ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Approved by Governors: October 2018
Review Date: October 2020
On behalf of Governors signed: Signed Copies On File
Print name: 
On behalf of Governors signed: 
Print name: 
Principal’s signature: 

All One In A Million Free School Policies have been devised to ensure that:

- Students from all backgrounds and all abilities are welcome
- Each student has the opportunity to flourish and achieve their potential
- We value the individuality of each student within the context of membership of our community
- We are committed to raising educational attainment and improving our students’ life chances
- We provide an environment in which all students will be self-aware, self-disciplined and confident
- All students will understand how to make a positive contribution to our extended community
- We support academic, creative and personal achievement through our focus on Sport, the Arts and Enterprise

Attendance Background
Attendance Policy

It is recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person’s future prospects. Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority both nationally and locally, because missing school damages students’ attainment levels, disrupts school routines, affects the learning of others and can leave young people vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and crime.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. One In A Million Free School (OIAMFS) is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students, and endeavours to provide an environment where all young people feel valued and welcome.

Parents and students play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that children arrive at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Students who miss 50% of their secondary schooling only have a 3% chance of gaining 5 Grades 9 - 5 including English and maths

73% of students whose attendance is over 95% get 5 Grades 9 – 5 including English and maths

1 in 5 students miss 19 days of school each year and for these students they drop ONE - TWO GCSE GRADES

1% improvement in attendance results in 5 – 6% improvement in attainment.

This policy has been reviewed with due regard to the Governing Body’s statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010. It also informed by the 2006 Education Regulations, and the Department for Education guidance on School Attendance (2014).

This policy is available to all stakeholders on our website or by request at Reception.

OIAMFS recognises the high correlation between achievement and attendance therefore, in order to maintain the high levels of attendance at OIAMFS, there is a clearly defined process communicated to all stakeholders.
Attendance Policy

- The importance of good attendance is an integral part of the home/school partnership.
- There are clear procedures for the reporting of absence.
- The taking of holidays during the school terms is strongly discouraged and will be recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence. Where family holidays or leave of absence are taken without the permission of the school, parent/carers can be given a Penalty Notice for periods of unauthorised holiday.
- The Integris system is used effectively to monitor attendance at registration and lessons.
- Attendance figures are reported annually and appropriate targets are set for the following year.
- Attendance figures are monitored on a regular basis by the SLT.
- We work co-operatively with external agencies to deal with problems of irregular attendance.
- We maintain accurate records of all exclusions and, in accordance with statutory guidance, report them to the Governing Body and the LA. We take appropriate action to reduce these.
- We continue to monitor the attendance of ‘Cared for Children’, those from ethnic minorities, Pupil Premium Students, vulnerable students and those students with a SEND status.
- We monitor carefully any of our students who are receiving off-site education.

Procedures

The OIAMFS Vice Principal of Student Experience will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will also ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed; ensuring that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a student is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their student’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

- A note or explanation from a student’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised.
- The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- The Vice Principal of Student Experience meets with the Director of Inclusion and Heads of Year regularly to review whole school attendance.
Attendance Policy

- The Vice Principal of Student Experience meets both the Director of Inclusion and Heads of Year on a regular basis to discuss any student who is of concern due to a poor attendance record and plan a course of action and then review the impact of this action. This involves a detailed and forensic analysis of the attendance data.

- Prolonged absence without medical support is referred to the Educational Welfare Service. Individual student absence records can be obtained from the computerised registration system to reinforce the case against the student and to keep on file.

- Heads of Year and the Director of Inclusion investigate all cases where a student’s attendance falls below 85%. This information is available from the computerised attendance information.

- The attendance of any student classed as a Persistent Absentee is monitored every half term and strategies implemented to try and support the student to improve their attendance.

Responsibilities of School Staff

All staff members at OIAMFS share a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately and that the appropriate code is used.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- All staff promote high standards of attendance in all year groups by being a good role model, setting an example to students.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child’s absence.
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of Students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school is a parent/carer’s legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
Attendance Policy

- Discuss with the learning coach/class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Registration and Punctuality

Morning registration at OIAMFS is at 08:15 and for the afternoon session at 13:30. Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other students.

