DARLAND HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date Reviewed: October 2019

Aims

At Darland High School, we aim for very high attendance to reflect our prime focus on learning. We aim to ensure that all pupils benefit from effective education and are able to achieve their potential so that they are equipped to follow an appropriate learning pathway post-16.
In order to achieve this, we recognise that the school, parents/carers and students must work together in partnership, and that absence and lateness must be kept to a minimum.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school will:

- Ensure efficient and accurate registration of pupils
- Contact parents/carers if a child is consistently late or is absent from school without a satisfactory explanation
- Publish attendance reports for parents three times a year and report overall school attendance to governors at every meeting of the Full Governing Body.
- Analyse attendance data fortnightly in order to monitor and take appropriate action on low attendance and unpunctuality
- Ensure that there are clear communication routes to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a student from attending school
- Discuss/refer any students causing concern to the ESW.

The parent/carer will:

- Support the school in its aim to improve attendance to 95% and improve punctuality
- Ensure that his/her child attends school regularly
- Ensure that his/her child arrives at school on time
- Contact the school if his/her child is unable to attend, giving the reason on the first day of absence. If this is not possible, a note must be sent immediately the child returns to school (this can be written in the planner). In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness such as a doctor's note may be requested.
- Support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of his/her child through full attendance at school.

The student will:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time to school and to each lesson
- Let staff know if there is any issue that might prevent him/her from being punctual or from attending school
- Report to the Student Services Reception Desk if they arrive late.

Responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher i/c attendance

- To ensure the collection of accurate statistical data
- To develop efficient monitoring and evaluation systems (Please refer to attached flow chart and exemplar letters)
- To liaise with progress coordinators on attendance matters
- To form positive links with outside agencies such as ESW, Health Team, Counsellors, Social Services
- To refer pupils to the ESW as necessary
- To report to the Governors' Staff and Student Wellbeing Working Party on attendance
- To introduce whole school and individual pupil strategies to promote good attendance.

Responsibility of the Class Teacher

- To ensure accurate registration
- To ensure registration of the first class of the day is completed by 9.00am and that every subsequent class taught by any teacher is registered within the first 15 minutes of the lesson.
- To alert the School Office if a child is missing from the lesson register, but it is evident that the child was in the previous lesson.
- To communicate with the form teacher and progress coordinator regarding concerns about pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To positively promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom
- To assist pupils to catch up when they return after periods of absence.
- To make positive links with parents/carers.

Responsibility of the Admin. Team/Attendance Officer

- To set up class registers at the beginning of the year and to provide the form tutor with an up-to-date class list including contact numbers
- To contact parent/carer if a student is absent from school / college course / other educational activity and to confirm reasons for absence if the school has not been informed
- To record late arrivals
- To send out letters for unauthorised absence and lateness
- To issue attendance statistics fortnightly for the teacher i/c attendance
- To receive telephone calls from parents/carers regarding non-attendance and to pass this on to form tutors and progress coordinators
- To provide punctuality and attendance data for pupil progress reports and as required by staff
- To ensure attendance and punctuality data is accurate by checking with staff, students and parents/carers.

Attendance and punctuality targets

The overall weekly attendance at Darland High School is consistently over 94%. The school aims to increase attendance to 95% and to improve punctuality. Various measures will be taken in order to attain this including celebrating and rewarding good attendance, introducing rewards and incentives for good attendance, implementing late detentions and by discussing concerns with parents/carers. The School will implement and use SIMS ParentApp to inform parents of up-to-date attendance figures.
The implementation of SIMS provides accurate and timely information about the levels of absence and lateness within the school.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

Absence may be authorised for illness, school visits, attending interviews, for religious reasons or exclusions, for other circumstances that are unavoidable e.g. serious emergency, bereavement.
Class registers are taken by teachers in period 1 lessons at 9am. If a child arrives after this time, they must report to the reception, where they will be given a late mark and also a break time detention for later that day. Should a child fail to appear in school without a valid reason, before 10am, they will be registered absent for that morning.

Holidays in term time for students are discouraged. Although the headteacher does have the discretion to grant up to a maximum of 10 days holiday in any academic year, it is Darland High School policy not to authorise holidays during the school term. The School reserves the right to recommend to the Local Authority, that parents who ignore the School's refusal to authorise holiday absences, a Fixed Term Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices.

Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers in cases of unauthorised absence, where there has been a failure to secure their child's regular attendance or whereabouts and an unwillingness to take responsibility for doing so, for example where the parent/carer has:

- Failed to engage with any voluntary or supportive measures proposed
- Failed to make adequate arrangements for the whereabouts of their child.

Penalty notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These need not be consecutive.
- Persistent lateness (after the registration has closed and an unauthorised absence is created). Persistent lateness in this instance is defined as equalling or exceeding 10 occasions in any one term. NB. Am and pm count as separate absences.
- Any other cases which would constitute truancy.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 day period the LA may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Fixed penalty notices will be issued only after several attempts to engage with parents/carers to offer support have been made and there has been a failure to engage in the support offered.

Parents need to be aware that although they may provide a reason for an absence, it is the School which makes the decision as to whether or not these reasons constitute an authorised absence.

Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

We aim to promote attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Clear expectations explained on admission
- Not authorising holidays for students.
- Regular analysis of attendance data
- Early intervention with parents/carers of children causing concern because of low attendance or poor punctuality through standard letters and discussion of situation
- Presenting attendance awards to the tutor group with the highest attendance in the fortnightly whole school assembly
- Awarding pin badges for pupils to display on their blazers, at the end of each term, for pupils with 100% attendance.
- Introducing the 100% Prize Draw at Christmas and Easter
- Placing students who arrive late in the Late Detention at break time
- Placing students who truant in After School Detention or the Seclusion Room

Appendix 1.

Darland High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Darland

Application for Leave during term time.

By law, the school is required to ensure that all our pupils receive full time education. Our target as a school, is to reduce the number of learning days lost through authorised absence, in order that the school achieves an attendance rate of 95% (around the median for schools of our type). We urge all parents to consider carefully the impact on the learning of their child, before deciding to take them on holiday during term time, since the time lost from lessons can, in some cases, never be made up.

The government has delegated the decision of whether holidays can be authorised (up to a maximum of ten school days in any one year) to the Headteacher. Therefore permission for authorised holiday leave rests at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting under the guidance of the School's Attendance Policy. This policy clearly states the following:

It is Darland High School policy not to authorise holidays during the school term.

Should parents persist in taking a child on holiday when the application for this has been refused by the school, the absence will be marked 'unauthorised' and may result in a Fixed Term Penalty issued by the Local Authority.

Name of pupil _____ Form _____

Dates of leave.

Day and date of first day of absence from school._____

Day and date of last day of absence from school. _____

Total number of school days absent _____

Brief explanation of reason why leave is being applied for.

Signed _____ Print Name _____

School Response. Original to be placed in Student's file, copy to be sent to parent.

Attendance % for last two terms _____ and _____ .

Approved _____ Refused _____

Reason given for refusal _____

Headteacher's signature _____ Date _____.

Code entered on SIMS _____