

PHOENIX COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Phoenix College recognises that:-

- Most of our students attend school regularly to learn, socialise, and acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to becoming responsible adults who prosper and contribute to their communities.
- A student may be at risk of harm if not attending school regularly or persistently absconding.
- It is the legal responsibility to parents/carers to ensure their children attend school where they are enrolled.
- Some students and their parents/carers may need additional support at times to meet their obligations and responsibilities to attend school.
- Lateness to school and class disrupts the education of not only the student who is late but also of other students in the school.
- There is a clear link between the level of attendance at school of a student and their levels of progress, achievement and attainment. A student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of other students.

Phoenix College expects that all students should:-

- Arrive at school by 8.55am each morning, appropriately prepared to be registered.
- Attend school regularly, remain for the whole day and attend all their lessons.
- Inform a member of staff if there are any problems, reasons or situations which may affect their regular attendance to school.

Phoenix College expects that parents/carers will:-

- Ensure that their son attends school every day unless too ill to do so, or there are acceptable reasons for absence.
- Ensure their son arrives to school on time, prepared and equipped to remain and engage for the whole day.
- Inform the school as soon as possible, on the day, if their son is to be absent from school.
- Co-operate with the Education Welfare Service where appropriate, to maintain a good level of attendance of their son.

Phoenix College will:-

- Follow its set procedures and that of RBC Education Welfare Service, in dealing with attendance issues.
- Give details on attendance when requested, for Annual Reviews, for monitoring by the Education Welfare Service, for enquiries by the Justice system, for Annual school reports.
- Report to parents/carers on how their son is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is, and how this relates to their progress and attainment.
- Celebrate and share good attendance by displaying individual, year group and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class and individual Attendance Challenge awards, letters home, outings/events and trophy presentation.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Continue to establish absence targets to aim for continuous improvements (no longer required by law).
- Work co-operatively with the Education Welfare Service by regularly reviewing whole school attendance data, by making referrals for unacceptable absences, by attending attendance panels, by issuing supporting reports, and by focusing resources within the school, appropriately, on areas with most significant attendance concerns.

TYPES OF ABSENCES

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (NOT PARENTS) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

AUTHORISED

These are morning or afternoon absences from school for acceptable reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes (e.g. bereavement, funerals, or family trauma)

UNAUTHORISED

These which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "permission" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Education Welfare Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and include:-

- Parents/carers keeping their son off school un-necessarily
- Parents/carers colluding to avoid sanctions imposed for unacceptable behaviours or refusal to engage in school work.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences not properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register closes
- Shopping, looking after siblings, or birthdays
- Day trips or unsanctioned leave of absences during term-time

TRUANCY

Truancy is unauthorised absence from school. If parents/carers are unaware of this type of absence, there may be significant danger to a student whose whereabouts are unknown to any responsible adult. Regrettably, on occasions, truancy is condoned by parents/carers.

Truancy can take the form of absence from school for complete days, or absenteeism from individual lessons. Although both instances are equally serious, the strategies used by Phoenix College to effect change may be different. It is the policy of the school that where explanations for absence are considered unacceptable, parents/carers will be informed that the absence will be marked as unauthorised, with an explanation. In rare cases, the Thames Valley Police may be involved.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

A Student becomes a "persistent absentee" when he misses 15% or more of schooling across the school year. Any absence that has reached this level or is at risk of moving towards it, is given priority, monitoring and parents/carers will be informed. This level of absence inevitably affects progress and attainment. All Persistent Absentee students and their parents/carers are subject to an ACTION PLAN (EWO) and automatically referred to the RBC Education Welfare Service.

CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE

Illness (I)

In most cases information from parents/carers (by note or telephone) is acceptable. Medical evidence may need to be provided where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This may be an appointment card, prescription or doctor's note. Repeated absences through illness may trigger a visit from the attached school nurse for purposes of offering support.

Medical/Dental appointments (M)

These appointments should be made outside school hours, if possible. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards should be shown to the school.

Other authorised circumstances (C)

This is where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison, "part-time" timetable agreed as part of a re-integration package.

Exclusion (no alternative provision) (E)

Exclusions are counted as authorised absences. Work is sent home.

Family Leave of absences (and extended leave) (H)

This is not acceptable during term-time. However, up to 10 school days leave in any one school year may be granted at the discretion of the Principal.

If the leave is taken without permission, then the absence will be UNAUTHORISED (G)

Religious Observance (R)

The multi-faith nature of our community is recognised and respected by Phoenix College. If these fall on a school day, consideration will be given, and the absence will be deemed AUTHORISED or SPECIAL. Advance notice from parents/carers is requested. No more than 3 days in total in any school year will be granted, and any absences above this will be marked as UNAUTHORISED.

Traveller Absence (T)

Traveller students should be encouraged to attend school as regularly as frequently as possible. If the student attends for at least 200 half days in a year, then Traveller parents/carers are safe from prosecution (Education Act 1944, section 86). Parents /carers should inform school of their proposed travelling pattern and proposed return dates.

