



# Ellis Guilford

**ELLIS GUILFORD SCHOOL**

**Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**Reviewed: September 2018**

## **1. Mission Statement**

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at the Ellis Guilford School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

## **2. Aims**

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It is recognised that:

- All students of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No student should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of students and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many students and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## **3. Expectations**

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**We expect the following from all our students**

- They attend school regularly.
- They will arrive on time, in full school uniform, with a pen, a pencil and a school bag.
- They will inform a member of staff/tutor of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### **We expect the following from parents**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To provide written evidence explaining any absence and proof of all medical appointments
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework on doddle.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affect the student's performance or attendance at school.

### **Parents and students can expect the following from school in relation to attendance**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and first day absence call
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- We will reward good attendance.

## **4. Absence from School**

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### **4.1 Illness and other legitimate reasons.**

If a child is unfit for school, parents must contact the school on the **first day**, in person or by telephone or text. When the child returns he or she must provide a medical or written note, signed by a parent for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time.

Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time, provided a written explanation is received. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house, caring for a sibling or pet, buying school uniform or as a treat. Parents should in all cases aim to make appointments involving children out of school hours.

The first day and last day of term are compulsory school days and all students are expected to attend unless they are ill. If your child is ill you need to contact the school on the first day of absence as per the Attendance Policy.

**Please take note** if your child does not attend on the first day or last day of a term without an exceptional circumstance this could result in a Penalty Notice being issued against parents.

**The school will decide** in all cases whether to authorise an absence on the basis of the evidence available to it.

#### **4.2 Holidays**

From September 2017, the law has changed. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. A meeting needs to be arranged between the parent/carer and the schools Attendance Co-ordinator, six weeks prior to the request of absence. Any child who does not return by the agreed date of return will incur unauthorised absences until such time as they return and will be reported missing after two weeks to the Local Authority. This could result in a Penalty Notice of £120.00 per child being issued against the parents.

All of the above are reflected in School brochures, newsletters and on school web sites.

#### **4.3 Religious Observance**

Nottingham city is a vibrant and diverse city that promotes respect for the faiths and values of all its communities. There are many religions celebrated in our schools and it is important that we recognise the diversity of the school population.

It is acknowledged that different schools have different arrangements according to the ages of the children, the type of school and the percentage of students from different religious backgrounds. This section promotes community cohesion by recognising the diverse needs of all sections of the school community.

In Nottingham city one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year) should be counted as authorised absence. The Student Regulations 2006 state that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised (absence) **'on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'**. Additional days off for shopping or for extended celebrations should be treated as unauthorised absence.

In respect of pilgrimages, schools may request to see copies of visas. Dates of return should also be agreed prior to the period of leave. Parents should be advised about this policy and procedures regarding unavoidable delays in returning or taking extended leave that has not been authorised by the school.

#### **4.4 Safeguarding Concerns**

Any safeguarding issues pertaining to a child being taken out of school in circumstance that cause concern will be addressed directly to the Social Care Duty Team covering the area where the child lives.

If there are concerns that the student may be coerced into forced marriage, the following information will be obtained where possible prior to any student going abroad; the child's name and date of birth, parents names, any address where the student may be staying overseas, details of travel plans and contact details of relatives remaining in the U.K., a photocopy of the child's passport; information that only the student is aware of. This information would assist any investigation by the relevant Embassy/ High Commission, should the student fail to return.

#### **4.5 Responding to non-attendance**

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by letter.
- On their return to school, tutors will ask students for a note to explain absence.
- Where there is no response, a second letter will be sent after three days of unexplained non-attendance, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff, from the Education Welfare Officer or the school Police Liaison Officer (where attendance causes concern).
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned. This may in some cases, result in a referral to the EWS.

#### **5: Punctuality**

Being on time helps a child develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and towards others and is a sign of good character. It is respectful and builds good habits for later in life as lateness is not tolerated in the work place so it is important that they develop good habits now in preparation for their future.

Research shows that: **attendance and punctuality are the single most important factors in school success.**

##### **5.1 Lateness to School**

All students are expected to arrive at school on time and be at their **first lesson** by 8.50am. Any students arriving at the school site after 9.30am are marked late and will receive an hour detention on a Tuesday from 3.10-4.10pm in A9 with the attendance team. Parents will be contacted by text.

**Registers will close ten minutes after the original registration has closed. Any student arriving within the ten minutes will be recorded as an L which signifies late. Any student arriving after this time will be recorded as U which signifies that they arrived after the official close of the register and will therefore denote an unauthorised absence.**

##### **5.2 Lateness to lessons**

Students who arrive late for lessons will serve a class teacher detention to make up the time missed.

