

Sheridan School

'A unique service for unique young people'

Attendance Procedure

Sheridan School

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Attendance Procedure

Procedure Purpose

The purpose of the procedure is to provide an agreed and consistently applied framework within which attendance at Sheridan School can be managed. The procedure aims to help ensure that all students attend both regularly and punctually and ensures that attendance matters are monitored and responded to. The procedure further provides for the active investigation and follow-up of all unexplained and questionable absenteeism.

Registers and Registration

Registers are maintained in accordance with DFE and Local Authority guidance. Registration takes place between 9.00am and 9.15am. Students who arrive at the school after 9.16am will be classified as late and an entry to signify this will be made in the register.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

All Students absences will be categorised as either authorised or unauthorised. An absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation is received with the request from the student's parent / carer. If no request and explanation is received or if the explanation is not deemed satisfactory then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Procedures for Following-up Absenteeism

All parents / carers are requested to ensure that if a student is absent from school they should contact the school as soon as possible – preferably on the first morning of any absence.

If a student has not arrived by the end of the period set aside for registration and no explanation has been received from the student's parent / carer, then a phone call will be made by the

member of staff responsible for student welfare to the student's parent / carer to elicit the reason for the absence. If there is no response to the initial phone call further calls will be attempted during the day.

If a student arrives after registration and school staff have reason to believe that the student's parents / carer is unaware of the lateness, then a phone call will be made by staff in order to make the parent / carer aware.

Should a parent / carer persistently fail to comply with the school's procedures on notification of absence the Head of School will write to that parent / carer to remind him / her of his / her responsibilities.

Safeguarding and Attendance

School absenteeism is a safeguarding concern and therefore the following process will be followed for students who are not attending and/or no reason has been provided for an absence and/or it has not been possible to speak to parent/carer to ascertain the reasoning behind the absence.

- If your child is absent from school and we have not been informed as to why, a welfare telephone call will be made at the close of registration (9.15am)
- If it has not been possible to speak to a parent/carer to ascertain the reasoning behind the absence, then a second telephone call will be made at the close of afternoon registration.
- If it has not been possible to speak to a parent and carer after the second telephone call and your child is absent from school again the following morning a third welfare telephone call will be made at the close of morning registration.
- If by the third telephone call it has not been possible to make contact with a parent/carer then an unannounced welfare visit/check will be conducted that day by a member of staff. This visit will be conducted by a trained DSO within school where possible.

- If upon the welfare visit/check, there is no response and/or the member of staff visiting has concerns as to the welfare of the child then the member of staff will return to school and will contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) to raise a safeguarding concern.
- If a student has been absent for three consecutive days even if an explanation to the student's absence has been provided, then a DSO will make a telephone call to speak to the parent/carer and the student. This will result in an unannounced welfare/visit check if the student remains absent on the fourth day.

Procedures for Monitoring Attendance

The Head of School will regularly inspect the registers to identify emerging patterns of absenteeism. Any such patterns will be discussed at team meetings and appropriate support strategies will be put in place.

Attendance and punctuality will feature in a student's targets.

It will be the responsibility of all the school staff to ensure that the importance of regular and punctual attendance is continuously stressed to the students and that appropriate supportive strategies are used with students who may experience attendance difficulties.

Staff at Sheridan School will liaise with parent/carers and if assigned the student's social worker where appropriate, to ensure that support is given to parents/carers where necessary. In the event of persistent absences, a meeting will be called between all relevant agencies to discuss the issue and related concerns.

For students whose attendance falls below 90% and it is viewed this is likely to continue and it is not a 'short term' drop in attendance, then an attendance plan will be devised to increase attendance again. This will be devised in conjunction with parents/carers and the student concerned.

Strategies Used

In order to support students who may be experiencing attendance difficulties Sheridan staff will:

- Be alert to early signs of difficulties
- Ensure that there are clear channels of communication to the student's parent / carer
- Speak to the student individually
- Contact the parent / carer by phone or letter
- Record all such contacts on the student's file
- When necessary, personally visit the student's parent / carer
- Invite the student's parent / carer to Sheridan
- Set clear attendance targets for improvement
- Monitor progress on a daily basis
- Offer encouragement and provide reassurance where appropriate
- Liaise with other services / agencies when necessary
- Consider the resource implications of taxi / lift support

Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local Authorities and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason:

Parenting Order

Education Supervision Order

School Attendance Order

Penalty notice

You can be given one or more of these orders, but the Local Authority does not have to do this before prosecuting you.

Parenting Order

This means you must go to parenting classes. You will also have to abide by what the court says to improve your child's school attendance.

Education Supervision Order

If the Local Authority thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you are not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order.

An attendance supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The Local Authority can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.

School Attendance Order

You will get a School Attendance Order if the Local Authority thinks your child is not receiving an education. You have 15 days to provide evidence that you have registered your child with a school or that you are giving them home education.

The order will require you to send your child to a specific school. If you do not, you may be prosecuted.

Penalty notice

Instead of being prosecuted, you can be given a penalty notice. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If you do not pay the fine, you may be prosecuted.

Prosecution

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.