

### 1. Introduction

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all learners can fulfil their potential is recognising that learners need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leave young people vulnerable to falling behind.

This policy has been written to take into account Departmental advice on school attendance (DfE advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities November 2016:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>) In particular, the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, governing bodies, learners and parents.

- Schools and local authorities are expected to: (a) promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence; (b) ensure every learner has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, (c) act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Learners are expected to be punctual to their lessons.

### 2. Attendance at College

Learners may enter the college site from 8.45 am and must vacate the site by 15:30 pm each day. Outside of these times there is no supervision available; therefore, unless the child is involved in an authorised college activity, the college cannot accept responsibility for their care beyond the school day.

### 3. Registration and Lateness Procedures

A registration system is in place to record attendance, lateness and absences.

- Each college day is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon, each registered separately. Punctual attendance at both daily registrations is compulsory.
- When a learner fails to attend college for one or more sessions this will be recorded as an absence. Absences will be shown as authorised or unauthorised. The College determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised (see below).
- Morning registration for all learners is at 9:00 am each day; afternoon registration is at 12:45 pm.
- Any learner arriving after 9:10 am will be registered on the class register with a late mark and the number of minutes late recorded.

- Learners arriving after 9:10 am should report to the College Office to sign the late sheet. At 10:00 am the registers will be closed. Anyone arriving after 10:00 am will be marked as absent (Code U) and learners must provide a note explaining the reason for arriving late.
- Failure to follow these procedures for registering will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.
- When learners are unaccounted for, the College will telephone home to ensure all absences are explained.
- Learners will be registered by subject staff in each lesson during the day. Any unexplained absences should be reported following the Missing Learner Procedure (see Appendix 1).

#### **4. Absence from school**

Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their child attends school for each session during the prescribed school days of the academic year, unless there is illness or some other acceptable reason for absence.

- All absence relating to illness must be explained by a written letter or email and signed by the parent/carer. This should be shown or sent to the Key Worker or Administrator who will amend the register.
- The Administrator will inform parents/carers of their child's absence if the College has not received any notification after 5 school days following the learner's return to school. If, after ten school days have elapsed since a learner's return, there has been no letter to explain the absence, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and further sanctions by the College may be applied.
- Where a learner's attendance causes serious concern, the College will follow Departmental guidance: Children missing education 2016 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>) on sharing information with external agencies.
- Punctuality and attendance data for individual learners are recorded in their school report.
- For absences due to medical/dental appointments within the school day learners must provide written evidence of the reason for absence. This may include a treatment card or an appointment notification. Copies are made and kept in the office. If parents need to take their child out of the College early for whatever reason they must sign the book at the office.
- For parents/carers seeking authorisation for a proposed absence they should complete an Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time (see Authorised Absence appendix 2).

#### **5. Illness**

Parents/carers are asked to inform the College by 9.00 am on the first (and every subsequent) day of absence due to illness. It is crucial that parents/carers adhere to this procedure to ensure that all learners are safe and their whereabouts accounted for.

- A child who has been given antibiotics should be kept away from school for the first 48 hours of treatment.

- A child who has been sick or who has diarrhoea should also be kept away from school until the child has been clear of the problem for 48 hours.

If unsure, please contact the Key Worker or College Administrator for further guidance on specific illnesses and required length of absence.

## **6. Long term absence due to illness**

Occasionally, some learners experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. Youth Works Community College will deal with each case individually, agreeing procedures for reintegrating these learners with each family as the need arises. Please contact the College if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

## **7. Persistent Absence**

Attendance (either on a lesson or daily basis) falling below our College monitoring threshold of 95% or persistent lateness, without a medical or other satisfactory explanation will be considered to be a serious concern and remedial action will be initiated by the learner's Key Worker.

