

## **Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers**

### **Purpose**

We are hugely dependent on your support as a parent/carer in making sure students attend school regularly and promptly. Attendance is one of the few areas in life where 90% is poor; in practical terms, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing nineteen full days of school each year! Poor attendance is proven to have a very significant - and negative - impact on exam success, and (therefore) a very significant impact on an individual's life chances. Arriving punctually and on time for each school day is just as important as attending regularly. For example, being just five minutes late for school every day would add up to over three full days of school missed each year.

**The *minimum* level of attendance we expect for every student in our school is 96%.**

We know that in most cases, any problems or difficulties around attendance can be sorted out by talking things through. We are keen to work with parents and carers - and to provide whatever support we are able - to make sure every child attends school regularly, and at the correct times. While we understand that absence is sometimes unavoidable, we do however expect that every student makes up any time and work they've missed, so they don't fall behind in their learning and development.

The following procedures are in place to ensure all children are properly accounted for, and that any absences are followed up in a timely manner. Please do let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Improving Attendance**

The school can support students in Phase Two, Phase Three or Phase Four to catch up with any learning missed, and to improve their attendance record. This involves the student attending additional time at school (After School and/or Saturday mornings - 'Saturday School'). A letter informing parents/carers of these options when the student is required to attend will be sent home as and when necessary. Any student is welcome to access these opportunities on a voluntary basis, even when their attendance record is greater than the expected minimum of 96%.

***After School*** sessions run from 3.30pm till 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. *These sessions take place in our Supported Learning Space, and are managed and overseen by a qualified teacher. Students can attend to finish work that has yet to be completed, and are also welcome to continue and/or develop any additional work that has connected with their interests. Phase Three and Phase Four Students can attend unaccompanied. Phase Two students are welcome to attend together with their parent/carer or a secondary aged brother or sister.*

**Saturday School** runs between 10.00am and 1.00pm on Saturday mornings during term-time, and is overseen by a qualified teacher. Saturday School is an excellent opportunity for students to catch up with their learning, whether they have missed school or for any other reason. Students are also welcome to attend Saturday School to continue and/or develop any work that has connected with their interests. Phase Three and Phase Four Students can attend unaccompanied. Phase Two students are welcome to attend Saturday School together with their parent/carer.

**Digital Learning** platforms are used across the school as part of the school's regular pedagogy and learning processes. These platforms also enable students to undertake and complete curriculum-based work in ways that are accurately assessable, both in terms of the quantity and the quality of work completed. Students are able to use these digital learning platforms to finish work that has yet to be completed, as well as continue and/or develop any additional work that has connected with their interests. In some cases, students have been able to study subjects in addition to those that form part of the standard curriculum offer

Where we are able to accurately record and assess work that has been completed *in addition* to that expected through the regular curriculum timetable and regular home-learning requirements, we are able to reflect this in that student's attendance record.

### **Arrival & Registration**

As a school, we are required to record every student's attendance twice a day; once for the morning session, and once for the afternoon session. As such, there are ten possible sessions in each full school week, and one day's absence from school would be recorded as two sessions of absence. You can access details of your child's attendance record on the school's management information system, Progresso.

**The school registers are taken promptly at 9:00am**, so it is important for your child to be in Studio and ready to be registered **before** then. Arriving after the registers have been taken can have a very unhelpful impact on the rest of that student's day at school. We've probably all had the experience of arriving late at an event, and recognise this can feel uncomfortable and take away from our experience of that event.

We do however recognise that lateness can be unavoidable at times. However, if a child arrives after the register has been taken, they will be marked as 'late after the register closes'; this is recorded as an **unauthorised absence** and will affect their school attendance record. If a student arrives at 8.55am or later, they must sign in on the school's Inventory system and provide a specific reason. There is a drop-down box on the Inventory system for parents/carers/students to select the appropriate reason. If other circumstances apply, these must be explained to staff on the reception desk at the main

entrance at the time of their arrival.

### **Phase One & Phase Two**

Phase One and Phase Two Studios are open from 8.30am, when there is an informal opportunity for children to take part in play-based learning activities. During this period, parents/carers can spend time alongside their child, speak to staff or catch up with other parents/carers for up to half an hour. Parents/carers are expected to leave the school building by 8.55am (at which point the back gate is closed and locked); the Studio registers are taken promptly at 9.00am.

*If you arrive after 8.55am, you **must** sign your child (or your child must make sure that they sign themselves) in via the Inventory electronic system located in the main foyer at the front entrance to the school.*

### **Phase Three & Phase Four**

Students are able to enter the school from 8.30am and the registers are taken promptly at 9.00am. After the school gate closes at 8.55am, students are required to enter the building via the main foyer at the front entrance to the school. If students arrive after 8.55am, they **must** sign in via the Inventory electronic system located in the main foyer.

