



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of review: October 2024
Next review date: October 2025
Staff responsible for policy: JMB

1. AIM

To secure maximum attendance of all students as part of the school's determination that all should achieve their potential both academically and socially.

2. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

Attendance at school up to the last Friday in June in the academic year in which a student becomes sixteen is a legal requirement. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure the attendance of their child as much as it is the school's responsibility to encourage and support it.

The school will implement existing legislation (DfE: Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024).

We will also demonstrate an unwavering commitment to maximising attendance by using evidence-informed practices such as:

- ensuring that the school is regarded by all students and parents as a happy and worthwhile place to attend;
- celebrating good and improving attendance;
- supporting students and families to increase attendance;
- taking action (using an Educational Welfare Officer) where appropriate.



3. WHAT DOES PERCENTAGE ABSENCE LOOK LIKE IN DAYS?

An attendance of 90% is the equivalent to missing half a day per week during an academic year. This adds up to over a term in absence during Years 8 – 11.

Annual Attendance Percentage	Days attended	Days missed	Hours of lessons missed
100%	190	0	0
95%	180.5	9.5	47.5
90%	171	19	95
85%	161.5	28.5	142.5
80%	152	38	190
75%	142.5	47.5	237.5

There are **175 non-term time days** for holidays, appointments, shopping etc. A two week holiday in term time means the maximum attendance that can be achieved is 94.7%.

4. WHAT IS PERSISTENT ABSENCE / RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE / SEVERE ABSENCE?

Persistent absence (as defined by the Department for Education and often abbreviated in this context to PA) is when a child’s attendance drops below 90%. Therefore, if a student who is with us at the start of the academic year has 19 or more days of absence he/she/they will be classed as persistently absent (this can be adjusted for in year joiners).

Risk of persistent absence is defined as someone who is close to attendance dropping below 90% in the long term. We identify this as a student who is between 12 and 18 days of absence.

Severe absence is used to identify students who are absent more than they are present (i.e. have an attendance below 50%).

5. THE SCHOOL’S ROLE IN GOOD ATTENDANCE

There is a degree of overlap between this policy and several others, most notably:

- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Policy for Students’ Attitudes and Behaviours and
- Anti Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

- Privacy notice / Data Protection Policies (as it is now mandatory for schools to share *daily* attendance data with the government).

All of the practice in these policies has an impact on attendance because together they create the atmosphere in school, the culture and the ethos. They create a positive, inclusive culture where students are supported, confident and ambitious and, therefore, are keen and able to attend school.

In summary, our role is to, where possible, create the conditions required for attendance to be good. We can do this by being aware of (and trying to tackle/support with):

- Health issues;
- Family circumstances;
- Wellbeing and safeguarding issues (including bullying);
- Issues relating to SEND;
- Transportation issues;
- Socio-economic issues;
- Cultural or language barriers;
- Curriculum or academic barriers or challenges.

On ‘the ground’ this is embodied by:

- Warm, welcoming classroom environments;
- Building positive relationships;
- Recognition of good/improving attendance but also barriers too;

6. ROLES ASSOCIATED WITH ATTENDANCE

Job role	Current postholder	Role in this policy
Headteacher	JMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for strategy for maintaining and improving attendance and reporting progress to all stakeholders, including governors. • Ensuring that this policy is adhered to and is adapted as required; • Ensuring that the complementary policies referred to in section 5 are compatible with good attendance and are also adhered to.
Deputy Headteacher – Students’ Attitudes, Behaviour and Wellbeing	GLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day leadership of the Attendance Team to ensure they know about students with atypical arrangements or are changing enrolment (e.g. beginning some AP); • Oversight of safeguarding concerns raised by attendance at AP. • Oversight of process when parents request EHE.
In House EWO	LJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with identified students in PA (and their families) to improve their attendance; • Co-ordinating with external agencies (including the Section 19 team at the LA) to ensure families are getting support and/or students are receiving an education; • Instructing the external EWO which cases to pursue.



Co-ordinator for Vulnerable Learners	KJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running 'The Link' (our provision to get students who are absent from school due to anxiety etc. back in to school)
Attendance Administrators	CW + NM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process parental/carer notifications of absence Ensure registers are completed on time and accurately Alert parents/carers to absence from school on the day and seek reasons as best as possible via telephone calls if required; Encourage and support parents to send their children in to school; Keep tutors and other staff aware of challenges that students are facing with their attendance; Sending out praise / recognition cards and other positive communications; Carry out safe and well checks when we have not been able to ascertain a student is well.

7. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Notification of absence

The school expects that:

- Parents/carers notify the school about student absences.

For planned absences such as medical appointments, attendance at a funeral etc. this should be done by contacting the school and speaking to the reception team.

For requests for leave during term time (e.g. in exceptional circumstances, family holiday etc.) parents/carers are required to fill out the form on the school website. It is here:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/communications/online-forms-holiday-request-etc/> NB: Please see the 'Leave During Term Time' paragraph in the ATTENDANCE CODING section for more information on how these requests will be processed.

For absence 'on the day' (e.g. illness) parents/carers should telephone the school and select option 1 from the menu and leave a voicemail.

When absence is becoming a concern

The school expects that parents/carers:

- recognise and celebrate personal achievements;
- communicate proactively with school if there is a concern about your child and work with the school help understand any barriers to attendance;
- take an active role in any multi-agency efforts;

8. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT INTERVENTIONS

Automated communications with parents/carers and students

With the exception of students who are in tier 2 or 3, on cycle we will email parents to let them know their child's individual attendance, how many days of absence 'left' before being classed as persistently absent, how their attendance compares to their year group at DSHS and how it compares to their year group nationally. We will also indicate what the child's attendance will be if they attend all of the sessions in the upcoming three week cycle to give an indication of how much sustained attendance is needed to move the overall figure significantly upwards.

Contact following up on absence

The attendance administrators will proactively call families where they identify a pattern of absence (or increasing absence) even if parents have got in touch to let us know.

Tiers of support

Tier name	Likely actions	Person
0 – Attendance is not a concern	Send periodic automated communication so parents made aware that child's attendance is good (>95% and/or not at risk of persistent absence) Let tutors and HoH know.	Attendance administrators
1 – At risk of persistent absence 12 to 18 days absence (adjusted for late joiners) or... (at the start of the academic year) in PA last AY.	Send the frequent automated communications so parents are made aware of risk of falling into PA. Verbally contact parents regarding every absence, giving priority to PP and SEND students. Let tutors and HoH know.	Attendance administrators
2 – Persistently absent but still less than 25 days absence	Send the frequent automated communications so parents are aware of the progress towards achieving 85%+ by the end of the year. Verbally contact parents regarding every absence, giving priority to PP and SEND students and in the conversations paying close attention to consequences of going above 25 days. Let tutors and HoH know.	Attendance administrators
3 – Persistently absent and greater than 25 days absence	No longer receive automated communication. Parental meetings to discuss barriers / strategies / coordination of <i>external</i> support. Attendance contracts* Let tutors and HoH know.	In House EWO / Vulnerable Learners Coordinator



4 – At risk of or in severe absence	<p>No longer receive automated communication.</p> <p>Parental meetings to discuss barriers / strategies / coordination of external support and/or use of the ‘The Link’ where appropriate.</p> <p>Attendance contracts / attendance supervision orders / parenting orders / fixed penalties (and notices to improve) / prosecution*</p>	<p>In House EWO / Vulnerable Learners Coordinator</p> <p>External EWO</p>
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* the national guidance makes it clear that these interventions should be used on a case by case basis, as appropriate to the individual circumstances. For more information see Chapter 6 of https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Rewarding good attendance

Good attendance is recognised by the automated emails referred to in a previous section.

Students are awarded praise points for working well in class, good homework, kindness etc. They are also given demerits for negative behaviours (e.g. disrupting the lesson, lateness etc.) Their ‘net’ point score along with the *attendance streak* is used to calculate how many ‘Droitwich Dollars’ they have to spend in the school reward shop.

An attendance streak is how many consecutive* days a student has attended school. Bands of streaks have different levels of ‘boost’ applied to them.

Days	Droitwich Dollar (D) Boost
10 - 19	+10%
20 - 29	+20%
30 - 39	+30%
40 - 49	+40%
50 - 59	+50%
etc. upto...	
170 - 180	+170%
...and then...	
180 – 190	+200%

For example, if a student has a net behaviour point score of 25 and an attendance streak of 44 days then their 25 points gets a 40% boost so they have D35 to spend. If they miss tomorrow (without getting any more praise or demerit points) then their spending power returns to D25.