Parents, guardians or carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10-week period, the school will issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15 &amp; 1:30</td>
<td>Registers close at these two times. Students registered after this time are marked as ‘Late’.</td>
<td>Learning Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:15 &amp; 01:00 – 1:15</td>
<td>Parents ring in school with an explanation for their child’s absence</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 08:15 &amp; 01:15</td>
<td>Reception ring on the first day of absence if the parents have not rung with an explanation. These are recorded in the register. Reception keep a record of when they expect a student to return.</td>
<td>Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 08:35 &amp; 1:35</td>
<td>Students who have not arrived at school are marked as ‘O’ on the school register.</td>
<td>Reception/Class Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent Days of Absence</td>
<td>If students are absent more days than originally was stated parents ring in with a further explanation.</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent Days of Absence</td>
<td>If students are absent more days than originally was stated (as recorded in Reception), Reception ring parent/carers for a further explanation.</td>
<td>Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to School</td>
<td>The Learning Coach records attendance. If they return earlier than expected the Learning Coach over-writes the codes in the register.</td>
<td>Learning Coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Codes for use on the One In A Million Integris system
Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Student Registration) (England).

Regulations state that the school may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

It is for the school to determine if the requests for leave of absence are reasonable. Each request should be judged on a case by case basis, and the school will use its discretion sparingly.

Where family holidays or leave of absence are taken without the permission of the school, parents can be given a Penalty Notice for periods of unauthorised holidays. From 1 September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per parent per child
and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120. If this remains unpaid, it may lead to higher fines, possible custodial sentences, parenting orders and community orders.

Schools can delete students from the registers if they fail to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date, or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if the holiday/leave of absence has not been agreed.

It is important to note that school can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

When deciding whether or not to authorise the absence, One In A Million may take the following into consideration:

- The reasons for the holiday;
- The wishes of the parent(s);
- The age of the child and their educational stage;
- The time of year for the proposed holiday (for example if it is near to any exam dates);
- The child’s overall attendance record, including any holidays already taken in term time;
- The child’s ability to catch up on work missed.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from OIAMFS Reception in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

In a small number of cases One In A Million may have concerns about a student’s welfare, such as that the student will be forced into marriage whilst abroad. In such cases, the school should follow agreed Child Protection procedures.

OIAMFS can delete students from the school register if they fail to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if the holiday/leave of absence has not been agreed.

The school will however check that the students do not have a good reason for their absence, such as disrupted travel arrangements or illness, before deleting the student. If after making reasonable enquiries the school deletes the student from the school roll then a Children Missing Education referral will be made to the Education Social Work Service.
Procedure for removing a child from OIAMFS roll

The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 sets out the circumstances in which a school can remove a child from the school’s roll.

There are significant child protection implications when the whereabouts of a child is not known and therefore OIAMFS is committed to established procedures which enable schools to remove compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- The school is replaced by another school on an attendance order
- The school attendance order is revoked by the Local Authority (LA)
- Completion of compulsory school age
- The permanent exclusion of a student
- The death of a student
- The student is transferred between schools
- The student is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- The student fails to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the LA have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- The student is in custody for more than four months
- There are 20 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and the School Checklist has been completed and submitted to the CME Team.

NB Students who are no longer on roll will be retained within the Database for reference purposes.

All other removals are illegal and could result in court proceedings.

With the exception of students who are subject to a school attendance order and students with special educational needs or disability (SEND), for whom the LA has made arrangements, there is no requirement for LA approval of removals from registers.

Missing Children / Children Missing Education (CME)

The Children and Young People’s Service (CYPS) has put in place rigorous arrangements for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing, or at risk of going missing from education. The named individual responsible for receiving details of children found missing from education and for brokering support for them through the most appropriate agencies is: Jaz Qadri (Vice Principal of Student Experience).