Late arrival (L)

Students arriving after the start of morning or afternoon sessions will be marked as present but arriving LATE.

Late after Register (U)

Students arriving after the close of the register will be recorded as LATE (U). This will count as an unauthorised absence.

The absence may be authorised if an acceptable explanation is given (e.g. NOT: - "woke up late" or "waiting for uniform to dry")

Unauthorised absence (O)

Absence is not authorised unless parents/carers provide a satisfactory and acceptable reason.

NOT the following examples:-

- A student or family members birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having a hair cut
- Siblings school closed
- "Couldn't get him up"
- Illness which prevents school attendance, BUT allows the student to accompany parents/carers on shopping sprees
- Leave of absences without school's content

PROCEDURES

Monitoring

Attendance performance throughout the school is monitored in a number of ways:

- Registration at morning and afternoon assemblies
- Registration in all lessons.
- Regular review of attendance by EWO
- Regular recording and reporting of attendance figures to the Principal, Governing body and any other relevant agencies who requests it.
- Individual students' attendance included in reports to parents/carers.
- Form Tutors and Keyworkers to have focussed conversations challenging absence (80 - 90%)

Phoenix College Attendance Policy will be monitored annually by the SMT and Governors (as with other policies), and amended/updated as appropriate.

Registration

The register provides the daily record of the attendance of all students. It contributes to a students' Annual Review of statement, Annual end of year reports, Records of Achievement and References. It is a legal document that may be required in a Court of Law as evidence, for example, in prosecutions for non-attendance (please see code sheet – DfE).

- The school day begins at 8.55am for all students. Registration takes place at the morning assembly.
- Students arriving after the start of registration will be marked as late (L)
- Students arriving after the registration closes after 10.30am will be coded (U) which is legally an UNAUTHORISED absence.
- Where there is no acceptable reason given, the student should expect a LUNCH-TIME detention, at the least.
- Registration for afternoon sessions is taken at the afternoon assembly at 1.30pm.
- Registration is also taken at every lesson, which enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified, which may suggest problems with a particular subject or a wider issue. Students will have discussions about any such issues, and parents/carers informed if the matter has not been resolved.

Follow-up to absences

- If no contact is made by parent/carer by 9.10am via text or telephone then Admin staff will make 1st day contact calls.
- Where contact has not been possible, then the EWO will be informed by telephone (where relevant or appropriate)
- A text or letter may be sent.
- If the student is absent for some days with no appropriate/acceptable reasons given then the school will make a formal referral to the EWO for a visit to the home address.
- Regular non-attenders will be contacted by the school to try to work with the family to break down the barriers to attendance, strategies such as providing ALARM CLOCKS have been used.
- Persistent non-attenders will be dealt with by the EWS.
- If a parent/carer requests direct support, the school may send “outreach” to support and facilitate “wake-up”.
- Dependant on circumstances, Phoenix College may provide transportation support (e.g. bus fares, taxi paid for by school). “Pick-up” transport from school may also be provided.
- On occasions the PRINCIPAL may make “WAKE-UP” calls at approx. 7.00am for the first, and 7.30am for the second, when and if appropriate.
- Unusual/sudden unexplained absence without explanation will trigger a letter of “support” from Phoenix College.

Referral to EWO will involve the following:-

- Telephone contact
- Home visit
- Information letter
- Attendance panel
- Action plan
- Attendance panel review
- Attendance meeting with RBC legal team member
- Reports prepared for legal action
- Legal action
- Collaboration with EWS
- Make informal contact by phone/email/text
- Make FORMAL REFERRAL in writing
- Bi-weekly meetings with SMT and attendance admin
- Weekly attendance/registration documents sent on request.

Any information on Log to support the EWO monitoring **STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVED ATTENDANCE**

Incentives

- ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE is on-going. Regular 100% attendance for the TERM/YEAR are rewarded with a prize, letter home, outings and celebration/Trophy at Parents' Evening.
- Attendance figures for each Tutor Group are shared and published weekly. Top Tutor Group is rewarded.
- Attendance levels are graphically displayed.

Support in school

- Parents/carers may contact the school if they are experiencing problems with attendance ('NO BLAME' culture)
- New admissions with previous poor attendance will be 'flagged' and monitored as part of the INDUCTION PROCESS.

Links to other policies

- Consideration is given to whether any aspect of other policies such as Anti-bullying, Behaviour should be implemented to help support improved attendance.

Re-integration

- Returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some students, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations Phoenix College will plan carefully with the student, parents/carers and any other relevant agencies about how best to support the student's return to school. This may start with a meeting of all concerned.
- In a few, rare cases, and for a short period, it may be appropriate for Phoenix College to offer some form of gradual re-integration.
- Other support may be appropriate as deemed and offered by the school, e.g. outreach education, buying-in short-term provision.