* the detail behind the calculation can be found in the appendices.

We also use the reports created to identify students with rapidly improving attendance and maintenance of 100% attendance. They are rewarded with extra recognition including certificates and items from the school shop.

9. ATTENDANCE CODING

in accordance with DfE guidance the following attendance codes will be used. NB: if codes are updated during the academic year then the school will immediately begin to work with the new guidance.

Present	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
	Either the school has given approval in advance or has accepted an explanation as justification	'Unauthorised' means 'where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or for which no permission has been given.'
In school (/ and \)	Illness (I) (or I02 for COVID)	No reason yet given (N)
Educated off site (e.g. with the Medical Education Team) (B) (or K, when this provision is organised by the Local Authority)	Medical or dentist appointment (M)	Truancy or inappropriate reason for absence (see below) (O)
Educational Visit (V)	A personal / family circumstance (C)	Inappropriate reason for absence e.g. going shopping, birthday, visiting relatives where there is no ill-health, unwillingness to attend (with no illness)
Work Experience or work related learning (W)	An authorised and agreed part time timetable (C2)	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher. (G)*
Examinations (e.g. a music exam)	Attending an Interview (J1)	
Participating in a sporting activity (P)	Exclusion (E)	
	Traveller absence (T)	
	Religious Observance (R)	

There are other codes used with there are school closures. For more information see page 87-90 of https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

**Leave During Term Time*

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the Headteacher does grant leave during term time the C code will be used.

As per the regulations outline above, Headteachers will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

To make a request for an absence from school or to notify the school of intentions to take a family holiday in term time parents/carers are required to complete an online form:



<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/communications/online-forms-holiday-request-etc/>

Where possible, this request should be made at least two weeks before the requested absence begins. The Headteacher will review the request and reply in writing.

If parents decide to take their children out of school and go on holiday when they have not received approval from the Headteacher, they must inform the school that this is their intention by replying to the letter sent to them by the Headteacher. The absence will be coded as G (which counts as unauthorised) and these absences would contribute to potential EWO action through the number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence.

These absences may be subject to a prosecution via a penalty notice fine. The national threshold for a penalty notice is ten sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks. It is important to note two things from the guidance:

1. The unauthorised absence doesn't have to be in consecutive sessions and the unauthorised absence does not have to be entirely made up of unagreed family holiday. For example, a two or three day holiday may tip a student's record over the threshold.
2. The school should consider if a penalty notice is the "best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour."

10. PROCEDURES FOR DETECTING ABSENCE AND COLLECTING AND ANALYSING ATTENDANCE DATA

The attendance register is a legal document. It must be marked accurately and kept up to date. The school records attendance at registration and at all lessons using an electronic registration system (Arbor).

Every member of staff is issued with a laptop and is responsible for accurately recording attendance. Supply staff are provided with paper registers if we are not able to provide them with a laptop.

Appropriate action is taken when registers are not taken; including analysis of staff who regularly do not complete registers in a timely fashion.

The Attendance Administrators will:

- Process the notifications of student absence that have been received through the voicemail and text messaging service including adding the correct codes and comments to Arbor.
- Closely monitor the AM tutor and period 1 registers for missing marks and pursue as necessary to get them completed by colleagues.
- Contact the offsite alternative provision providers (e.g. Bon Terre) and process emails from the MET to check that students are present on the days that they are scheduled to attend.
- Synthesise the planned and notified absences and today's registers to a point where an accurate absence notification can be sent to parents/carers.
- Process any direct responses to the absence notification as appropriate.
- Ensure that for any students who arrived to school after AM tutor time that their AM session mark is equal to L.
- For the students who were either late to AM tutor or who arrived in school during P1 or P2 (before 10.30am) place them in the break time detention and create a 'collection' list for those on collection duty.



- After waiting for a response to the absence notification and receiving no reply, telephone parents/carers of children who aren't in school today (except for children the In House EWO is already working with) to try and ascertain a reason for their absence. Add the correct codes and comments into Arbor.
- Process responses from tutors into outstanding N codes.
- Contact parents (via telephone) to ascertain reasons for absence where N marks remain (prioritising 'live' three day+ absences).
- Carry out 'safe and well checks' at students' houses if we have either not been able to make contact with parents and/or have concerns about a student's welfare.