Parents will be alerted to the College's concerns and asked to discuss the situation with their child in order to improve their child's attendance or persistent lateness. If a learner is persistently absent and the College's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership (EIP) Team by the Key Worker. In such cases, the Local Authority may choose to issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **8. Authorised absence**

'Authorised absence' means that the College has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or, in the case of illness, has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

- Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
  - Parents are advised to notify the School on the first day and every subsequent day the child is unable to attend due to illness. The College will authorise absences due to illness unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the College can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. The College can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but will advise parents of their intention. The College will not request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
- Medical or dental appointments
  - Absence due to a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

- The College, however, encourages parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the learner should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Religious observance
  - The College will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.
  - The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the College will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
- Leave of absence authorised by the College
  - It must be noted that taking a learner on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt a learner's educational progress. The College strongly discourages such absence and will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In particular, leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
  - A leave of absence is granted entirely at the College's discretion and the Head Teacher's decision is final. The College will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
  - The application must be made in advance and the College must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.
  - Where a leave of absence is granted, the College will determine the number of days a learner can be away from school. If the College does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.
  - The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

## **9. Requests for Leave of Absence**

The learner or parent should obtain an Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time (see Appendix 3) from the College Administrator or from Youth Works' website. When the completed form is returned to the College, the Head Teacher will decide whether to authorise or not and advise the parent of the decision in writing.

## **10. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of trustees.

Ratified by the Board of Trustees: 6 September 2019

Review due: 5 September 2020

## Appendix One - Missing Learners Procedure

Learners should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without permission. It is possible that on some occasions a learner may leave the premises without such knowledge or permission and this policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of the learner to the College.

### Objectives

- To locate any missing learner quickly;
- To ensure that all learners are kept safely on the College premises during school hours unless they have permission to leave.
- To ensure that all learners who leave the College during school hours only do so with the permission of the Head Teacher (or other delegated person) and the permission of the parent or carer.
- To ensure that teachers and staff keep learners under appropriate supervision at all times.
- To ensure that if a learner cannot be found during the school day, every realistic effort is made to locate them as quickly as possible (see below) and to return them to the College – in such an instance parents or carers will also be informed.

### Procedures

It is the duty of all staff to ensure that learners are safe and appropriately supervised during the school day. However, it should be noted that if a learner is missing staff will:

- Notify the College Administrator as a learner may have reported there.
- If the learner is not, the office staff will notify the relevant Key Worker to investigate (If these staff members are unavailable a member of SLT).
- The member of staff will check that the learner is not participating in some other authorised activity.
- The member of staff will search the College buildings.
- In the event of the learner not being located, the College Administrator will inform the parents or carers and (if appropriate) the police. Northamptonshire County Council's guidance relating to children missing in education will be followed <http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/information-for-school-staff/pupil-support-and-inclusion/Pages/attendance-and-behaviour.aspx>
- The incident will be logged on the learner's behaviour log/safeguarding cause for concern form as appropriate.

### Outcomes

The safety of all learners will be given our highest priority. A missing learner is, and should be, an extremely rare occurrence. This policy aims to put in place swift, appropriate and effective actions to locate missing learners and to inform the appropriate people concerned.

## Appendix Two – Application for leave of absence during term time

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in an annual family holiday. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Education Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in advance in writing using the attached form. Permission for authorised leave of absence may be granted for holidays in special circumstances, totalling no more than two weeks in any school year, unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Please note the school year is from September to July.
- The Department for Children Schools & Families state that absence for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
  - availability of cheap holidays
  - availability of desired accommodation
  - poor weather experienced in the school holiday period
  - overlap with beginning or end of term
  - holidays booked before checking with the school
  - day trips

(Keeping Pupil Registers – guidance in applying pupil registration regulations - DCSF September 2006)

There are certain times of the year when a child may experience extra problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the College Head Teacher will take these and other factors into account.

If the Head Teacher refuses your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to the College as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

## Request for Leave of Absence

Name of learner: .....

Home Address .....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

First day of absence: ..... Date of Return to School .....

Total number of school days your child will miss .....

The exceptional circumstances why I have to take my child out of school during term time are:

.....

.....

.....

Having read the information overleaf, I would like to apply for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed, then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed .....

Date .....

School children in England and Wales already have 13 weeks' holiday a year. Taking additional holidays in term time is not a right – it is up to the school whether or not to grant leave of absence during term time. The Government is putting schools under pressure not to authorise holidays except in very exceptional circumstances. As a school, we would strongly recommend that you do not take your child out of school during term time.

**This form should be returned to the College AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS before the first day of absence. Please do not book holidays before you know whether the absence will be approved.**