

# Abbey College Policy Statement

## Attendance

**Scope of Policy:** This policy applies to all students of compulsory school age at Abbey College, Ramsey and will be used to inform attendance practice in relation to sixth form students.

### Key Requirements/ Legal Duties

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

Abbey College seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements.

Abbey College fulfils its responsibilities in respect of taking a morning and afternoon session registration, of being open for the required 190 student school days unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance, and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

### Key principles

- Students at Abbey College have the right to the best possible education
- In order for students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution are jeopardised by poor attendance

### Context

Abbey College endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which students can feel and be safe, enjoy and achieve. We acknowledge the proven correlation between high level attendance and student outcomes. Abbey College's attendance policy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal Abbey College procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including legal action, will be considered.

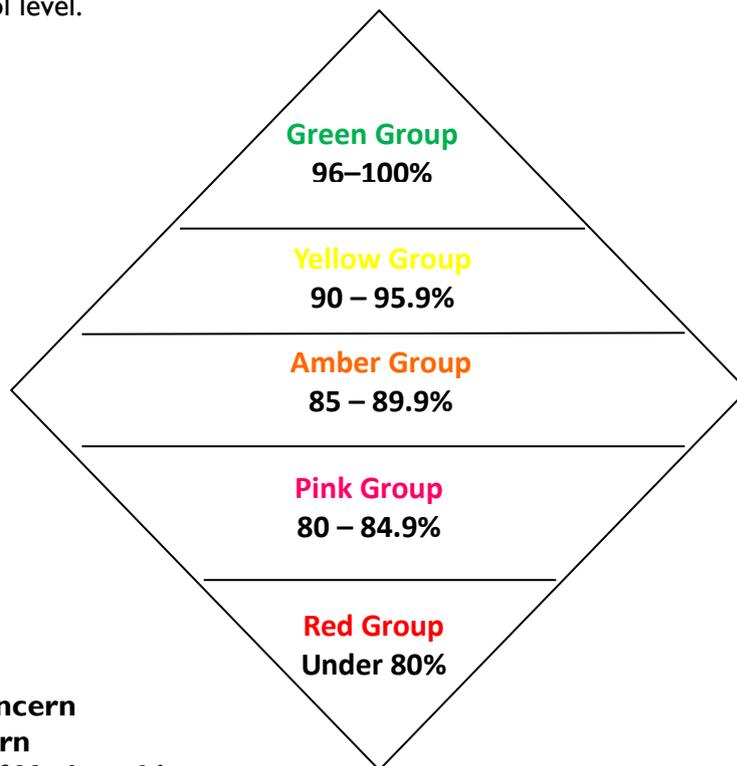
### Aims of the policy

- To increase overall Abbey College attendance to 96% or above
- To raise the profile of the importance of high level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies, linked to higher levels of progress in learning.
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

### Attendance practice

Improving attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of school staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Attendance Team who work with staff to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.



**Green: No Concern**  
**Yellow: Concern**  
**Amber: Risk of Underachievement**  
**Pink: PA & Severe Risk of Underachievement**  
**Red: PA & Extreme Concern**

For each group we have a flow chart showing these processed and actions (see Appendix I)

### Positive reinforcement

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, Abbey College uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- Displays detailing attendance
- Certificates
- Letters
- Assemblies
- Inclusion in prize draws
- Special awards
- Reward Visits
- Successful completion of Contract rewards

### Attendance monitoring and intervention

As evident from the attendance diamond, Abbey College has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concern.

The principles underpinning the model will be used to promote consistency both across the different year groups of compulsory school age and within each House group. In summary these are as follows:

- The attendance statistics for every student at Abbey College will be distributed to Form Tutors on a weekly basis by the Attendance Team. This report will be displayed in the Form Room.
- Attendance matters will receive positive reinforcement in assemblies
- Green 96% - 100% and Yellow 90 - 95.9% - The Form Tutor has responsibility for praising students in the Green group for high attendance and encouraging and supporting improvement for students in the Yellow group through monitoring, dialogue with the student and recognising improvement, this may also include telephoning the parent of student.
- For all other stages of the Attendance process see Appendix I.

To support this process the Attendance Team, will hold regular attendance meetings for each House in which all students are monitored and banded in relation to their attendance percentage. In these routine meetings the attendance of students whose attendance is in the Red, Pink, Amber or Yellow groups and those whose attendance is declining will be reviewed. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

These principles and the concept of colour coding; with the Yellow, Amber, Pink and Red percentage bands serve as the absolute minimum at which action is taken. In practice preventative intervention, working closely with parents and the active involvement of the Attendance Welfare Officer is likely to be initiated much earlier.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service is a statutory service and a legal requirement. Education Welfare Service involvement is usually triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Persistent absence
- Lateness

The Attendance Team is responsible for ensuring that Abbey College's policy and practice is compliant with the local authority's legal duties and processes. This includes ensuring that only the Head Teacher, or a nominated Deputy authorise Penalty Notices.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

If a student is absent from Abbey College, it is vital that a parent contacts the school at the earliest opportunity to provide a sufficient reason for absence. This should be by telephone in the first instance supported by a written note on the student's return.

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no sufficient reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents cannot authorise absence. This is a decision which rests with Abbey College in accordance within the boundaries set down by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Where deemed necessary, Abbey College reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness

### **Lateness**

It is Abbey College's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if students attend regularly and punctually. Abbey College expects all students to arrive at School and lessons on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others. Occasional lateness to

school or lessons will result in short detentions, a build-up of lateness or patterns of lateness over a period of time will result in further follow-up investigation and action.

### **Avoiding holidays & appointments during term time**

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day or taking family holidays during the term time period.

New Government Legislation came in to effect from September 2013 which states that it is now illegal for any headteacher to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore Abbey College will not consider authorising an absence in relation to any holiday during term time unless exceptional circumstances are detailed on the Application for leave of absence during term time form, which can be found on the school website and handed in at least 2 weeks before any absence is taken.

Abbey College will judge each request for absence on an individual basis.

Whilst an authorised absence may very occasionally be granted for an exceptional circumstance it is entirely Abbey College's decision and not a parental right. Parents should be advised that absence without the consent of Abbey College could result in further action and sanctions including a penalty notice

### **Legal action**

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends Abbey College on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare investigation. Where necessary, Abbey College's Attendance Team will recommend legal action. Abbey College and Cambridgeshire Local Authority work together in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 28 day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- **Prosecution for unauthorised absence:** It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at Abbey College. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

### **Post 16**

Post 16 students will be monitored and expected to adhere to the same attendance levels as main school students; i.e. an attendance level of 96% or above is expected. Drops in attendance will be dealt with via the 6<sup>th</sup> Form attendance process. (See Appendix I, 6<sup>th</sup> Form Flow Chart)

### **Supporting and working with parents**

In order to support parents in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, Abbey College seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues. Methods include:

- Automated first day absence calling
- Telephone calls to parents to discuss support needed

- Go4Schools individual student progress record
- Letters detailing attendance concerns and possible future actions
- Parental meetings
- Active involvement of staff & Attendance Team
- At Parents' Meetings/Evenings
- Formal Parenting Attendance Meetings where any established barriers to attendance will be discussed.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Working in collaboration with the Attendance Team, the Deputy Head will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy, review it annually and submit a report to the Governing Body. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Abbey College.

Policy Developed by:	College AWO
Policy Adopted:	Autumn 2015
Frequency of Review:	Every 2 years
Reviewing Committee:	Learner Progress
Next Review due:	Autumn 2017