##### **5.3 Persistent Lateness to School**

Students who are persistently late will be dealt with on a case by case basis. This will usually involve a letter being sent home informing a parent that their child's punctuality will be monitored. Should punctuality not improve parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue.

The school may request that a Penalty Notice is issued where there has been persistent lateness that results in unauthorised absences being recorded. In order to request a Penalty Notice, parents must be aware that they are likely to receive one (per child/per parent).

### **6: Persistent Absentees**

Where a student's attendance is lower than 90% the school will exercise caution in authorising any absence and may not do so without a discussion with parents as to the exact nature of the absence.

Key staff at the school will meet on a weekly basis in order to analyse the attendance patterns of those students who are below 90%. At this meeting action will be identified to monitor and support persistent absentees for all in-school staff and for out of school staff such as the EWS in intervening to improve the attendance of this cohort.

### **7. Reintegrating Students with Poor Attendance**

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The return to school for a student after long-term absence requires special planning.

Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.

All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.

Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the House Team or SENCO may be required.

### **8: Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to students the importance and value of education.

In addition to these there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

#### **8.1 Member of SLT with responsibility for Attendance:**

- To oversee the whole attendance policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, students and parents.
- To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set to reduce absence.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.

- To report to the Senior Management Team on attendance matters.

## **8.2 Attendance Team**

The key responsibilities of the Attendance Team are:

- Manage first day contact
- Initiate telephone contact to explain absences.
- Maintain all registers - checking for accuracy and identifying concerns.
- Produce weekly reports for all House Leaders and tutors to identify patterns of attendance and to ensure that all unauthorised absence is tackled by pastoral teams.
- Supply attendance figures on a weekly and termly basis to all pastoral staff and to other parties outside the school.
- To follow the attendance flow chart of consequences as an intervention to improve attendance
- Report to the Assistant Head where there are registers that are not taken in accordance with school policy.
- Carry out home visits when required
- Refer attendance concerns to the Educational Welfare Service

## **8.3: House Leaders:**

- To collate and analyse attendance data for the House and each year group.
- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.
- To reinforce good practice at tutor meetings.
- To organise rewarding students for good or improved attendance.
- To include attendance figures in assemblies.
- To initiate contact with parents in cases of prolonged unexplained absence.
- To liaise weekly with the Attendance Officer regarding attendance issues in the House
- To liaise with EWOs as appropriate.
- To plan for the return of long-term absentees in conjunction with the Inclusion Team

## **8.4: Form Tutor**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance with students or refer to the Attendance Coordinator or House Leader for further support in identifying reasons for absence.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence

- To display information on attendance.
- To ensure that attendance remains high profile with the tutor group and that students understand the importance of good attendance
- To make students aware of their attendance regularly
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform their line manager of concerns.
- To initiate meetings with families and other agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.

### **9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. (Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered.)

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:-

- Take an active interest in their child's school life and work
- Attend attendance meeting, parents' evenings and other school events
- Ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Ensure that their child is only absent for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance
- Always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence
- Respond as quickly as possible to any Schools Comms communication
- Confirm any absence in writing when the child returns to school
- Not book family holidays during term time in line with statutory requirements
- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend

### **10. Working with other agencies**

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS. It is, therefore, vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

These are the main support services:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Mental Health Services- including MALT
- Social Care.
- Connexions
- Youth Service.
- Local police

## **11: Education Welfare Service**

### **11.1: The Role of the EWS**

The fundamental purpose of EWOs is to maximise attendance rates for individual students, individual schools and for Nottingham City as a whole and to discharge the City Council's legal duty to ensure that all students of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. EWOs will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

EWOs will employ three main interconnected and interdependent strategies to ensure that registered students of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually:

- As authorised representatives of the City Council, monitoring attendance through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with school staff
- Undertaking individual casework with non-attending students as per their identified priorities, and their parents
- Offering strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing attendance.

