

THE PEELE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The Peele Community College challenges all students to achieve personal excellence by providing a strong learning culture; this is based on honesty and mutual respect in an open, safe and supportive environment. For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at college, on time, every day the college is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. To ensure that all students establish regular attendance patterns, the college will do all that it can to encourage students to attend and will act quickly upon any problem, that threatens full attendance. It is important therefore that your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

All students of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will affect their learning and social development. Any student absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at college is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from College without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility - parents, students and all members of college staff.

To help us focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance through our regular Home Bulletin and newsletter
- Help parents/carers and students alike to understand their responsibilities in ensuring full attendance at college, as required by law
- To provide the appropriate rewards and support for students and/or parents/ carers in helping them to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities
- Celebrate good attendance as well as displaying individual and class achievements
- To involve and work in conjunction with external agencies, as necessary, in order to secure full attendance.

Parents, carers and students can expect the following from the college:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance information.
- Contact from the college when a student fails to attend and no good reason is given via the Truancy Call system.
- Immediate and confidential action on a problem which prevents a student from attending college.
- To instigate the college reward policy for good attendance.

Understanding types of absence

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence. The use of fixed codes assists the college, The Local Authority and the DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the college, but why pupils are absent from college.

Every half day absence from college must be classed by the college as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from college approved by the college, the college may approve absences due to illness, family bereavements, days of religious observance and medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in a college day, all efforts should be made for these appointments to take place after the college day has ended. In the context of the law it is the college's decision whether an absence is authorised, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation.

Unauthorised absences are those that the college does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off college unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the college day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive too late to get a registration mark
- Shopping or looking after other children
- Day trips in term time

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and legal proceedings. Whilst any child may be off college because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend college. It is never better to cover up absence as it usually makes things worse. Therefore it is the parents/carers responsibility to make the college aware immediately of any problems this allows the college to intervene and put every effort into resolving the issue.

Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 15% of their schooling across the College year for whatever reason, authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level (85%) is doing serious damage to your child's education and will be taken seriously. All PA cases are automatically made known to the Senior Leadership Team.

PA students are tracked carefully and subject to an individual action plan where appropriate measures will be put in place to support the student and yourself if necessary. This may involve: intervention, academic/behavioural mentoring or the involvement of other agencies.

Absence procedures:

- Parents /carers must contact the college office before 8.45am whenever their child is unable to attend and speak to our Attendance Officer Liz Hoyles (01406 362120)
- Parents /carers must send a note, explaining the absence on the first day back from absence
- Medical notes may be requested if long periods of absence or absence patterns become a concern
- Parents/carers must contact the Attendance Officer/ Head of Year to discuss in confidence any problem that may prevent their child from attending college
- Parents/Carers will inform the college immediately of any change in contact details
- Medical, dental or optician appointments, where possible, will be arranged at the end of a College day.

Lateness to College:

- In the event of students being late, they **must** sign in the late book and report to the college's Attendance Officer immediately on their arrival
- Students who are repeatedly late for college will be referred to the Headteacher and a Fixed Term Penalty fine could be issued.

Holidays in term time and patterns of absence:

We expect family holidays to be taken during the designated periods of the college's holiday. The college will not agree to any holidays taken during term time. Any period of leave taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices could lead to a £60 fine in the first instance. This would also apply to a student who is regularly taking time off during term time. In this case the college would involve the Education Welfare Officer who would follow guidance set out in:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please contact the Local Authority if you require further information.

We ask that parents/carers are mindful of the savings you think you may be making by taking a holiday in college time, are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in college time to go on holiday.

Child Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the schools' or college's procedures on dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Therefore the college has in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers (see point 8 below).

The college will inform their local authority (see point 9 below) of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period or
- Have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015*).

If your child is absent we will:

- Send a truancy call on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Notify parents/carers whose child's attendance drops to 90% or below. You will receive a **1st warning letter** advising that there is a concern
- If there is no improvement in a student's attendance and it drops to 85% or below a **2nd warning letter** will be issued and your child will be spoken to by the Attendance Officer
- If no improvement in attendance then an attendance panel will be called and parents/carers will be expected to attend. At this meeting a stage **3 warning letter** will be issued advising that if there is no improvement in attendance the Headteacher will get involved
- If there is still no improvement in attendance then **legal proceedings** will begin.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupils who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State (*Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015*))

The Parental Liaison Team

The college operates a fast track system to improve attendance. This means that legal action will be taken if a student's attendance becomes a concern.

8 Regulation 4 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

9 Regulation 12(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Students whose attendance falls below 85% or are causing a concern will receive a home visit by members of our Parent Liaison Team to discuss any attendance concerns. The college will endeavour to work with you to resolve any concerns identified at this meeting.

The college will actively seek to work in a positive way with parents and carers, to ensure that students are supported and listened to. We encourage that parents, carers alert the college quickly if they have any worries.

College's targets:

The college challenges students to have good attendance. We know that good attendance is crucial to achievement. The students have an important role to play. Good attendance is recognised for individuals and within houses. Attendance targets are displayed within the college and celebrated throughout the year. Students who achieve 100% attendance are also commended by the governing body.

The people responsible for attendance matters in the College are:

- Miss Hoyles Attendance Officer
- Heads of Year, Mrs Porter, Mrs Earl, Mr Harrison, Mr Wright, Mrs King
- Senior Leadership Team.