spot prizes/lucky dip in PD time for good attendance/punctuality, improved attendance etc
- ❖ End of term/year trips for all students who have achieved excellent attendance/punctuality
- ❖ Prizes/Vivos for winners of the Attendance League

## **SYSTEMS FOR DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE ISSUES**

- ❖ Every ½ term the attendance team will identify a target group of students(below 85%) and initiate the following system;
  - First letter of concern to parents – regular meetings with students for a period of approx 6 wks
  - Student/Parents/Carers meetings in College – further absence from this point will not be authorised without evidence of medical intervention.
  - Home visits
  - Governor Panel Meetings
  - Referral to Court Officer for FPN and/or Prosecution
- ❖ At Parental meetings, difficulties are identified and measures discussed to encourage improvement. Parental and legal responsibilities are also discussed along with the implications of continued poor attendance on academic and social development. Parent/student/college contracts are drawn up.
- ❖ Following parental meetings the Attendance Team will do home visits if there is still no improvement
- ❖ After a given period of time, should there still be no improvement, parents will be invited to a Governors Panel Meeting.
- ❖ The Attendance team will inform all relevant staff of actions taken which relate to students in their PD group/House
- ❖ Internal truancy is dealt with initially by the PD tutor using an attendance report card (as detailed in staff handbook) and then referred to the Attendance Strategy Manager if there is no improvement
- ❖ First day absence contact is made by the Attendance team
- ❖ Reasons for absence of targeted students will be monitored and referrals made to external agencies when appropriate
- ❖ Representatives from the Attendance team will attend Support meetings weekly

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