### **11.2: EWO Casework Priorities**

#### **PRIORITY ONE**

- Unauthorised Persistent Absentees (PA)
- Children subject to a Safeguarding Plan or CAF where the EWO is a key member of the Core group
- Siblings of a PA who have been identified for Early Intervention
- Family Welfare Case as identified at Case Review
- 10% unauthorised absence in a 4 week period where school interventions (dialogue with parent, letter, meeting in school ) has not led to an improvement
- Unusual absence combined with concerns from school
- 10 days continuous unauthorised absence with no contact/explanation from the parent

## **PRIORITY TWO**

- Unauthorised PAs which require 4 week review letters (Preventative)
- Where attendance is an issue (at least 20% unauthorised absence where the school have tried to resolve issues)
- Family Intervention Project /Alternative Learning Service cases referred with 20% unauthorised absence where workers/school have tried to resolve issues
- Fair Access Panel cases which may require monitoring
- Cases where children are subject to a Safeguarding plan where the EWO is not a key member of the Core group

### **11.3: City Council policy on Prosecution**

If a student who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly and attempts by the school and the EWO are unsuccessful in that the parent(s) fail to ensure the regular attendance at school of their child(ren), the Local Authority will, unless there are mitigating circumstances, consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parents to appear before the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In deciding whether or not to take legal action, the Local Authority must be satisfied that:-

There is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction; it must consider what the defence case may be and how this is likely to affect the prosecution case; It is in the Public Interest to prosecute; in cases of any seriousness, a prosecution will usually take place unless there are Public Interest factors pointing against prosecution, which clearly outweigh those in favour; any action which it takes complies with the terms of the Human Rights Act.

In cases where parents willfully and knowingly withhold a student from school, the Education Welfare Service, on behalf of the City Council will proceed against the parents using sub-section 1A of Section 444 (the "aggravated offence" which is an offence that can lead to a prison sentence).

Cases identified as Persistent Absentees are managed via the Fast-Track to Attendance process.

If after legal action has been taken the student still fails to attend school regularly, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action after a three month period.

Cases that have been deemed appropriate for prosecution will be pursued in the event of a transfer request within the authority or conurbation.

### **11.4: City Council Policy on the Use of Education Supervision Orders**

Before initiating a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the appropriateness of an Education Supervision Order (ESO) under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 at a Case Review between the EWO and their SEWO (Manager). The purpose of an ESO is to place a child who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the Local Authority.

An ESO aims to ensure that the child receives full time education and that he or she and the parents receive intensive support, advice and guidance from a Supervising Officer who is required “to advise, assist and befriend”.

An application for an ESO will only be made when one or more of the following apply:-

- All other attempts to improve the student’s attendance have failed and prosecution of the parents is deemed inappropriate
- The parents appear likely to co-operate with a structured programme of work prepared by the Supervising Officer
- A Magistrates’ Court hearing has directed the Local Authority to apply for an ESO
- The SEWO (Manager) and EWO are of the opinion that the Order will have a significant impact upon the student’s non-attendance.

### **11.5: City Council Policy on the use of School Attendance Orders**

The Education Welfare Service will serve a School Attendance Order (SAO) {under Sections 437-439 of the Education Act 1996} on the parents of a child of compulsory school age if the parents have failed to demonstrate that the child is in receipt of suitable education and if the Local Authority believes that the child should attend school.

The SAO will specify the school (or Student Referral Unit) which the child should attend. Admissions and Exclusion will name the school to be identified in the Order based on the suitability of the school and the capacity. Should the parents fail to comply with the SAO, the EWS will initiate legal proceedings under Section 443 of the Education Act 1996 (unless the parents can prove that the child is in receipt of suitable education).

All legal action taken by the EWS will be monitored and reviewed.

### **11.6: Parenting Orders**

EWOs will when necessary liaise with the Youth Offending Team, the Family Intervention Project and with Social Care staff when the courts, in relation to a non-attendance case, impose or recommend a Parenting Order.

### **11.7: Penalty Notices**

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, the Education Welfare Service has the power to issue Penalty Notices:

- To the parents of a child who fails to attend school regularly
- At the request of the Head Teacher in respect of children and young people who are regularly late after the close of the register
- Where unauthorised absences have occurred due to unapproved holidays being taken during term time.

All of the above being subject to the school making parents aware of the possibility of the above action by speaking with them, writing to them, publishing the information on the school website and ensuring the Governing Body have adopted the Policy and therefore support the action.

#### **11.8: EWO Policy on Suspending Casework**

Ideally a case will only be closed when a student returns to regular school attendance, is no longer a PA or the child ceases to be of compulsory school age. There are some exceptional circumstances however in which the problems are so severe and entrenched that the work of the EWS is having no impact on changing the student's behaviour and returning him or her to regular attendance. In such circumstances the SEWO (Manager) will consider whether it is appropriate to suspend further active casework.