With the support of the Headteacher, use Arbor to conduct statistical analysis of the attendance figures in order to identify:

- students for whom either recognition and/or automated parental/carer contact could either maintain good attendance or improve attendance and then:
 - send the communications after checking with HoH and the In House EWO for any known issues regarding the family / situation etc.
- students for whom human intervention e.g. HoH or EWO is the most appropriate intervention and then either:
 - take that case on personally;
 - pass it on to the in-house EWO;

as appropriate.

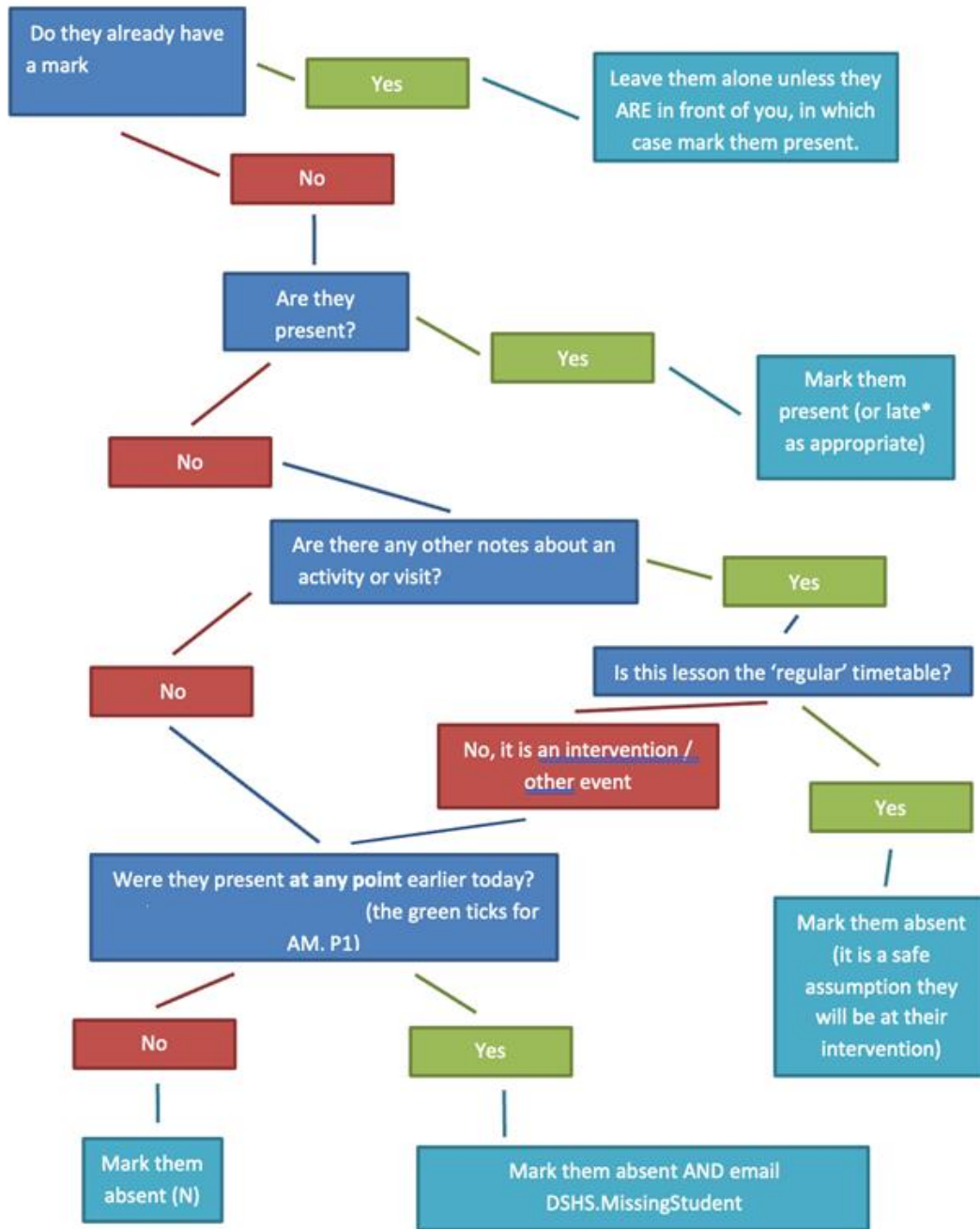
The In House EWO will:

- Make the statutory 'ten day' notification referrals to the LA.

