



Maximising Attendance

A Guide for Parents/Carers



Introduction

Why attendance is important

For students to reach their full potential they need to be in school. Full attendance means a student can benefit from and enjoy everything the school has to offer.

At York High we want to work with parents and carers to ensure school attendance is consistently excellent.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up. It's not only the academic work: missing out on the social side of school life can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships, a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on. Employers want to recruit people who are reliable. So children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of getting a good job.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher, and the other children in the class.

Research has shown that children who are not in school are most vulnerable and are thus more easily drawn into crime. Those children who play truant are more likely to offend than those that do not. Research also shows that less than 40% of pupils in secondary schools with an average of 17 days or more absence get 5 good GCSEs (grades 4plus compared to more than 90% in schools with an average of less than 8 days absence).

Many parents are surprised how quickly their children accumulate 15 days of absence. Every lesson in school matters and children who have time off find it difficult to catch up.

What does the law say?

By law, all parents and carers who have children of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that they receive an effective education. Parents/Carers whose children are registered at school are therefore responsible for ensuring that they attend regularly, punctually and stay in school during school hours. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

York High's attendance policy

The school has an attendance/punctuality policy that follows the City of York Fast Track process. We reserve the right to use the fixed penalty notice once all other interventions have been explored with both students and parents. This decision is not made lightly but does reflect the importance we place on attendance.

We feel that by working together with parents we can remove many barriers that might lead to poor attendance. Your child's Form Tutor and/or Head of House is their first port of call when trying to stop any worrying attendance patterns. They will be reviewing attendance data on a weekly basis, and may feel that contact is required to see if any negative trend can be halted and reversed.

Any student with an attendance percentage below 90% (without medical evidence to explain absence) will have further absence classified as 'unauthorised'.

Absence Procedures

What to do when your child is absent

If your child is absent from school please ring 01904 806600 between 8am – 8.45am to speak to the school Attendance Officer. The school tracks unauthorised absences for all students. If your child is marked absent with no reason at morning registration, you will be contacted by the school so we can ascertain the reason for the absence or to alert you if your child is not in school when they should be.

What do I do if my child needs a medical or dental appointment?

Please try to arrange all medical and dental appointments out of school hours (every lesson really does count). If however, you have no choice then please inform the school of the appointment beforehand. Depending upon the timing of the appointment, please arrange for your child to attend school for as much of the rest of the day as possible. We require a letter for all medical appointments **and** a note in your child's planner.

What do I do for all other absences?

There are very few other reasons that the school can authorise an absence. Examples of these would be family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observance would be acceptable for short absences. Examples of unacceptable reasons for missing school would include shopping and birthdays. Students will be expected to catch up on any missed work.

If you are unsure please phone or email reception@yorkhigh.southbank.academy

What about holidays in term time?

Parents are asked to arrange all holidays during school holiday periods. You should not expect the school to agree to an absence for a holiday during term time. Holidays or other absences during term time mean that your child misses out on important school time – both educationally and socially. It will then cause problems when they return from their holiday, in catching up on the work that they have missed.

A letter must be submitted to the school. Each application will be considered individually. No holiday requests will be authorised unless there are *exceptional* circumstances. All other requests for an unauthorised absence should be put in writing addressed to the Attendance Officer, stating clearly why the absence from school is being requested. Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. The law states that schools have the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence in a school year under very special circumstances.

Why is unauthorised absence so important?

If a student has a pattern of unauthorised absence then the school must evidence to the government what support we have put in place to ensure that students attendance improves. As a school we will always look in the first instance to work with the student/parent/guardian, through meetings, phone calls or a formal Attendance Panel meeting.

If this does not improve the student's attendance we are left with no choice but to refer that child's parents/guardian to the Local Authority who will start legal proceedings against the parent/guardian, which might result in a fine and the long lasting impact on employability issues from having a criminal record.

Useful Websites

NHS 111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. Call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. This is available 24 hours for you to find out more about illnesses, operations, tests and treatments.

Is my child too ill to attend school

The following websites are really useful in establishing if your child should attend school

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
- <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/parentscarers/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool>

The Government's Website

This will provide you with an overview of the law on school attendance and absence including advice on holidays during term time and home education.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

YorOK Website

Information, help and advice for children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners in York.

www.yor-ok.org.uk

York Family Information Services

Family Information Service: help and advice for children, young people, families, parents and carers in York.

<http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/FIS/family-information-service.html>

York Council Website

Information, advice and links on attendance from York City Council

https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20163/attendance_and_truancy/173/attendance_and_truancy

Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (01904 551900) - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a multi-agency single point of contact for all concerns about children and to make sure that children receive the right level of support. You can phone them to receive support and advice.

Poor attendance

The school always looks to work with students/parents/guardians to improve attendance and might look to support via: academic support, communication with home, explaining the importance of good attendance, Form Tutors support, Head of House support, Pupil Welfare Officer, Attendance & Engagement Officer, recognising and rewarding good attendance.

What happens if my child's attendance does not improve and no good reason is provided for the absence?

The school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority (City of York Council). If your child is not attending school regularly, the school must evidence it has tried to improve your child's attendance. This will be done through writing to you and inviting you in for meetings. You may be offered to complete an 'attendance agreement'. This is a formal agreement in which the school seeks to provide you with support and you agree to help improve your child's attendance.

As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with penalty notice or being taken to court. The Local Authority may decide to prosecute a parent.

If this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

A penalty notice of £60 may be issued (by the LA, school or police) as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution.

The Local Authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. This would be heard in the Family Proceedings Court. An ESO is made in respect of a child and makes the Local Authority responsible for advising, supporting and giving directions to a child and his or her parents in order to make sure that the child attends school regularly. There are sanctions against parents who fail to cooperate.

Magistrates may also direct the Local Authority to consider applying for an ESO following a prosecution.

At what age can children leave school?

By law, compulsory education for all children in England ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches 16.

Your child cannot leave school until that date. Even if they have received their National Insurance card before then, it is still against the law for them to leave school and begin full-time work.

What can I do to help?

If you suspect that your child may be missing school or is unhappy at school, you should contact the school as soon as possible so that you can work with them to resolve any difficulties.

Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school but be on the alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as bullying or problems with school work and discuss these with the school.

If your child is ill or absent for any other reason, contact the school on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.

Follow the school's procedures for notifying absence, and always let the school know of any days that your child is unable to attend.

Make sure your child arrives at school on time for both the morning and afternoon sessions. The school day begins at 8.40am.

Take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school.

Co-operate with any support, such as a parenting contract offered by the school.

Where can I get support?

Please contact the school for support at any time. The following people are here to help:

Attendance Officer - Miss K Sowden

Attendance & Engagement Officer - Miss L Harrison

Pupil Welfare Officer - Miss E Masterman

Designated Safeguarding Leads - Miss V Burns and Mr J Walker

Heads of House

Aqua - Mrs T Muress

Ignis - Mrs P Wilson

Terra - Mr A Swales

Ventus - Mrs N Crook