



ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Presented to Governors' Students and Safeguarding
Tuesday 4 June 2019**

**In force with effect from
September 2019**

Approved:

Consultation Process	
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ARTHUR MELLOWS VILLAGE COLLEGE



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Arthur Mellows Village College is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending College regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole College community - students, Parents / Carers, teaching and support staff and Governors/Trustees - have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 Arthur Mellows is a successful College and students play their part in making it so. The College aims for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and students should be at College, on time, every day on which the College is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- 1.4 All staff (teaching and support) at the College have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the College community and look forward to coming to College every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.0 Attendance Leader (AL)

- 2.1 A member of staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the College's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the College. This person will also provide up to date attendance data to be shared with the Senior Leadership Team, to inform a report that is prepared for Governors termly. He / she will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.2 It is very important therefore that Parents / Carers make sure that their child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together this will be achieved.

3.0 Why Regular Attendance is so important?

3.1 Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

- 3.2 Ensuring a child's regular attendance at College is the Parent / Carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from College without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4.0 Safeguarding

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this College, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all students encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum

4.1 Failing to attend College on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

4.2 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – Parents / Carers, students and all members of College staff.

4.3 To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to Parents / Carers regularly on how their child is performing in College and what their attendance and punctuality rate is
- Celebrate and reward good attendance

4.4 The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

5.0 The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 advises the Parent / Carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs and / or disability, he/ she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

5.1 Where the absence is due to a disability known to the College, Parents / Carers are asked to make this clear so that reasonable adjustments or accommodations can be discussed.

6.0 Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from College has to be classified by the College (not by Parents / Carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required within the dedicated absence reporting procedures.

6.1 **Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from College for a good reason like illness, medical / dental appointments which unavoidably fall in College time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

6.2 **Unauthorised** absences are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. Examples of this could include:

- Parents / Carers keeping children off College unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the College day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at College too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional / unavoidable circumstance

6.3 This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and / or legal proceedings.

6.4 Whilst any child may be absent from College because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend College. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the College, the Parents / Carers and the student. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

7.0 **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within a significant period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and the College needs full parental support and co-operation to tackle this. Missing 10% of school time equates to an entire school day per fortnight.

7.1 The College monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and the Parent / Carer will be informed of this immediately.

7.2 All PA, or potential PA, cases will be considered for referral to the link Peterborough City Council Attendance Service.

7.3 PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through the pastoral system and the College may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

8.0 **Absence Procedures:**

If a student is absent the Parent / Carer must:

- Contact the College by 9.00 am on the first day of absence and on all subsequent days. Email: absence@arthurmellows.org or complete the website absence form.

8.1 If a child is absent the College will:

- Telephone or email Parent / Carer on the first day of absence if the College has not heard from them
- Invite Parent / Carer in to discuss the situation with the College if there are concerns
- Refer the matter to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service if attendance falls below 95% without justifiable cause. They may consider issuing a Penalty Notice for Non College Attendance. (95% equates to missing half a day of school per fortnight, or 2 full school weeks over the academic year)

8.2 Telephone numbers

There are times when the College needs to contact Parents / Carers about lots of things, including absence, so up to date contact numbers are required at all times. Parents / Carers should ensure the College always has an up to date number.

8.3 The role of the School Attendance Officer (AO), Peterborough City Council

Parents / Carers are expected to contact the College at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the College may refer the student to the School Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. He / she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

8.4 Alternatively, Parents / Carers or students may wish to contact the AO themselves to ask for help or information.

8.5 They are independent of the College and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the College office or by contacting Peterborough City Council Attendance Service, Bayard Place, Peterborough.

9.0 **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher / Form Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

9.1 How we manage lateness

The College day starts at 8.45 am, all students should be on the College site by 8.40 am at the latest. Registers are marked by 9.00 am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

9.2 At 9.00 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it may result in an unauthorised absence. This may mean that the Parent / Carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

9.3 If a student has a persistent late record the Parent / Carer will be asked to meet with the College to resolve the problem, but the Parent / Carer can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to College on time.

10.0 **Leave of Absence**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional / unavoidable circumstance in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the College expects Parents / Carers to help by not taking children away in College time.

10.1 It is important to note that any savings the Parent / Carer think they may make by taking a holiday in College time are offset by the cost to the child's education.

10.2 There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday. All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the College will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

10.3 It is important that the Parent / Carer understands that the College may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional / unavoidable circumstances**.

10.4 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the College (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the College, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

11.0 Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, should a student fail to return to College by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence, the College is permitted to delete a student's name from the register.

