Charles Darwin School Attendance Policy

Persons Responsible:

Governors: **Ethos Committee**

Mr Paul Woolfenden

SLT: **Mrs Louise Rees**

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Reviewed and readopted: **2 December 2013**

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To be reviewed and readopted by Governors in September 2020

Contents

1.   Mission statement

1.1.   Charles Darwin School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a fulltime education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

1.2.   The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment and make each member of the school community feel wanted and secure.

1.3.   All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

1.4.   The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

1.5.   To meet these objectives Charles Darwin School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2.   Whole school policy for school attendance

2.1.   To continue to improve the overall percentage of attendance for pupils at school: Charles Darwin School target is 96%.

2.2.   To reduce the number of Persistent Absentees (PAs): Charles Darwin School target is less than 5%.

2.3.   To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and Governors.

2.4.   To maintain a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks. (See Appendix 1 - Guidance on Registration).

2.5.   To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.

2.6.   To have a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data.

2.7.   To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.

2.8.   To encourage pupils to be more aware of their own percentage attendance figure through the Attendance ladder.

2.9.   To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.

2.10.   To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.

2.11.   To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.

2.12.   To reduce the number of children and families taking holiday during term time.

Procedures

3.   Improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at Charles Darwin School

3.1.   Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.

3.2.　To ensure a senior member of staff has overall responsibility for whole school attendance [currently Mrs Rees, deputy headteacher].

3.3.　To ensure an external educational welfare lead is employed by the school for input one day a week.

3.4.　To be aware of the guidance outlined in the current Children Missing Education policy and ensure that all students are monitored through strict attendance protocols with the support of the Education Welfare Officer and the LEA.

3.5.　Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.

3.6.　Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.

3.7.　Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

3.8.　To unauthorise absence for holidays during term time in Years 7 to 13.

3.9.　To track families requesting leave of absence with consideration to using a penalty notice.

4.　Reduce the number of Persistent Absentees at Charles Darwin School

4.1.　Identify pupils who are PAs (at or below 90% attendance) or at risk of becoming PAs.

4.2.　Inform the Borough of the percentage of PA pupils when requested.

4.3.　Raise awareness of PA pupils in pastoral teams and set targets where necessary.

4.4.　To mentor individual PAs (pastoral leaders and SLT).

4.5.　EWO to meet with Achievement Co-ordinators and with target families to set strategies to improve attendance, particularly focusing on reducing PA numbers.

4.6.　To maintain whole school awareness of PA students by having this as a target to reduce PA totals in the whole school improvement plan.

5.　Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors

5.1.　Use staff/school handbook to ensure all staff are aware of policies regarding authorised and unauthorised absence and holidays in term time.

5.2.　Produce termly/annual reports to parents/governors.

5.3.　Discuss attendance at Parents' Evening, e.g. EWO meets identified parents if attendance is a concern on school report.

5.4.　Make attendance and punctuality a feature in The Link on a regular basis.

5.5.　Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff through partnership with the EWS.

5.6.　Display materials at focal points: form rooms, electronic presentations in Student Services entrance and attendance noticeboard.

5.7.　Discuss attendance issues in Education Welfare Service/pastoral meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.

5.8.　Maintain award systems, e.g. badges, house trophies, certificates, 100% attendance draws, reward trips and treats, etc.

5.9.　Reinforce use of punctuality sanctions within whole school system.

5.9.1.　Ensure a member of student services is visible on late gate duty on a daily basis.

6. Maintain agreed roles and responsibilities, and promote consistency in carrying out designated tasks

6.1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration and ensure use of mandatory codes.

6.2. Make contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence via Truancy Call.

6.3. Make contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence via First Day Calling for identified vulnerable children.

6.4. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.

6.5. Monitor late students at the gate regularly, text sent from Truancy Call.

6.6. Hold regular Late Gate using senior staff to target persistent latecomers.

6.7. Students to be sanctioned for repeated lateness and lateness after 9:30am via the whole school detention system and senior staff detentions. To be notified via designated school staff in Student Services and via form tutors.

6.8. Timetable staff to meet with Education Welfare Officer, making best use of EWO time.

6.9. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Welfare Service.

