



Attendance (Students) and Registration Policy

Last Review:	November 2014
Committee:	SLT
Date Ratified:	April 2018
Next Review:	April 2020

1. Rationale

Oldfield School regards regular attendance by students as essential if they are to benefit fully from the curriculum. It is also a legal requirement for those of compulsory school age. Responsibility for achieving excellent attendance is shared between parents and the school.

Oldfield School's expectation is that a student will achieve 100% attendance unless prevented from attending due to illness or unavoidable cause.

Parents must ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually and stays at school. Section 444 further states that: "*The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.*" Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 also states that: "*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability.*" Although there is no legal framework for Post 16 attendance and punctuality it is expected that all Oldfield students will have an exemplary record of attendance in order to support their learning.

The School must support attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance, and must publish its rates for absence. The school will work with parents and students to maximise attendance. This helps to foster positive relationships, high self-esteem, continuity of study and high achievement.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Anti-bullying
- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Special Educational Needs

2. Procedures and Implementation

Attendance is monitored twice daily, by the tutor at the start of the school day during registration and again during period 5 by their subject teacher. Subject teachers register students in their lessons using Lesson Monitor on SIMS and raise any concerns with Reception who alerts the Attendance Administrator.

For students who are persistently absent from school, the head of year will monitor and co-ordinate support to improve attendance. They may refer the case to the School Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for support. The school may also refer the case to the Local Authority.

3. Expectations of attendance

The Home School Agreement states the school's commitment to monitor carefully each student's attendance and give parents early warning of problems.

In accepting the school's Agreement, parents demonstrate their commitment to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually in accordance with the school's attendance policy and authorise his/her absence only when absolutely necessary.

The school informs parents of students of compulsory school age that they are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school. Parents are advised that they should inform school of the reason for a child's absence daily except where it is known that absence will be for a prearranged amount of time (e.g. operation). When the child is ill, they should inform the school of the nature of the illness and the likely duration of the absence. School will continue to monitor this absence until the child returns to school. On return, written confirmation of the reasons for absence should be provided.

4. Authorising Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes (doctor's authorisation may be required).

Unauthorised absences are those which are not considered reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy from a whole session
- children who arrive after registration has closed
- taking unauthorised holidays
- absences that have not been properly explained

Parents are expected to contact school and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties remain, the school may offer parents a formal meeting to discuss their child's attendance and/or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. The School may then refer the case to the Local Authority via the Children Missing Education Service.

BY LAW ONLY THE SCHOOL CAN AUTHORISE ABSENCE, NOT PARENTS.

5. Holidays during Term Time

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Oldfield School can only grant a leave of absence for family holidays during term time in **extremely exceptional circumstances**.

The School has discretion to allow up to 10 days in the school year for a family holiday if it believes that the circumstances warrant it. The school may agree up to 10 days "holiday leave" in special circumstances.

Holidays will not be authorised if:

- They are on the grounds of the availability of cheaper holidays.
- They are on the grounds of poor weather experienced during school holiday periods.
- The holiday arrangements overlap with the beginning or end of term.
- The student has a sibling at another school that has different holiday dates.
- The student already has poor attendance and/or the EWO/CEMO is involved.
- The student already has unauthorised absence.
- The student will miss public examinations (GCSE's, AS/A2 Levels).
- The student's educational progress will be affected by any disruption at the time.

In all circumstances of holiday leave, a written application must be made by the parent with whom the student normally resides **before** the holiday and a date for the students' return to school agreed. The decision to authorise absence for holiday rests entirely with the school and is not a right. In responding to requests the school will underline the importance of regular attendance to the child's learning. Parents will be informed in writing of the school's decision.

If parents take their children on holiday in term time and leave of absence has not been granted, where holiday absence which is unauthorised amounts to 10 sessions (5 school days, continuous or aggregated) or more within the last 100 sessions, the school will inform the Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority of this absence. Following the school's request, the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice to the parents for each child. The Penalty Notice imposes a fine of up to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. This shall be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Holidays agreed by the school are authorised absences and shown by code H in the register.

Holidays not agreed by the school, but taken, are unauthorised absences and shown in the register by code G in the register.

Where a request for a leave of absence has been made by a parent with whom the child resides, any estranged parent with parental responsibility will be advised of the request for leave. The school will not become involved in disputes between parents over permissions surrounding the request. If the parent on receipt of the notification does not agree with the absence, then he/she may put in writing to the Headteacher notification to that effect. This will be given consideration should a Penalty Notice be requested for the absence.