CRITERIA

Less than 90% (regularly)

- Discussions between student and Tutor staff and Keyworker focus (see Top 10 Tips)
- Letter or text to home informing of school's concerns

Less than 85%

- Student becomes part of EWO focus cohort
- Contact made by EWO after referral
- Meeting arranged by EWO
- Attendance contract
- Regular reviews/meetings, involving referrals to other agencies possible, if appropriate

Less than 75%

- Student becomes a prime focus of EWS
- Student classed as 'Persistent Absentee'
- Medical/psychological evidence may be sought
- Possible legal process and court sanctions
- Missing students are referred to RBC after school and EWO have made exhaustive but failed attempts to contact parent/carer

ANALYSES OF ATTENDANCE DATA

- Phoenix carries out data collection on attendance, including the views of the students.
- We provide data on:-
 - Overall and persistent absence levels
 - Individual students' attendance, authorised and unauthorised absences, exclusions, lateness, approved educational activities, dual registration etc.
 - Whole school data to facilitate key decisions on use of resources
 - Termly attendance data
 - Attendance data may be correlated with data on behaviour to identify students at risk
- Trends may be clearly identified with progress and attainment data allowing questions to be raised in terms of the curriculum provision, e.g. :-
 - How appropriate is deliver/support?

- Are there issues of individual external factors to be taken into account (e.g. is there a quiet area at home for completing homework? Is there an issue of providing uniform?)

DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday agreed	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before register closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

PROMOTING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- At the start of a lesson take off your coat, get out the books and equipment that you need for the lesson and wait quietly in your seat. For practical lessons wait in an orderly, single queue, outside your classroom.
- When a teacher is speaking to the whole class, or another student is contributing to discussion, you must stop talking and listen.
- Follow the "Classroom Code of Conduct" that is displayed in each teaching space.
- Record homework tasks in your student diary, asking for help if you are unsure what you are expected to do.
- If you arrive late for a lesson without an acceptable reason, you will be expected to make up the lost time.
- Permission to leave a classroom during a lesson will only be granted in special circumstances.
- Do not pack away at the end of a lesson until your teacher tells you to.

HEALTH

- If you require urgent medical assistance go to the office, with permission.
- Report any accident or injury to a member of staff immediately.
- If you need to take medicine during the school day, hand this in at the office with a letter from a parent explaining its use. (Exceptional)
- You are not allowed to smoke in school or when the school is responsible for you.
- You must not possess, or be under the influence of, alcohol or controlled substances whilst the school is responsible for you. If this is suspected or found to be the case, then you parent(s) or carer will be contacted, to discuss the situation.
- If a student is found to be providing or selling controlled substances to others, they will be permanently excluded.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

- If you need to attend an appointment during the school day, tell your tutor or the office and show them an appointment card or letter to confirm this. Sign out at the main office showing your appointment card or letter. If you return during the same school day, sign back in. (Doctor/Dentist appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.)
- If you are absent from school for any reason e.g. illness, then please make sure that a parent or carer telephones the main office on the first day of absence. You will be asked to verify any absence by a letter from home on the day of your return.
- Regular attendance ensures that your learning is uninterrupted. We set a minimum standard of **85%** attendance in school for students during any part of the school year. If your attendance falls below this, your name will be passed to the Educational Welfare Officer for the school. The Officer will want to discuss the reasons behind this with you and your parents, and offer help to improve your attendance.
- The school will follow up any un-authorized student absence, including the deliberate missing of sessions of the school day (truancy).
- There are only a few **exceptional circumstances** when requests for leave of absence during school time will be authorised.

Top 10 Tips for Attendance

Top Tip	Red (not doing it)	Amber (planning to do it)	Green (doing it)
Use an alarm clock – set it for a reasonable time and get up as soon as it goes off.			
Go to bed at a sensible time on school nights. Have a hot milky drink, a warm bath or read a book in order to relax before going to sleep.			
Stop working/watching T.V./playing computer games etc. at least half an hour before going to bed.			
Never let any issues that you may have regarding teachers/homework/ students affect your attendance – you must talk to someone.			
Turn off your mobile or put it somewhere so that you will not be disturbed during the night.			
Eat well – stay healthy. Remember to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. This will boost your immune system and help prevent illness.			
If you are feeling tired or run down, book an appointment or speak to school nurse at “drop-in”			
If you have a bit of a sniffle, are feeling a bit tired, got a headache – take the relevant medication and come to school.			
You must attend school every day possible – the only time you do not attend is when you are so ill you cannot physically lift your head off the pillow			
Take part in some form of physical activity after school or at the week-end. Adrenaline produces endorphins which in turn will make you happy and relaxed.			

Current attendance percentage.....

Target attendance.....

Date of initial meeting.....

Date of 1st Review

Attendance percentage.....

Date of 2nd Review.....

Attendance percentage.....