Suspending active casework is a very rare occurrence and will only be considered where all options and strategies have been tried and been found to have been unsuccessful. Active casework will only be suspended after full consultation between the EWO and his/her SEWO (Manager) and when there are exceptional circumstances; they will only apply to Year 11 students who are in the final stages of their compulsory schooling. In such circumstances the EWO will refer the student in question to the local Connexions Personal Adviser.

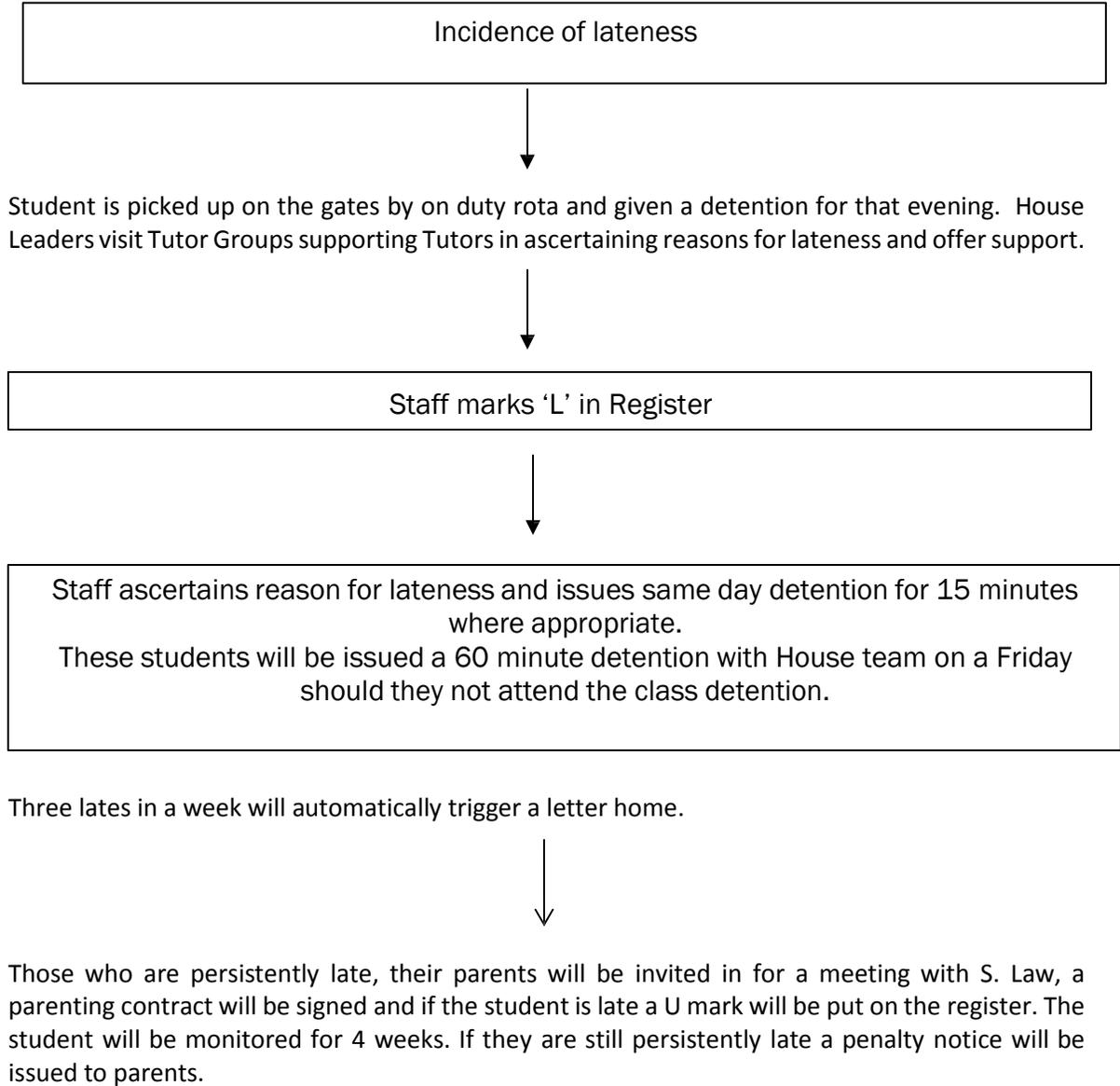
In circumstances when the active casework is suspended the situation will continue to be monitored and any necessary liaison/consultation with other services/agencies will also take place. Active casework will recommence if there is a change in circumstances which suggests that further EWO casework may be appropriate.

#### **11.9: Other EWO Services**

As well as undertaking casework with individual students or siblings, the EWS will offer strategic support and challenge to schools by working with school Management Teams on implementing this Policy and procedures. EWOs will promote improvements in schools' management of attendance through the strategies listed below.