### **Collection Times/Leaving Early**

Collection times at the end of the school day are as follows:

Phase One	- 3.05pm
Phase Two	- 3.15pm
Phase Three and Phase Four	- 3.25pm

Should your child need to leave school before their Phase's collection time, they must sign out (or be signed out) via the Inventory electronic system located in the main foyer, recording the reason for leaving early.

### **Student Absence**

If we have not received any notification of absence, Attendance Team staff will send an automatic text message via our school management software (Progresso), to **all** Primary Contacts registered for the child. The text requires the parent/carer(s) listed to contact the school as soon as possible to explain the absence. This enables us to record the correct absence mark; if we are not provided with an explanation, an **unauthorised absence** mark will be recorded. *Where we cannot get in touch with the Primary Contact and/or we do not receive any reply from them, we will attempt to make contact with the other named contacts you have provided.*

**Details of student absence can be given by phone (01752 221927), by email ([attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk](mailto:attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk)) or in person to reception staff at the main entrance to the school.**

If a student is absent from school with no contact/information from home, either staff from the school's Additional Needs team or the Education Welfare Service may make a home visit. If a student is absent with no contact with home for more than one day, this will be recorded on our school records as a safeguarding concern. The Attendance and Safeguarding Teams will check the student's history and raise this concern with the Education Welfare Service and any other relevant professionals (e.g. Social Care, Police etc.).

**Please note:** *There are two registration points during the school day; morning and afternoon. If your child is registered in school in the morning, but is not present for afternoon registration, school will aim to make contact with home as described above. If any student leaves the school site without permission during the school day, we will contact the police immediately.*

### **Sickness Reporting**

If your child is absent due to sickness, you **must** contact the school promptly before 8.30am on the first day of illness **AND** on a daily basis for any (and all) subsequent days of sickness. Prompt and regular notification of absence helps us make sure children are kept safe at all times, and reduces time spent by school staff unnecessarily following up student absence.

*Please note that if a student has a prolonged period (or sporadic, frequent periods) of illness, we are entitled to ask for medical evidence for **any** current or future absence.*

For students who have an ongoing physical or mental health concern, an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) will need to be completed. Additional Needs team staff will contact home to arrange for this to be done. The purpose of the IHCP is to make sure that all options to support the student's learning have been considered.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Wherever possible, non-urgent medical/dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours. If an appointment does fall during the school day, prior notification must be given and a copy of the appointment letter provided. This enables us to record the absence correctly in advance, and means you will not need to 'phone in on the day. This information should be handed to staff on the reception desk at the main entrance to the school so that we can keep a copy as evidence on your child's school record. Alternatively a scanned copy of the evidence can be emailed to [attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk](mailto:attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk)

### **Other Absence (Exceptional Circumstances)**

Requests for absence during term time must be made in advance and in writing by submitting an Absence Request to the headteacher, with supporting evidence. The form can be accessed from this link: [Student Absence Form](#) and should be

returned via email to [attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk](mailto:attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk) or handed in to staff on the reception desk at the main entrance to the school, clearly marked for the attention of the Attendance Team.

The absence cannot be taken until it has been authorised. **Please note that absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.** In considering any request, the student's attendance record and learning development will be considered, alongside government guidelines and statutory requirements for school attendance.

With this in mind, absences at the end or the beginning of a school term will not be authorised without prior agreement with the school, or the absence being supported by medical evidence. Absences without prior agreement or supported by medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised. These absences will be forwarded for the attention of the Education Welfare Officer, who may take legal action.

If the student is absent because the family have taken a holiday during term time and have not previously submitted an absence request form, parents/carers will receive a formal letter from the Education Welfare Officer.

**\*Please note that we are unable to authorise holiday absence during term-time\***

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract further consequences (such as a Penalty Notice) from the Local Authority.

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent Absence is defined as a student having an attendance level of 90% or less. This means your child is missing a whole day each fortnight, which will have a significant impact on their learning.

Your child's Basecamp teacher/tutor monitors their attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. If any student's attendance falls below 96%, the student's Basecamp teacher/tutor will be involved and will have a conversation with the student's parent/carer (Phase One and Phase Two), or will speak directly with the student (Phase Three and Phase Four).

**\*The key purpose of ANY meeting is to make sure that there's a clear plan to support the improvement of attendance\***

If attendance does not improve (and/or falls below 92%), a meeting involving the tutor and Attendance Team **will** be required to agree and formalise a plan to improve attendance; this meeting will be arranged by the Basecamp teacher/tutor and can be supported by the Attendance Team. Persistent absence (attendance of 90% or less) will be reviewed by the school's Strategic Leadership Team to assess and develop the plan to improve attendance, and the school's Education Welfare Officer will be notified. Attendance of 85% or less will require the parent/carer to meet formally with the Basecamp teacher/tutor and member of the Strategic Leadership Team in school; this meeting will be

arranged by the Attendance Team. A continued lack of improvement will further involve the Local Authority Education Welfare Service and statutory legal action.