



# **Attendance Policy 2018-2019**

**January 2019**

## **UNITY COLLEGE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

It is fundamental that regular college 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 college.
- ❖ Provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents/carers.
- ❖ 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-college 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 Penalty Notices and/or Prosecution in cases where attendance/punctuality does not show considerable improvement.

# **UNITY COLLEGE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parents**

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

Parents should;

- Ensure their children attend regularly and on time.
- Contact college 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 requests for leave of absence for a holiday should be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to booking the holiday (Pro-forma available on college website if required).
- Contact college as early as possible when concerns with attendance become apparent.
- Support the college 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 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 promptly and accurately on Sims every lesson.
- follow procedures with regards to registering students.
- deal with students who are late to school or to lessons according to guidance set out in staff handbook (also see section on Punctuality).
- 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 any improvements.
- 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 college.
- 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 i.e. those students below 90%. Letter of concern to parents in first instance.

- invite parents in to a meeting if there are no improvement seen during the first few weeks after letter of concern sent.
- 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 college for discussion when necessary.
- liaise with the Deputy Headteacher regarding in-college 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.
- be involved with transition work from Year 6 to 7.
- collate evidence and refer to LEA when no improvement is forthcoming with a view to the instigation of warnings, 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 8.50am should sign in at the appropriate place.
- Lists of registration symbols are available for staff on request.
- Staff will register every lesson using Sims.
- Students arriving after the register has closed, without good reason, will be coded as 'U'. This is an unauthorised absence and may incur a penalty notice.

### **PENALTY NOTICES/PROSECUTION (see flow chart)**

- Unity College will request that the Local Authority issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence including any leave of absence where permission has been denied by the Headteacher once the criteria is met.
- 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 given a period of time to improve – any unauthorised absence during this period may result in a referral to the Court Officer once the criteria is met.
- If attendance is below 65% a referral for prosecution will be made rather than a penalty notice referral.
- Unpaid penalty notices will automatically lead to prosecution.
- The criteria for a penalty notices is currently 10 or more unauthorised sessions in one term or 14 unauthorised sessions over two consecutive terms.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

- Each Monday PD tutors will be given a list of students with 2 or more lates from the previous week. They should arrange appropriate detentions and inform parents as necessary.
- Students with two lates will be given a 15 minute detention the following week. Students with three or more lates will be given a 30 Minute detention. These detentions are the responsibility of the PD tutor.
- If they do not attend this detention further sanctions will apply.
- If punctuality does not improve over a given period parents will be invited to a meeting in College and further sanctions put in place.
- Lateness to lessons should be dealt with by subject staff. (This may be by arranging for the time to be made up or by ensuring that the students catch up on missed work).

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

Leave taken during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised leave totalling 10 or more sessions in one term or 14 sessions over two consecutive terms will incur a Penalty Notice. All requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher and in the case of requests for holidays this should be done prior to booking the holiday. There is also a Proforma for requests for leave of absence on the college website.

## **REWARDS/INCENTIVES**

### Attendance Raffle

- At the end of each week all students with 100% attendance for that week will be put into a draw which will be drawn at the end of each term.
- Bonus weeks allow for students who have 100% attendance that week to increase their chances of winning the draw as their name will go in the draw four times.
- Bonus weeks are based on previous data which results in any 'dip' weeks in % attendance.
- Prizes will be 'Love to Shop' vouchers ranging in value from £30 to £5.

### Attendance League

- At the end of each week PDs are given points depending on their PD's attendance that week e.g. 4 points for 100%, 3 points for 99%, 2 points for 97-98% and 1 point for 95-96%. Students who have less than 70% are discarded from the data e.g. dual registered students.
- The PD with the best attendance from the week will receive a queue jumper for Chaucher's or Bronte's the following week.
- The winning PD from each House at the end of the term will receive a free breaktime snack.

### Certificates and Prizes

- Each year students are awarded with a Gold, Silver or Bronze certificate for Attendance above 95%.
- Students who receive a Gold award for 100% for the whole college year will receive a badge.
- Attendance and Punctuality will be considered with regards to students going on College trips, becoming a prefect, attending Prom etc.

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

- Every half term the attendance team will identify a target group of students (below 90%) and initiate the following system;
  - i. First letter of concern to parents. If no improvement within a few weeks, parents to be invited in to a meeting.
  - ii. At this point no further absence will be authorised without evidence of medical intervention.
  - iii. An attendance contract may be agreed at this meeting.
  - iv. Little or no improvement after the meeting will result in referral to the Court Officer for the consideration of Penalty Notice or Prosecution once the criteria is met.
  - v. Further meetings with parents may take place during the referral process. Representatives from LCC or the College Governors may be present at these meetings.
- 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. An Attendance/Parent contract may be drawn up.
- Following parental meetings, the Attendance Team may do home visits if there is still no improvement.
- 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.
- Representatives from the Attendance team will attend parents' evening to speak to the parents/carers of identified students re improving attendance.

# Improving Pupil Attendance – Penalty Notice

Register check every half term

Attendance problem identified  
(Initially between 80 – 94.9%)

Letter to parents / carers outlining concern during 1<sup>st</sup>  
week of half term below 94.9%

Improvement at  
end of half term

No Improvement

Thank you letter  
to parents / carers

Letter to parents / carers for  
meeting in College. Contract  
drawn up. Unauthorise  
absence unless proof of  
medical intervention provided.

Improvement

Prepare evidence  
notes for court  
officer when  
requested

Refer for Penalty  
Notice if criteria  
is met  
DTA/HTH

Attendance  
Dropped

No, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting  
pending  
prosecution

Court Officer  
monitoring 3  
weeks

No Improvement.  
Lists checked  
weekly Friday /  
Monday

Improvement  
case closed

Penalty Notice not  
paid

No  
Improvement  
Penalty Notice

Penalty Notice  
paid case  
closed