6.10. Review attendance regularly in SLT and pastoral meetings.

6.11. Be familiar with the Education Welfare Service's referral and recording system.

7. Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils

7.1. Highlight attendance in:

- PHSE through tutor programme
- Attendance ladder
- Assemblies
- School notice board
- Staff available to talk to pupils
- "Mentor" system including SLT mentoring
- Parents' Evenings
- Pupil planners

7.2. Publicise support offered by schools.

7.3. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.

7.4. Maintain regular communication with parents, e.g. letters/phone calls home.

7.5. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents via planner.

7.6. Involve parents from earliest stage.

8. Maintain a systematic approach in gathering and analysing attendance related data

8.1. Standardise recording of:

- authorised/unauthorised absence
- educational activity
- presence

8.2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.

8.3. Decide what information is provided for:

- Governors
- pastoral staff
- other school staff
- parents
- pupils (individual or groups)
- Education Welfare Service

8.4. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

8.5. Inform the Borough on a half-termly basis of names and percentage of Persistent Absentees (PAs), i.e. those pupils with 90% or less attendance.

9. Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school

9.1. Initiate first day absence contact.

9.2. Make full use of computer generated letters and Truancy Call/Parent Call.

9.3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.

9.4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Item 4).

9.5. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).

9.6. Encourage all parents into school.

10. Implement a system of rewards and sanctions

10.1. Use pastoral budget for a system of rewards. Each year group is also allocated reward funding.

10.2. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.

10.3. Promote use of attendance Ladder for rewards.

10.4. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.

10.5. Involve pupils in system evaluation.

10.6. Make use of effective and immediate sanctions.

10.7. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. Education Welfare Service, parent, Social Services and Looked After Children Team.

11. Promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies

11.1. Designate key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.

11.2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Service.

11.3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.

11.4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Service referral.

11.5. Hold weekly attendance review with key school staff and Education Welfare Service.

11.6.   Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate, e.g. for PA pupils and families.

11.7.   Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community, e.g. Safer Neighbourhood Team, Safer Transport Team.

11.8.   Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school eg Youth Policing Team.

11.9.   Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

12.   Holidays in Term Time

12.1.   There is no automatic entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we therefore do not expect students to be taken out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendments 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (see below).

12.2.   Exceptional Circumstances

12.2.1.   Applications can be made by parents for Leave of Absence on compassionate grounds to enable a child to attend a wedding, funeral, religious observance etc. Family holidays and celebrations are not considered to be exceptional circumstances. Such applications will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher.

12.2.2.   A Leave of Absence form must be completed for all holiday requests not less than 3 weeks before the intended period of leave. The form will be returned to the parent/carer clearly stipulating if approval has been given. If approval has been given, it will be made clear that it is only given in these exceptional circumstances and that no further requests will be considered.

12.2.3.   Any requests for a Leave of Absence that is not authorised will be communicated to parents/carers in writing. Please be advised that if a second Leave of Absence is requested during a student's time at Charles Darwin School and their previous Leave of absence was in excess of 3 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued. A Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child is in education or has an unacceptable period of unauthorised absences. The Penalty Notice is £60.00 that must be paid within 21 days increasing to £120.00 to be paid with 28 days.

13.   Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence

13.1.   Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.

13.2.   Involve/inform all staff in re-integration process.

13.3.   Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.

13.4.   Consider peer support and mentoring.

13.5.   Consider use of the Student Learning Zone.

13.6.   Involve parents as far as possible.

13.7.   Agree timescale for review of re-integration plan.

13.8.   Include Education Welfare Officers, parents and pupil in Re-integration Plan.

14. Alternative provision [as statutory guidance taken from Keeping Children safe in education 2019]

14.1. When the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider we will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will need to be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil.

14.2. The school will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

14.3. The school will need to ensure attendance records at the alternative provision are recorded and maintained for the duration that the pupil remains on a dual registration.

15. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding policy when considering patterns of absence over a period of time. Judgement can then be made regarding involvement of the EWO, opening a CAF on a family or considering referrals to other external agencies ie Social Care.

16. This policy should be read in conjunction with the latest Keeping Children safe in Education document provided by the DfE. There is an Annex A section within this document relating to Children Missing in Education.

See Appendix 2: Attendance and Punctuality Overview.

