ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY
Version 1.4

Date effective from:	**September 2017**
Date approved by Governors:	**1 January 2017 (Full)**
Date of review:	**1 January 2018**
Prepared by:	**NGC, Senior Assistant Vice Principle**

CONTENTS

1   PURPOSE

Lostock Hall Academy recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy is therefore to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individual students, vulnerable groups and the school as a whole. In order to achieve this, all members of the School community have an important contribution to make. Section 7 of the policy contains strategies that identify the ways in which we can all contribute to improving attendance at the school.

2   AIMS

The aims of the policy are:

- to improve the overall percentage attendance of students at this school, with an expected target of 97%
- to raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, students, parents/carers and the Governing Body;
- to ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents/carers, students and staff;
- to develop and monitor clear procedures for maintaining accurate registers;
- to develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance related issues; and
- To develop a framework within which all staff can work to provide a consistent approach to raising levels of attendance using relevant agencies as appropriate.

3   AN OUTLINE OF THE POLICY

In order to achieve a high rate of attendance, it is essential that all staff are aware of the strategies to encourage this:-

- all members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for student attendance and punctuality;
- an appropriate curriculum, including the use of alternative provision for some students, is essential and kept under constant review;
- the need for high quality learning and teaching throughout the school is recognised by all;
- Students are provided with appropriate support so that problems do not escalate and drive them away from school. Our approach to bullying is of particular importance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a student's attendance, an appropriate level of multi agency support will be instigated;
- SEND students are identified and given appropriate support;
- Effective partnership with parents through regular contact and support is provided. Parents/carers are kept informed by the text messaging service and e-mails/school comms. if their child is absent from school;
- letters of praise and concern on matters of attendance are sent to parents;
- Any requests for leave of absence will be strongly discouraged. Requests for absence will be declined unless the parents/carers are able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances;
- parents are invited into school to discuss matters relating to their child's attendance, formally through the Parent/student Attendance support meetings;
- a comprehensive system of rewards for good attendance is used including stickers, certificates, postcards, early lunch passes, recognition at Presentation Evenings etc;
- Attendance is given a high profile within the school e.g. through assemblies, attendance league, newsletter, displays and tutor group awards.
- Governors are encouraged to play a role in raising levels of attendance and are kept informed of attendance targets and developing issues.
- Punctuality is also highlighted as an important issue through the use of appropriate sanctions e.g. late detentions held at lunchtime and SLT after school detentions on a Friday evening.

4   IDENTIFYING AND TACKLING POOR ATTENDANCE

Strategies for identifying and dealing with poor attendance include:

- attendance levels for individuals, tutor groups, year groups and the whole school are carefully monitored and action taken to address poor attendance;
- attendance levels of other groups of students, such as boys and girls, SEND students, ethnic minority, CLA and DA students are also monitored and action taken to address significant differences;
- long term absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school;
- early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work during transition from KS2;
- Attendance Improvement Monitoring (AIM) provides targeted strategies for students with poor attendance, students with deteriorating attendance and potential poor attendees;
- written agreements and contracts can be set up to encourage good attendance e.g. Parent/Carer Contract, Attendance Monitoring Card, Punctuality Card;
- Fixed Penalty Notices for non attendance can be issued in circumstances where a parent is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's attendance (e.g. truancy, parentally condoned absence with no good reason, excessive or unauthorised holidays). This could be issued after 10 missed (unauthorised) sessions. The cost is £120+ and is payable by each parent. This must be paid within 28 days. Should the child's attendance not improve, school can request action for a prosecution for non attendance.

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance is only part of the school's approach to this issue. The whole school drive for supporting students strive to be the best, such as providing effective pastoral support, mentoring and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact on attendance.

Student Support Attendance Meetings (SSAM) – Tier 1

Purpose

- To impress the importance of student attendance for good attainment.
- To solve any issues relating to student attendance e.g. home difficulties/medical concerns.
- Student attendance monitored for 4-6 weeks.
- Student only meetings; parents/carers not invited to the meetings.