11. ATTENDANCE AND SAFEGUARDING AND TRUANCY

In addition to the above processes regarding detecting absence we also use attendance data to safeguard children.

The following flow chart will be used to inform decision making when completing registers and assist with identifying students who may have gone missing during the school day.



If students that were previously registered as present cannot be located on site then parents/carers will be contacted. If necessary, emergency services will be contacted. External agencies will also be contact if appropriate.

If a student is found to have deliberately missed lessons they will be punished with a lunchtime detention in the first instance. If this becomes a persistent problem they will spend time in the Refocus Room.

12. ATTENDANCE AND PART TIME TIMETABLES / ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Part Time Timetables and or use of 'The Link'

In rare circumstances students may either not be required to attend for the full school day every day and/or attend provision at another site. For example:



- a student may be returning from a serious medical procedure and require a part time timetable in the short term (see also the policy for Supporting Students with Medical Needs);
- a student may require a part time timetable as part of a programme of managing their illness (see also the policy for Supporting Students with Medical Needs);
- a student may begin on a part time timetable as part of an integration from a period at the Aspire Academy (or similar) or reintegration from a long exclusion / failed managed move;
- a student may have a reduced timetable to (re)gain momentum with attendance;
- a student may have a reduced timetable to stabilise his/her behaviour in an attempt to avoid a permanent exclusion.

It is important to note that all part time timetable arrangements are fixed in their longevity (e.g. a 2, 4 or 6 week plan with a review date) always with the intention to build a student up to full time attendance.

'The Link' is our primary method of encouraging students who have anxiety about returning to school to feel confident about doing so. By using the bungalow at the bottom of the drive away from the main buildings, varying start and end times, varying uniform requirements and using a graded/phased approach to reintegrate, we the intention is to build up student's ability to return to school full time.

Part time timetables will never be used as a form of exclusion. A Pastoral Support Plan will be written for students who are on a Part Time timetable / engaged in Alternative Provision.

Where it is appropriate and increases the likelihood of success, work will be set and reviewed/assessed for students for the lessons that are missed due to the part time arrangements.

Alternative Provision

Some students may benefit from more vocational provision e.g. at a college or alternative provision provider or a workplace. For example, a student may benefit from smaller groups and a change in environment at a provider such as Bon Terre. Alternatively, in rare circumstances, a student may undertake a work placement on one day a week.

Processes to ensure safeguarding in relation to attendance

In both of the instances above there is a procedure to follow to ensure that the student's timetable accurately reflects their expected attendance pattern on site with us and any expected attendance at offsite provision if appropriate.

The member of staff (likely to be a Head of House) instigating the change must, *after seeking the support of parents/carers*, complete the online 'Part Time Timetable / Alternative Provision Change Request' or 'Change to Enrolment' form (as appropriate) on the Launchpad. The forms ensure that the objectives and nature of the change are clearly logged and a senior member of staff thinks the arrangement is appropriate (considering any additional vulnerability the student may have e.g. LAC, EHCP, CIN etc.) and, once verified, the request goes to the Attendance and Enrolment Office to make the appropriate change to the student's record in Arbor and timetable (including ensuring it is time bound to the original request).

In the case of alternative provision, this creates a register for the Attendance Administrators to keep records and detect any absence (see PROCEDURES FOR DETECTING ABSENCE AND COLLECTING AND ANALYSING ATTENDANCE DATA).



In the case of part time timetables at the expiry of the arrangement (or if an indefinite end date has been provided) the form will persistently ask the requester if the arrangements are still appropriate (i.e. require the requester to review the case with a view to building towards full attendance).

If a part time timetable arrangement spans a whole session then the C code will normally be used for that session (unless a member of staff visits to support the child, in which case the B code would be used).

13. CHILDREN WHOSE HEALTH NEEDS PROHIBIT ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The school will aim to ensure that suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs. It will also ensure that students, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

Expected Absences of Less Than 15 Days

The school will attempt to plan to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Arrangements which the school could make include:

- Part-time timetables with review to build on improving attendance.
- Creation of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)
- Sending work home through liaising with teaching staff
- Making a referral to the Medical Education Team (MET)
- Liaising with hospital schools and other agencies such as CAMHS, Early Help and Social Care
- Agreeing a time limited reduced timetable or alternative provision (see 12. ATTENDANCE AND PART TIME TIMETABLES / ALTERNATIVE PROVISION)
- Creation of a Pastoral Support Plan
- Providing online lessons / guidance (e.g. GCSEPod).