6. Monitoring of low attenders

The Attendance Administrator will alert parents daily of their child's absence and seek reasons for absence through our Truancy Call system. This system sends a text message to the parent named as

first priority on SIMS to alert them of their child's absence from school.

7. Sanctions for unauthorised absence

Cases of non-attendance are dealt with by the Head of Year in accordance with our attendance procedures. School procedures for non-attendance include - letters home, 'on report' system and late detentions held on Friday after school.

Persistent non-attendance can lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and attendance at a school attendance meeting. Persistent non-attendance could also resort in the school informing the Local Authority which may then lead to legal action.

The School will inform the local authority (CMES) of any pupil who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more and where all attempts to contact the parents/carers for information has failed.

8. Fixed Penalty Notices

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted parents will be liable to a fine of up to £2500/and or a prison sentence of up to 3 months. Magistrates may also impose a Parenting Order.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice does not require an appearance in Court but still aims to secure an improvement in attendance. A penalty notice may be considered when a pupil has had 10 or more unauthorised absences in the last 100 sessions prior to the penalty notice being issued.

If following an unauthorised holiday, a penalty notice may be issued once a student's attendance has reached 10 unauthorised sessions within the last 100 sessions.

How much will it be?

The fixed Penalty Notice will be £60 – if payment is made within 21 days. £120 – if paid after this but within 28 days. They are issued by post, to the parents /carers home address. Penalty Notices may be issued to any or all parents/carers as defined by section 5 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers will not be issued with more than 2 separate Penalty Notices per child in any twelve-month period.

Oldfield School does not take the decision to instigate legal action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to its enforcement powers. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that these powers will be used if this will help in securing a child's education.

9. Registration of Attendance

Registration is taken twice daily. Registration is taken in the morning during tutor time. Any student arriving

after this is required to sign the late form in reception. The register closes at 9.30am. In accordance with the regulations governing absence, if the student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U).

- L -before 9.30 am for morning registration
- U - after 9.30 am for morning registration

Registration is also taken at the start of period 5 at 1.50pm by the subject teacher.

Tutors keep track of individual attendance rates, monitor reasons for absence and notify Heads of Year when attendance causes concern.

Reception maintains a record of late arrivals and those leaving school during the day which is displayed for the Attendance Administrator to check and updates lesson monitor on SIMS.

To detect truancy, lesson monitor on SIMS is used by teachers/support staff, who refer any queries to the main office who then alerts the Attendance Administrator/EWO. The Attendance Administrator will notify the parent/guardian if a student's absence to a lesson is unexplained (see Appendix 3).

Once an absence has been marked as authorised in the register, it cannot be changed without a comment attached providing justification, this is important because it can be used, for example, in evidence to a court.

The blue register wallet must be returned at the end of both registration times to the main office every day.

Registers and monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of the tutors in the first instance. Tutors will ask students within their tutor group for letters explaining absence, look for patterns of absence or poor attendance. In addition, they will comment on regular good attendance. If tutors have problems in obtaining letters authorising absences or are concerned about any aspect of attendance they should discuss this with their Head of Year.

10. Encouraging good attendance

The importance of good attendance and punctuality is emphasised in the newsletter and in the tutorial / assembly programme through regular feedback on their attendance, and recognition for good attendance in the form of awards from the Head of Year termly:

- Gold (100%), Silver (99%) and Bronze (98%) certificates are awarded each term.
- A board to celebrate attendance is updated termly.
- Parents are informed of % attendance via reporting system.
- All students achieving Gold certificates are entered into a lottery termly, with a gift voucher as a prize finances permitting.
- Students with 98% attendance or above for the year will have an Excellent Attendance Certificate presented at their end of year celebration assembly.
- Students who have achieved targets set at attendance panels may receive appropriate rewards.
- Annually the top 2 students in each Year are presented with a special attendance

award and prize.

Students are able to self-check their attendance at regular intervals throughout the year.

11. Discouraging avoidable absence

At the beginning of the academic year, attendance information from the previous year for each year group is reviewed.

Students are taught that every absence requires a valid reason, and rigorous monitoring takes place. The tutor ensures that evidence supporting the authorisation of absence is recorded, and refer cases causing concern to Heads of Year.

Students whose attendance falls below 96% are identified and monitored (see Appendix 2). The tutor discusses this with their tutee and closely monitors their attendance. If the absences are authorised and medical, it may be appropriate for a medical action plan will be put in place.