Registration

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.30 am and 1.10 pm.
- If a pupil arrives after the registers close at 8.35 am and 1.15 pm, s/he should be marked as late.
- When a pupil misses registration altogether and fails to provide an adequate explanation, the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for this session.

Authorised Absences

Medical evidence will be required for the school to authorise any absence due to illness for pupils with attendance at or below 90%. Absences may be authorised for pupils for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (whenever possible made outside school hours)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence

Absences will not be authorised for:

- Truancy
- Arrival (without justified reason) after registration period has closed
- Shopping
- Looking after family members (save in exceptional circumstances)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays or similar events
- Any work (paid or unpaid) undertaken during school hours
- Family holidays during term time.

When considering individual cases of absence, the school will consider:

- The nature of the event
- Frequency of absence
- Whether advance notification is given
- Overall attendance record of the pupil.

If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service through the Attendance Officer or Achievement Co-Ordinator.

The head teacher can authorise leave of absence requests at his discretion.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY - OVERVIEW

Concentrate on:

- Improving the average attendance percentage
- Prompt arrival to school
- Prompt arrival to lessons
- Reducing the % of Persistent Absentees (PA's)

Pupils	Responsibility
	• Arrive to school by 8.15am each day. • Home to notify school with reason for absence. • Aim to achieve 100% attendance. • Seek to book any medical appointments outside of school hours. • Catch-up on all missed work due to absence. • Ensure that arrival to lessons is prompt.

Staff	Responsibility	First Line Support
Form Tutor	• Be on time to registration. • Ensure that register is taken promptly at every session. • Notify pupils in their form of attendance and encourage this to be recorded in planners each week. • Challenge any late comers and seek explanations. • Check student planners and lesson monitor to review punctuality to lessons. • Liaise with Attendance Officer and Achievement Co-ordinator to identify pupils with attendance concerns including unaccounted absences. • Liaise with Attendance Officer and Achievement Co-ordinator to reward pupils with a good attendance and punctuality record. • Encourage good attendance and importance for achievement in school.	ACO
Subject Teacher	• Be on time to all lessons. • Take a register every lesson on Lesson Monitor (SIMS). • Start the lesson promptly - challenge any late comers and detain if necessary. • Inform HoF of regular lateness and detail if necessary. • Ensure that all lessons are ended promptly. • Ensure pupils move swiftly to and from lessons by being out in the corridor between lessons moving pupils along. • Check that any pupil late for Period 1 has signed in at Student Services and has a note in their planner.	Head of Faculty

Achievement Co-ordinator (ACO)	• Devise systems of rewards for pupils with high attendance and punctuality. • Ensure presentation of certificates for 100% attendance each term and promote good attendance and punctuality in assemblies. • Check registers on a weekly basis, take action on any concerns and liaise with Attendance Officer. • Conduct truancy spot checks - particularly targeting pupils with poor attendance/truancy records. • Meet Attendance Officer and EWO each week to discuss pupils with poor attendance/ punctuality.	SLT
Attendance Officer	• Checks Absence Line each morning and update records to authorise absence. • Meets with Achievement Co-ordinators on a weekly basis to discuss targeted pupils/concerns. • Meets with EWO on a weekly basis to discuss concerns. • Have an overview of Persistent Absentee (PA) students in Years 7-11 and Sixth Form. • Ensure correct pupils are being mentored. • Maintain/update notice board to notify pupils and teachers of attendance trends. Complete truancy checks. • Produce the annual Truancy Return for DFE. • Provide Registration Certificates for individual students when required. • Have overview of Lesson Monitor (SIMS) across the school. • Provide weekly reports on attendance and punctuality to ACOs. • Calculate lates and determine sanctions for lateness – WSD/SSD/learning recovery time.	SLT Line Manager
SLT	• Liaise with Attendance Officer on a regular basis. • Review Attendance Policy on an annual basis. • Liaise with ACO's to identify suitable strategies for improvement in attendance rates, e.g. PA mentoring programme. • Be aware of percentage of PA students and ensure family meetings are organised with EWO present to discuss strategies to improve attendance. • Inform Headteacher and Governors of attendance percentage at any given time.	Governor
Governor	• A Governor is identified each year with the responsibility of regularly monitoring attendance.	