Parent/Carer and Student Attendance Support Meetings – Tier 2

- No improvement in attendance from SSAM

Purpose

- To form good relationships with parents/carers to support students with poor attendance.
- Student attendance monitored for 4-6 weeks.
- If required, Parent/Carer/Student contracts to be issued to support an improvement in attendance.

5   LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

Any requests for leave of absence will be strongly discouraged. Requests for absence will be declined unless the parents/carers are able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

Leave of Absence

- Parents/Carers are strongly discouraged from taking their children on holiday during term time
- All requests for leave of absence will be declined unless parents can evidence **exceptional circumstances** which is at the discretion of the Principal.
- Requests for holiday leave during exam times will not be authorised under any circumstances.
- Parents/carers must apply for leave of absence using the school's application form which can be requested from the school office or downloaded from the school website.
- If a student fails to return from an agreed period of absence, investigations will be made by staff (telephone calls/home visits by the Family Support and Attendance Improvement Officer).
- If school investigations fail to make contact with the parents/student the case will be referred to the Children Missing Education Team who may, after further investigation, inform school that the student may be removed from roll.
- Penalty Notices will be used in cases where an application for leave of absence is refused and the student is subsequently absent during the dates originally requested. Parents will be warned of potential consequences when an application for leave of absence is denied.

Parenting Contracts - Attendance

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 makes provision for the use of Parenting Contracts where attendance is a cause for concern. The school may choose to initiate such contracts following the case being discussed at the Parent/Student Attendance Support Meetings (PSASM) and agreed by the Senior Leadership Team.

Parenting contracts will not typically be used the first time a student and their parents are invited to attend an attendance panel. In serious cases where all previous targets have failed, parenting contracts may be used as a precursor to prosecution, and used as a method of gathering evidence of parent's failure to improve their child's attendance.

- Each individual parenting contract will identify areas of concern and set specific targets to be met by students, parents/carers and the school
- It may be considered necessary to request that parents/carers attend Parenting Support Groups. These may be offered after consultation with senior staff and governors regarding resource implications
- Each contract will typically last six school weeks
- Following this period the contract will be reviewed and a new contract issued if necessary
- Parenting contracts are voluntary, although parents will be encouraged to accept them. Where contracts are refused, it may be necessary for school to make a request to the Authority's legal team for prosecution
- Where contracts are successful a letter of acknowledgement will be sent and new targets set to continue the improvement
- Where contracts are unsuccessful they will be reviewed and a new contract may be issued or school may decide to make a request for prosecution

Penalty Notices

The school may seek to use Penalty Notices in the following cases:
- Following an Attendance Support Meeting where parents/carers have been warned in writing of the school's intention to use a penalty notice
- Where an application for leave of absence has been refused and the student is subsequently absent during the requested dates
- Students failing to return after an authorised leave of absence
- Students who are persistently late after registration has closed

6 REGISTERING OF STUDENTS

The school will follow DfE guidance on Keeping Student Registers

- Students must be registered twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon;
- School uses SIMS.net to register students and to track punctuality rates;
  Morning registration and Lesson 5 will constitute the 2 session marks;

- Morning registration opens at 8.40am and closes at 8.55am. If a student arrives after this time they are deemed late (code L) until 9.10am.

- Students arriving after 9.10am are 'late after the register has closed' and will be marked as a 'U' for the morning session (this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** for the am session).

- Students arriving after 9.10am due to medical or dental reasons will be marked as an 'M' (for medical) for the am session. Please note: this will be recorded as an **authorised absence**.

- Under exceptional circumstances, students arriving after 9.10am with a valid reason will be marked as a 'C' (for other authorised circumstances). Please note: this will be recorded as an **authorised absence**.

- Afternoon registration opens at 2:00pm (the start of Lesson 5). Staff should complete afternoon registration by 2:15pm.

- All students follow the late system with the gates being closed at 8:40am and lunchtime/SLT detentions issued to students who are late in the morning.