In the first instance, parents/carers will be invited in to meet key staff and an Individual Healthcare Plan will be drawn up in accordance with the school's "Supporting students with medical conditions policy". Where possible the student will be involved in this process. At this meeting a plan for reintegration back into school will be discussed with agreed review times. Issues around ensuring the child is being safeguarded will be discussed at this meeting.

Expected Absences of 15 Days or More

Hospital Admissions

The school's In House EWO will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the student is in hospital.

The Medical Education Team

In Worcestershire the statutory duties for children unable to attend the school because of medical difficulties are discharged by the Medical Education Team. The Medical Education Team ensure that arrangements are in place for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs so that they have appropriate and ongoing access to education. The Team consists of qualified teachers and teaching

assistants who are skilled in teaching children /young people of statutory school age with a wide range of physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

The Medical Education Team service level agreement and referral form can be found on the Worcestershire Children First website: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/1/support-services/22/medical-education>

Where it is not appropriate or possible for the needs of children with medical difficulties to be met by the Medical Education Team and the school has not made alternative arrangements, Worcestershire Children First will work with schools and families to agree provision. The school will alert Worcestershire Children First when there is evidence to suggest that a child is unable to attend school and alternative provision is not yet in place to ensure they access full time education.

Designated staff at MET (Worcester or Redditch) will follow their attendance policy, reporting and following up any absence with parents/carers and the Home School. School registers will then be updated to reflect the student's attendance to this provision. Contact will be made with the Local Authority as a matter of utmost priority to ensure there is no delay in provision being made for the child.

The school is committed to being part of half-termly review for every student attending MET so that the needs of the student and their family are scrutinised and actions formulated to facilitate reintegration into mainstream education when appropriate.

Reintegration

Where reintegration is anticipated the school will:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the student to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible;
- Enable the student to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school);
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school;
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made.

14. FABRICATED AND/OR INDUCED ILLNESS

In a very small number of cases there may be concerns that a child's medical difficulties may be fabricated or induced. Parents/carers may fabricate or induce illness in a number of ways:

- Fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history.
- Fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts, tests and records including falsification of letters and documents.
- Induction of illness by a variety of means.

As with any other form of abuse, where schools are concerned that a child may be experiencing or be at risk of harm, advice will be sought from the Local Authority. In cases where Fabricated and/or Induced Illness is a consideration, evidence of medical difficulties such as medical appointment letters and multiagency working as part of the child's IHP will be required.



15. PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality to AM tutor time

Students who are late to AM tutor time (or miss AM tutor time and then subsequently attend P1 or P2, either on time or late) without a valid reason (e.g. something M or C code) will be placed in 'Basics Detention' at break time on the day they are late.

Parents/carers will be notified via SMS or email that their child has been late and has been placed in detention.

Any student who arrives to school after break time without a valid reason (as above) will be placed in HoH detention on the same day.

Punctuality to lessons (and Personal Development time in the PM)

Students who are late to lessons will be marked on the register as an L and given a stage 1 demerit for being late. Students who are persistently late will be given a stage 2 demerit for being late. Once a student has reached stage 2 for persistent lateness to lessons he/she/they will be added to the next available Basics Detention.

16. APPENDICES

ATTENDANCE STREAK CALCULATION

One day is both sessions (AM and PM). i.e. if you are in for the morning but then absent for the PM then that isn't a day so you'd lose your streak

Some attendance codes count as present e.g. school visit, interview, approved sporting activity, work experience, study leave (Y12/13) i.e. your streak will continue if you have one of these.

Some absences pause the streak. Any COVID related absence; a school closure; the code C (authorised circumstances); absences related to a medical condition; the code for religious observance pause streaks. Pause means that the streak doesn't grow during these absences but the streak doesn't go back to zero.

Illness, family holiday, unauthorised absence etc. are examples of absences that will end a streak.



TEMPLATES / PRO FORMAS

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time Form

This form can be found on the school website here:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/communications/online-forms-holiday-request-etc/>