If a student's attendance falls below 93% and above 90% the Head of Year will begin to monitor their attendance. Parents are informed of this by letter.

If attendance does not improve / declines further, the reasons for absence will then be required and medical evidence will be requested. In many cases a school attendance meeting is called with parents and school staff and consent to contact the GP is sought.

If attendance drops to 90% or below a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer. They will support the Head of Year to support and monitor the pupil's attendance. This may include calling School Attendance meetings, making a referral to the local authority who may decide to proceed with legal action.

12. Sixth Form Attendance

While students over the age of 16 are not included in the school's statutory responsibilities, the school recognises a need to support older students in achieving good attendance. Registration and internal monitoring systems mirror those for the compulsory school-age group. Parents are notified when tutor or teacher has a concern about attendance.

13. Study Leave

Study leave will only ever be granted to students who are about to sit public examinations as the school recognises that all students have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. However, there will always be alternative provision in school for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Students who are granted study leave should be marked on the attendance register as authorised absence using code S. No other attendance code is suitable for the purpose of study leave.

Students who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly.

14. Child Performers

The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 on

leave of absence do not affect the section that allows the parent of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. Section 2 of Regulation 7 still enables a head teacher to grant leave of absence for a student to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.

Parents of a child performer must first obtain a local authority licence before a child can take part in a performance.

Requests for absence for a child performer which has the support of a local authority licence will be individually assessed by the head teacher and will be supported as long as this will not have a negative effect on the student's education.

15. Requests for absence to participate in sporting/musical activities

The School can authorise absence for students who are participating in an approved sporting /musical activity.

Any requests for absence must be made by the parent in advance of the event in writing.

Any student whose attendance is below 96% at the time the request for absence is made will not have their absence authorised. All requests for absence are made at the School's discretion and are not an automatic right.

16. Monitoring

- Registers are completed electronically on SIMS giving prompt access to attendance statistics.
- Truancy Call is used to inform parents daily of student absence. A text message is sent home around 9.45am but at the very latest by 10.15am each day.
- A member of staff may make a telephone call to check on absence.
- The policy is monitored through the systematic review of procedures and the publishing of attendance figures annually.
- The school attendance is monitored by the DfE, three times a year by means of a census and bi-terminly by the Local Authority.

17. Evaluation

- All Heads of Year discuss matters relating to students' attendance with their SLT link fortnightly.
- The Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion and all Heads of Year meet with the Education Welfare Officer fortnightly.
- The Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion, with the Heads of Year, agree targets for school attendance which are annually reviewed.
- An annual evaluation exercise is undertaken to compare outcomes with those for previous years and with national data. It also assesses our success in different year groups.
- The Governing Body receives, as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors, data regarding attendance for their evaluation.
- This policy will be approved by SLT every two years.

- Date when policy was last approved: April 2018
- Date when next review is due: April 2020

Appendix 1 Monitoring levels of attendance and evaluating performance

Responsibilities

Tutor

- ensures that register information is kept accurate and up-to-date to the legal requirement;
- takes register each morning at 8.30am;
- Supports the collection of written evidence to support authorisation of absence (collects written notes, updates registers and files notes in students files);
- investigates cases of unexplained absence from registration or lessons, contacting parents as agreed with Head of Year;
- regularly monitors attendance rate and punctuality of individuals in group, notifying Head of Year if any students causing concern;

Head of Year

- oversees overall year attendance;
- identifies poor attenders (below the target of 96%) and takes remedial action, in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and Assistant Headteacher; Inclusion;
- meets with the Education Welfare Officer fortnightly;
- takes action regarding truancy and punctuality;
- maintains an attendance intervention spreadsheet where all interventions logged.
- monitors registers weekly noting cases of unexplained absence. Where appropriate, names are passed on to the designated person who follows up these absences by contacting parents by telephone. Letters will be sent to parents asking for reasons for absence and to arrange school attendance meetings.

Assistant Headteacher : Inclusion

- takes responsibility for monitoring the overall levels of attendance in relation to local and national averages, and reviewing strategies for achieving good attendance.
- The Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion relies on the Head of Year's comment on the tutor group attendance breakdown, who in turn speaks with the tutor if there is a significant drop in levels, who in turn investigates and reports back to the Head of Year;
- review the data on whole-school attendance collected termly, and agree annual targets for attendance with LT link manager and link governor;
- identify those students who are low attenders at primary school before their arrival into Year 7. These students are monitored regularly by tutor and Head of Year 7 and attendance problems addressed promptly;
- deals with issues of inadequate registering and arrange appropriate training for staff;

- determines (in collaboration with the Headteacher and Head of Year) whether to authorise any proposed absences;
- initiates with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance.