7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Class Teachers

Class teachers will:

- ensure that all students in lessons are able to access the learning through a range of teaching and learning strategies in line with the School's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy;
- ensure that SIMS.net registration is completed accurately in Lesson 5, and the Student Support Manager is notified of any absentees;
- identify, within each lesson, any students who should be present in the lesson but are not;
- monitor carefully the attendance of individuals within a class and alert the Head of Faculty/Curriculum Lead and Form Tutors where patterns of non-attendance are detected;
- when a student is known to have truanted from your lesson, follow this up by making sure they have caught up the missed work in detention time;
- ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long term absentees and when requested for those on exclusion;
- ensure that those students who return from a long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access the learning within the lesson;
- welcome back students from long-term absence in a professional manner, avoiding reference to the absence in front of other students; and
- Actively discourage any adverse comments about the absence from other students in the class.

7.2 Form Tutors

Form Tutors will:

- ensure that registers for the morning are accurately completed and maintained;
- chase up absence notes from returning students and inform the Senior Form Tutor and Student Support Manager if no note is returned after reminders;
- Collect and scrutinise absence notes and inform the Senior Form Tutor, Student Support Manager and the Attendance Improvement Officer if professional judgement suggests any are forged. Tackle any instances of inappropriate absence initially with the student and inform Student Support Manager as appropriate;
- keep registers up-to-date with reasons for absence as identified within absence notes;
- encourage good attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets, encouraging students to want to be the best attending form in the year/school;
- monitor attendance within the form and use short-term attendance reports and targets where there is any deterioration;
- Liaise with the Senior Form Tutor, Student Support Manager and the Attendance Improvement Officer as early as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual students, groups within the form or the whole form.

7.3 Student Support Manager and the Attendance Improvement Officer

Student Support Manager will:

- monitor carefully the attendance of students within each year, group taking note of any patterns amongst students from particular groups, particular times of the week;
- take appropriate steps to support students to reverse the trend of absence;
- liaise with the Family Support & Attendance Improvement Worker (FSAIW) to ensure students with poor attendance are receiving appropriate levels of support as necessary;
- monitor the attendance rates of forms within the Year, taking action alongside Form Tutors where particular forms are identified as having poor attendance;
- monitor/mentor students who have been identified as those with deteriorating levels of attendance, using monitoring cards, short term targets and other strategies to improve attendance;
- foster a positive attitude to school attendance within the year through assemblies, notice boards and constant reinforcement with students;
- encourage a spirit of healthy competition between forms and individuals and issue rewards as appropriate;
- work with the FSAIW to identify ways in which long-term absentees can be reintegrated effectively;
- liaise with parents/carers on matters relating to their child's attendance, including organising the Parent/Student attendance Support Meetings for students at risk of being poor attendees, including follow-up review meetings;
- implement sanctions where there have been instances of truancy, whether from individual lessons or whole days;
- keep Form Tutors informed of any action in relation to particular students;
- make arrangements to ensure that parents who wish to take their child out of school during term time are contacted and the potential consequences explained; and
- Keep the SLT lead informed of issues relating to attendance in the year.

7.4 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- administer the SIMS.net registration system, noting where registers have not been completed or have not been completed accurately and taking appropriate action;
- ensure that the school's official registers are in line with legal requirements and that any anomalies are reported to the designated SLT member;
- operate the Schoolcomms system to notify parents by text message or e-mail of absent students;
- Provide weekly/monthly/termly data on attendance for the SLT lead on attendance.
- support the FSAIW in terms of administration – letters to parents/carers, agencies etc.; and
- Assist the SLT lead in keeping the school roll up-to-date, adding or removing students as required.

7.5   The Family Support and Attendance Improvement Worker

The Family Support & Attendance Improvement Worker will:

- use attendance data to identify students for support and close monitoring with the Senior Form Tutors and SLT lead;
- investigate instances of suspected truancy and take appropriate action, making parental contact, home visits as necessary;
- work closely with the parents/carers of targeted students to provide support to get students to return to school;
- keep in contact with long-term absentees and liaise with the SLT Lead/Head of Faculty to ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying 'catch up' needs;
- contact parents/carers where absences have remained unexplained despite previous intervention;
- liaise with the SENDCO/designated SLT lead and use attendance data to identify students for referral to the Attendance Support meetings and for CAF (Common Assessment Form)
- work with targeted students to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short-term targets and rewards;
- Prepare cases for referral through the CAF with the SENDCO/SLT lead and for where court action is required. Liaise with the Court Officer to initiate proceedings and follow protocol;
- work with the SLT lead to involve outside agencies with individuals and groups of students;
- administer the attendance rewards system, liaising closely with the SLT lead and
- Investigate other strategies to encourage improved attendance.