## APPENDIX 1. DEALING WITH LATENESS

Incidence of lateness



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graph TD; A[Incidence of lateness] --> B[Student is picked up on the gates by on duty rota and given a detention for that evening. House Leaders visit Tutor Groups supporting Tutors in ascertaining reasons for lateness and offer support.]; B --> C[Staff marks 'L' in Register]; C --> D[Staff ascertains reason for lateness and issues same day detention for 15 minutes where appropriate. These students will be issued a 60 minute detention with House team on a Friday should they not attend the class detention.]; D --> E[Three lates in a week will automatically trigger a letter home.]; E --> F[Those who are persistently late, their parents will be invited in for a meeting with S. Law, a parenting contract will be signed and if the student is late a U mark will be put on the register. The student will be monitored for 4 weeks. If they are still persistently late a penalty notice will be issued to parents.];
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Student is picked up on the gates by on duty rota and given a detention for that evening. House Leaders visit Tutor Groups supporting Tutors in ascertaining reasons for lateness and offer support.

Staff marks 'L' in Register

Staff ascertains reason for lateness and issues same day detention for 15 minutes where appropriate.

These students will be issued a 60 minute detention with House team on a Friday should they not attend the class detention.

Three lates in a week will automatically trigger a letter home.

Those who are persistently late, their parents will be invited in for a meeting with S. Law, a parenting contract will be signed and if the student is late a U mark will be put on the register. The student will be monitored for 4 weeks. If they are still persistently late a penalty notice will be issued to parents.

## **APPENDIX 2. STRATEGIES THAT MAYBE USED FOR REINTEGRATING STUDENTS WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS**

- Welcome students back
- Regular tutor with time to devote to student
- Long term medical absence – work sent home
- Creating the culture of welcoming back and reintegrating
- Offer 'catch up' sessions
- Persistent offender – give key worker / mentor
- Mentor and EWO – joint home visit
- Buddy
- Time after school 'catch-up time'
- Long term absences – re-engagement working with House Team and teaching staff.
- Prioritise resource to support reintegration based on reason for absence
- Prioritise timetable
- Curriculum organisation – vital – departments set a time to meet students
- Attendance Report– subject based to monitor work completed
- One-to-one sessions to discuss concerns

**APPENDIX 3. ACTION PLAN THAT MAYBE USED FOR REINTEGRATING STUDENTS WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS**

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Classroom Organisation</b>	<b>Strategies for Improving Behaviour</b>
Students who have returned to school after an extended absence.	<p>Flexible grouping arrangements to enable a student to join a group who can provide an update on the work covered.</p> <p>Buddy system where another student is encouraged to work outside the group situation alongside this student.</p> <p>Word or phrase banks clearly displayed or available to provide key words to be used in understanding teaching.</p> <p>Wall displays that represent key learning points or visual images that will support learning. For example, grammar rules to support the use of the past tense in Spanish, place value charts containing decimals etc.</p>	<p>Provide notes on work missed.</p> <p>Welcome back, show concern, be pleased to see them.</p> <p>Offer reassurance, build in time to discuss work missed.</p>
Students who have recently arrived at the school following exclusion	<p>As above.</p> <p>Classroom expectations published, clearly displayed and referred to within the lesson.</p> <p>Flexible positioning of students in whole class sessions to enable a student to be integrated to a location where a teacher may have easy access.</p> <p>Well-positioned teaching assistants, if available, to support the student.</p>	<p>Assess ability and provide appropriate work.</p> <p>Welcome, show concern, be pleased to have them in your class.</p> <p>Ensure they understand it's a fresh start, be positive.</p> <p>Explain class expectations and routines.</p> <p>Establish buddy system to help them settle.</p>
Students who have special needs in relation to their social, emotional and behavioural skills	<p>Teaching assistant to support with timing of tasks, provision of equipment and notes for the lesson.</p> <p>Additional time allowed for tasks.</p> <p>Differentiated tasks and homework set. Routine lesson structure.</p> <p>Frequent progress checks during lesson. Student paired with appropriate role model.</p> <p>Clear classroom behaviour expectations.</p> <p>Clear routines in place.</p> <p>Buddy systems for learning or emotional</p>	<p>Teach necessary behaviour skills.</p> <p>Provide emotional support.</p> <p>Develop personal relationship.</p> <p>Acknowledge efforts to improve.</p> <p>Provide supportive feedback. Set individual targets.</p> <p>Follow through individual behaviour plan.</p>