The process of tracking students without an educational placement is part of our collective responsibility and ongoing commitment to safeguarding the welfare of young people. It is vital that anyone who becomes aware that a child is not, or does not appear to be in education, notifies the named person with the responsibility for students missing from education in Bradford.
Attendance Policy

If OIAMFS becomes concerned that a child is missing, or if there is no explanation for their continued absence from school, the school should conduct further investigations through the school’s designated Attendance Officer without delay. The School’s designated Attendance Officer must then make enquiries as to the whereabouts of that child, using a standard School Checklist. If the child is continuously absent for a period of not less than 20 consecutive school days and the enquiries of both the school and their Attendance Officer have failed to locate that child, the Attendance Officer will then advise the Local authority CME team. The school should retain a copy of the completed School Checklist and also place the child’s name in the National Lost Students’ Database, which is a repository for the Common Transfer File (CTF). OIAMFS will not remove the child from roll until advised to do so by the Local Authority.

Co-operation in following these procedures is essential to ensure the safety of children in Bradford. This will enable both the school and the LA to identify possible missing children and to follow up all concerns.

Improving Attendance Strategies

The School Home Support Practitioner

In addressing student attendance, OIAMFS has appointed a School Home Support Practitioner. Based in school, the SHS works from a child centred approach and is primarily concerned with developing and maintaining good working relationships with parents, carers, children and young people, teachers, head teachers and various educational support staff and other agencies.

The primary focus of the SHS Practitioner will be to address and reverse unsatisfactory school attendance. This will be achieved by:

- Providing targeted casework for vulnerable students and families
- Supporting the improvement of attendance and punctuality in students
- Supporting students and their families through periods of transition
- Developing parental engagement and parent participation in their child’s learning in school and at home
- Supporting schools to meet their safeguarding and early help duties.

As has already been stated OIAMFS is committed to the highest attendance of its students. It will work closely with students and parents to do whatever it can to improve attendance.

Our strategy for improving attendance includes:
Attendance Policy

- First day response - same-day telephone calls to parents to ascertain reasons for absence
- Meetings with students and parents in school
- Home visits.
- Practical solutions – for example buying the student an alarm clock, advice about bedtime routines, address travel arrangements to school etc.
- Letters and texts to parents
- Attendance at the Governors Attendance Panel
- Fixed Penalty Notice - legal action (in co-operation with the LA’s Attendance Team) – for missing 21 sessions (10.5 days) in any term.

Incentives for students

Information about the need for good attendance and punctuality is communicated to parents via the Principal’s newsletter and parent meetings. Additionally, students are regularly reminded of the awards they can receive if they consistently achieve high levels of school attendance. An attendance prize draw is open to all students, so too trips and other events for students achieving high levels of attendance:

- A percentage attendance of 97% or more forms part of the criteria for students to be invited to the end of term trip.
- Students who achieve 97% attendance or above for the term will be sent a congratulatory letter for achieving good or excellent attendance rates.
- Students who attend school for an entire week receive a raffle ticket. If students attend for consecutive weeks they receive a greater number of raffles. The ratio of raffles for continuous attendance is shown below.

- 1 week - 1 ticket
- 2 weeks - 4 extra tickets
- 3 weeks - 6 extra tickets
- 4 weeks - 8 extra tickets
- 5 weeks - 10 extra tickets
- 6 weeks - 12 extra tickets
- 7 weeks - 14 extra tickets

At the end of each school term the prize draw will take place and the winning ticket holder will receive a £250.00 gift prize.
Attendance Policy

Students are also regularly reminded of the negative impact their absence can have on their Learning Teams and House chance of winning attendance prizes.

References

Improving attendance and punctuality – Ofsted – October 2013
Improving School Attendance in England – National Audit Office – January 2005
Bradford Children’s Services – Holidays in Term Time Penalty Notice Procedures and Guidance (Updated January 2017)
City of Bradford Education Social Work Service – Prosecution Advice for Academies Non-School Attendance

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review and amend this policy and procedure at least annually or as required by:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in guidelines from advisory bodies
- The effectiveness of the policy.