7.6   SLT responsible for Attendance

The SLT lead for attendance will:

- take overall responsibility for developing the Attendance and Punctuality Policy within the school;
- provide line management for the Attendance Improvement Worker/Progress Leader and ensure there is good communication with Governors on issues relating to attendance;
- oversee, monitor and evaluate the Attendance Improvement Monitoring (AIM);
- using attendance data, analyse this for patterns of poor attendance amongst particular year groups or groups of students and take action to address any anomalies;
- oversee the efficient running of the SIMS.net registration process and text messaging e-mail service/schoolcomms;
- take a lead in promoting the need for good attendance through assemblies and work with staff and students to build a strong ethos;
- assist the Local Authority by providing data for persistent absence and attendance;
- decide upon any new admissions and any initial action required to encourage good attendance, including attendance contracts if necessary;
- co-ordinate and chair meetings of the Attendance Support meetings, following up on any students for review with the FSAIW; and
- Together with the rest of SLT, actively discourage parents from taking students out of school during term time.

8 ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT MONITORING (AIM)

8.1 Attendance Indicators

Students will be divided into 3 identified 'groups' each half term based on their percentage attendance to date.

- GROUP 1: RED   Attendance of <90%
- GROUP 2: AMBER   Attendance of between 91% - 96%
- GROUP 3: GREEN   Attendance of more than 97%

8.2 Strategies For Group 1/Red students (PA students)

A variety of the following could be employed:

- attendance warning letter to the parents/carers, with monitoring improvement period outlined;
- first day personal phone calls in addition to the Schoolcomms text/e-mail system by the Attendance Officer/Attendance Improvement Worker;
- the student to be met by the AIW or SLT lead and short-term targets set/attendance report implemented, with a 2 week monitoring period;
- a formal requirement for parents/carers (and the student) to attend a meeting of the Attendance Support meetings consisting of the SLT lead, Senior Form tutors, Attendance Improvement Worker and a member of the Governing Body; and
- If there is no improvement, a further requirement to attend a meeting of the Attendance Panel and/or a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

In addition, a CAF may be opened to access further support and multi-agency involvement before a further in-house reintegration support plan is implemented. Rewards will be given to students exceeding their individual targets.

8.3 Strategies for Amber Groups

This group contains those students who are at risk of becoming a persistent absence (PA) student. The aim is prevention, with support the key.

- the SLT lead to meet with the AIW to scrutinise data to assess possible patterns/reasons for absence;
- the SLT lead and the AIW to meet with parents and the student to implement an attendance plan over a two week period;
- the SLT lead to monitor attendance carefully;
- a first day response phone call in addition to the Schoolcomms text/e-mail service
- Rewarding students who exceed their targets.

8.4 Strategies for Green Groups

This group contains students who have been identified by Form Tutors, who would initiate some or all of the following:

- set individual targets and rewards as necessary;
- encourage students to exceed their half term targets
- Give suitable rewards.

The aim is for numbers in the Red and Amber groups to decrease. There clearly will be movement between groups as individual attendance deteriorates or improves.

8.5   Half Term Attendance Rewards

Any student who achieves 100% attendance over a half term period will receive a reward postcard and entry into a draw at the end of every half term.

There are also awards for the winner of the Attendance League between forms in each year to encourage healthy competition between Tutor Groups.

8.6   Attendance/Behaviour Reward Trips

Only students whose attendance remains above 95% will be considered for Attendance/Behaviour Reward trips. Students with unauthorised absences during term time will not be considered.

8.7   Attendance Awards

Students who achieve 100% attendance over the whole of an academic year will receive a certificate presented at the annual Teaching and Learning Assemblies and the GCSE Awards Evenings.