Teaching staff

- informs the Attendance Administrator (via Reception) of the names of students who are absent from their lesson without notification at the start of the lesson;
- are responsible for the accurate official registration of students at the beginning of each lesson
- are legally responsible for completing afternoon registration at 1.50pm each day.
- welcomes any student with long term absence back into the classroom without question.
- support students who are on reduced/ flexi timetables to access the curriculum content by providing appropriate work if necessary.

Education Welfare Officer

- identifies students whose attendance is causing concern by monitoring data and inspecting registers;
- holds regular timetabled meetings with Heads of Year, Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion;
- agrees with the Heads of Year action plans to improve attendance of identified students, and contributes to the delivery of these by interviewing students, making home visits or giving formal written warnings to parents, and participating in school attendance meetings in conjunction with the Heads of Year;
- acts on referrals made by the school;
- takes special interest in the attendance of vulnerable groups;
- works with parents to ensure good school attendance;
- advises the school as to its legal obligations and completes appropriate paperwork for any legal proceedings;
- supports the Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Administrator

- listens to the student absence line and records absence accurately on SIMS daily;
- responsible for Truancy Call and informing parents of unexplained student absence daily;
- maintaining accurate attendance registers on SIMS;
- updating SIMS registers of students who have signed the 'late book';
- supporting the Education Welfare Officer & Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion in promoting good attendance.

The SENCO

- supports students on the SEN register who have regular patterns of non-attendance;
- is involved in any reintegration programme of SEND students where necessary.

Parents

- ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- ring school to inform of child absence
- provide a note to cover any known absence;
- must inform the school in advance if seeking authorisation for absence.

Students

- are responsible for making sure that their attendance is maintained at the highest possible level;
- are responsible for being present at registration punctually;
- are responsible for ensuring that they receive their attendance mark and for bringing notes to school regarding absence;
- who are late must sign in at Reception;
- ensure they are punctual to every lesson;

The Headteacher

- set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process;
- monitor progress via fortnightly meetings with Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion.

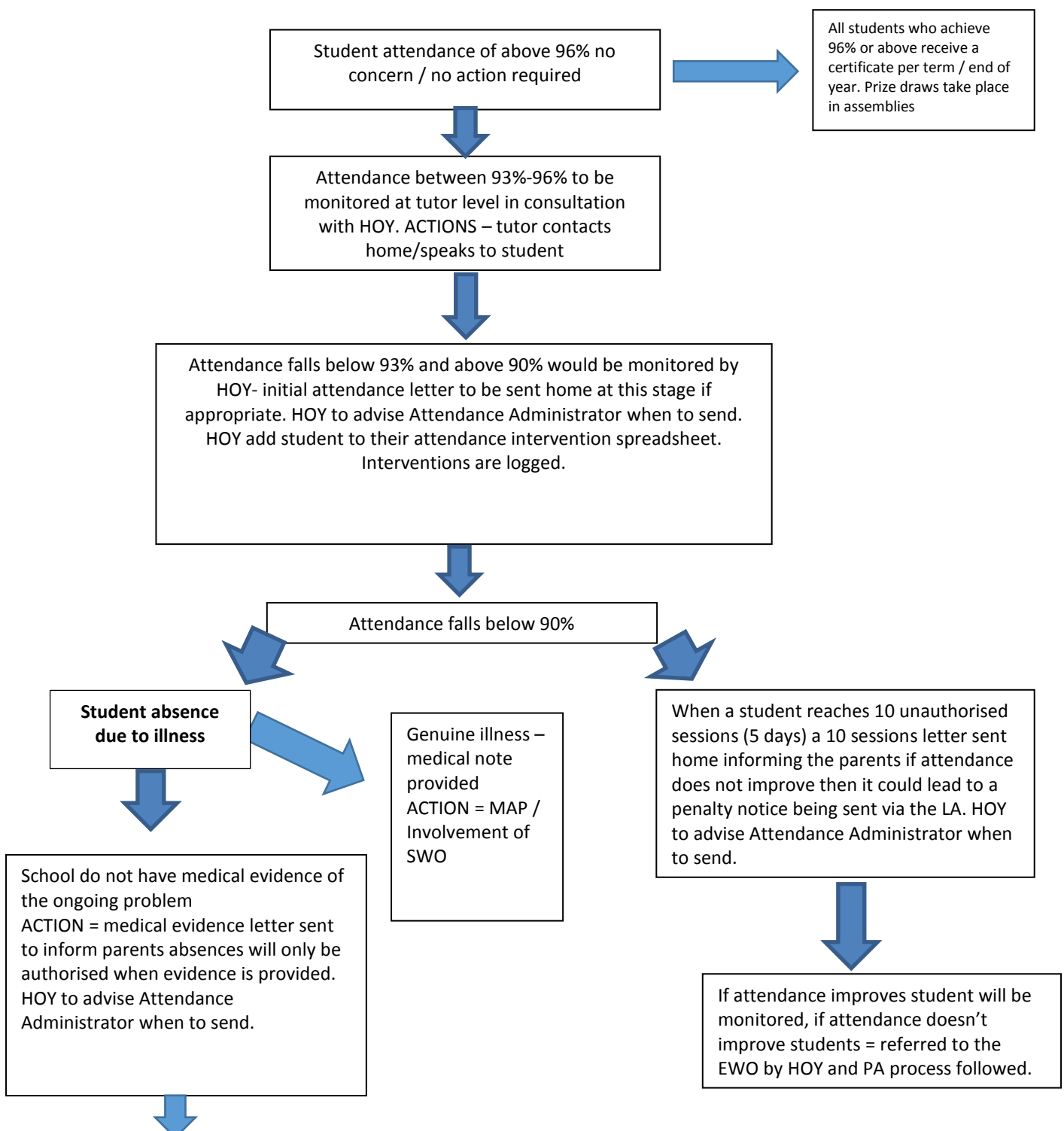
The Governing Body:

- monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy
- monitor progress against School targets
- monitor for issues of Equal Opportunity

Additional support that may be used;

- Pastoral Support Worker
- School Nurse
- Off the Record
- Referral to outside agencies e.g. CAHMS, Social Services, counselling services, Parenting Support, Young Carers, SARI, Black Families Support.

Appendix 2 – Attendance Intervention Flowchart



If attendance improves student monitored,
Attendance doesn't improve = once 10 unauthorised sessions reached - the unauthorised sessions letter would be sent home.
If no further improvement after that the student should be referred to the EWO by HOY and PA process followed.

Appendix 3 - Students Out of Lessons

Truancy

- Students who truant from lessons and/or school are marked as an unauthorised absence.
- A student is deemed to be truanting when they are not where they are expected to be, as shown by their timetable, and does not have permission to be elsewhere.
- Parents are informed by phone if a student is found to be truant.
- The student will be sanctioned for this truancy following the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning policy.

Punctuality

- It is important to make the distinction between a late that occurs during the official registration period and a late that occurs after the official registration period. The registration period covers the time between 8.30 and 8.40am during the morning session. Students that arrive late during the registration period should go directly to the classroom/tutor base. The tutor/class teacher should record this late on SIMS Lesson Monitor. Students who arrive late outside the registration period should sign in at the Main Office.
- The Attendance Administrator will enter the appropriate late.
- The Heads of Year will monitor punctuality and carry out spot checks in conjunction with the EWO at intervals throughout the school year.
- Students who are repeatedly late will be placed on Punctuality Report.

Signing Out

- There should be a record of all students on site. Outside of the arrangements described above, all students should sign out if they are leaving the school site.
- They should sign out at the Main Office producing proof of why they are leaving (an appointment card, note in the contact book or such).
- Sixth Form students may either sign out at the Main Office or at the Sixth Form Office in Penn Building.

Appendix 4 Long Term Medical Absence

- When a student is absent because of long term illness a Medical Action Plan will need to be initiated. This will provide a structure for the student to be reintegrated back into the classroom.
- A Medical Action Plan can only be completed once diagnosis is confirmed and prognosis given by the medical team supporting the student.
- Where the student needs the support of the Home Education and Reintegration Service (HERS) this will be sought/referred to on the advice of the medical professional responsible for the student's case.
- The school will take the lead role in planning and reviewing the student's provision in conjunction with HERS.
- For students with an EHCP this Medical Action Plan will be incorporated into the student's Annual Review. This would be compiled in conjunction with the Inclusion Manager.