11.1 This is possible if child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from College for a period of not less than 20 College days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2)

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student(s) is/are unable to attend the College by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause.

11.2 Children who are deemed 'missing from education' will be reported immediately to the Local Authority who will investigate on the College's behalf. Advice will then be taken with regard to taking off roll.

12.0 Those people responsible for attendance matters in this College are:

- Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Student Well-Being
- Attendance Leader
- Pastoral Support Team
- Student Reception for attendance administration

13.0 Summary

The College has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to Parents / Carers and to promote good College attendance.

13.1 Equally, Parents / Carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

13.2 All College staff are committed to working with Parents / Carers and students in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

14.0 Policy Review

The Local Governing Committee (or responsible committee) will review this policy in line with the procedure for policy review.

Date for Review

If no other reason for review (see policy review procedure) this policy will be reviewed in June 2022.

COVID-19 Addendum to the Attendance Policy of Arthur Mellows Village College

This addendum will be reviewed following any Government review of the guidance

Context

On 20 March 2020, as a result of Covid-19 and the Government's resulting social distancing strategy, schools closed to all learners except those of critical workers, those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those learners categorised as vulnerable. As such, although Arthur Mellows Village College has never fully closed, there are many learners who have not been in school for a protracted period of time.

The College has committed to the wider opening of our school based on the condition that there will be sound national medical and scientific evidence that it is safe to do so. 'Wider Opening' means a resumption of our core business of education, rather than the current limited arrangements which are, in effect, organised as childcare for key workers and vulnerable students. We want our children engaging in education so that we can support them more effectively from an academic, social and welfare perspective.

This addendum supports the College's Attendance Policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring school attendance/engagement is maximised for those groups expected to be in school. This addendum applies from week commencing 15 June 2020. It will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in line with the Government's reviews of legislation and guidance in the coming weeks and months.

There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the College to close to some or all groups of students, ie where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority or the Trust in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the school closure.

Guiding Principles

1. The College will follow Government guidance on the wider opening of our school; however, we have made local decisions about the extent of provision that can be offered to families. This is to maintain the health and safety of our children and staff and is a function of the school building(s) as well as the resources available to us.
2. The College will continue to provide educational 'looked after' provision for the families of key workers, children with EHCPs and those identified as vulnerable.
3. The College will prioritise educational provision in this order: vulnerable students and children with EHCPs; children of key workers; other children. This will apply where the Head of College identifies a high risk of limited capacity in school, this may be due to staff absence or where the anticipated number of children arriving in school is too high to maintain a safe adult to child ratio. Government guidance states that settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then to other children.
4. The College will follow existing Government guidance on attendance and absence and the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020. We will not penalise parents if their child does not attend school.
5. The College will follow the Government's guidance in recording and reporting on attendance as our school opens its doors to more students.

This addendum relates to recording and reporting on the attendance and absence of 5 groups of students:

1. Children of key workers, some of whom may not be on this school's roll ordinarily.
2. Vulnerable children
3. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
4. Year 10 and 12
5. Children whose education is being supported remotely at home who are not in one of the groups identified above.

NB These groups are not mutually exclusive.

The Government guidance issued on 28 May 2020 stated that from the point at which they open to wider groups of students, schools will need to do the following:

- Schools should resume taking an attendance register for all students.
- Schools should use the codes suggested in the guidance to record attendance and absence in the attendance register.
- All settings should submit daily attendance figures using the educational setting status form by midday every day.

Recording student attendance on the school's attendance register

From 23 March 2020 to the day before school's wider opening, the following applies to Arthur Mellows Village College:

- Use # for all students on the attendance register.
- Complete and submit attendance data to the DfE using the relevant form, including staff numbers in school/on site.
- Share this information with the Trust who collates and shares this information with external agencies, eg Local Authority and DfE.

From the date the school opens to wider groups of students: from 15 June 2020 dependent on phase to a date TBC, the following guidance applies. This supersedes the processes outlined above.

Students who are eligible to attend and do attend, ie students in one or more of groups 1 to 4 above:

- Use / = am \ = pm.

Students who are not eligible to attend a session, ie those in group 5 above who will not return to school nor in groups 1 to 4.

- Use X on the attendance register.

Students who are eligible to attend a session but do not, this could apply to children in group 1, 2, 3 or 4 above for a variety of reasons, apply the relevant code on the attendance register dependent on circumstances. The Government guidance states that '*at this time, all absence should be regarded as authorised*'.