Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance
by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent
absence.

- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are
entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory
school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Learning to turn up regularly and on time isn't just important for school learning, it is an essential life skill. Being able to take the personal responsibility for making sure I am where I need to be - and ready for what I need to do - is part of our school's process for encouraging personal responsibility. Whether a student aims to continue in education or begin employment when they leave our school, learning the skills necessary to arrive promptly and being ready and prepared to invest effort constructively is very important. These skills directly impact a student's life chances and opportunities.

Our minimum target for school attendance is **96%.** We recognise that absence is sometimes unavoidable (e.g. through illness) although we aim to support students and parents to catch up with/make up any work or time missed. This is important to make sure that no student falls behind in their learning. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. Studio staff and/or the team will provide support and guidance around the ways in which work can be caught up and attendance improved.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the Department of Education's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996

- The Education Act 2002

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

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- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Improving attendance

Attending school regularly (and on time) is really important for students to learn as effectively as possible. There are very few instances in life where achieving 90% is poor, but school attendance is one of them! Ninety percent attendance actually means missing 1 in every 10 days of schooling, which adds up to 19 days of school a year. This is categorised nationally as a Persistent Absence. This results in poorer outcomes for each child.

As a school, we recognise there are times when absence is unavoidable. However, we also recognise that where students and their parents/carers are willing to take responsibility to make sure learning and development is maintained, attendance can be improved through work that's completed *in addition* to the school day. *Please note; these additional learning opportunities are available to any student, irrespective of their attendance record.* The school supports this additional work through the following resources and additional attendance opportunities:

• *After School Attending twilight sessions. These run Monday 3.25-5.30pm, Tuesday 3.25-5.30pm and Wednesday 3.25 - 5.30pm and take place in our Supported Learning Space. These sessions are supervised by qualified teaching staff and are open to Phase 2, 3 and 4 students. Phase 3 and 4 students can attend independently; Phase two students are welcome to attend when accompanied by a parent/carer*

• *Saturday School runs between 10.00am and 1.00pm on Saturday mornings during term-time, and is overseen by qualified teaching staff. 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*

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been able to study subjects in addition to those that form part of the standard curriculum offer.

As stated previously, any student is welcome to access these opportunities on a voluntary basis, even when their attendance is greater than the expected minimum of 96%. Students will be encouraged to do so by the Basecamp teacher/tutor/subject teacher. 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.

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and again at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Any anomalies need to be reported to the Attendance Team immediately who may then need to alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (see Safeguarding Policy). See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

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Students must arrive in school *ready* to be registered by 9.00am for morning registration and for afternoon registration at 12.50pm (Phase One), for afternoon registration at 12.50pm (Phase Two), and for afternoon registration at 13.35pm (Phases Three & Four).

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am (or in exceptional circumstances, as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers can either notify us in person at the front desk, by phone on 01752 221927 or by email on attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. We will also ask for evidence

where absence through illness exceeds two periods of illness within a half term or three periods of illness within a full term.

If a student is on trial with us or has been subject to a managed move and where there are existing concerns about their school attendance, then medical evidence will be requested following their first period of illness at our school.

If for any student, there is a further absence due to reported illness, a follow-up letter will be sent to remind and request medical evidence. These further absences will be marked as unauthorised until evidence is received. If it is not received, then the student will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice and the relevant evidence is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers can either notify us in person at the front desk, by phone on 01752 221927 or by email on attendance@schoolofcreativearts.co.uk. Evidence of the appointment can be provided to school in person, by post or by email.

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Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance through our absence request procedure: Absence Request form

Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 5.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Students arriving late must sign in using the electronic system and provide a sufficient explanation. Students will be considered to be consistently late if they arrive after

9.00am on three or more times in a week. This will then be raised with the tutor to follow up with the student and/or parent/guardian. If there is no improvement or if there are five or more occasions of lateness in a week, or ten or more incidents of lateness in a half-term period, this will be referred for a meeting with a member of SLT.

A student who arrives after the register has closed (either in the morning or afternoon) will be marked as absent. If a student is persistently late after the registration period has closed, a referral to the EWO will be made.

4.5 Following up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Basecamp teachers/tutors will follow up absence with the student concerned and/or their parents/carers (Parent/Carers Guidance)

A referral may also be made to the EWO.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

Each child's attendance information is recorded on Progresso and available for parents/carers to access. Details of attendance are shared as part of our reporting processes.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Any application for term-time absence is considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by

the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

• Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

Although we recognize the value of extra-curricular opportunities such as travel, we are not able to authorise term-time holidays.

When attendance raises concern, the student will be offered the opportunity to catch up with missed learning; a referral will be made to the EWO; and an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)/Well-Being Care Plan (WCP) will be considered and implemented as appropriate.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year including arriving persistently late for school after the register close.

An unauthorised holiday during term time. Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. A student is found during a truancy sweep. Failure by parents/guardians to provide evidence and reasons for their child's absence.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Team monitors student absence on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a child is absent due to sickness, parents/carers must contact the school promptly before 9.00am on the first day of illness **and** on a daily basis for any subsequent days of sickness. Prompt and regular notification of absence ensures children are kept safe at all times, and also reduces time spent by staff following up student absences unnecessarily.

After 9.00am, if no communication has been received by school from home regarding the student's absence, the Primary Contact(s) home will be contacted. If there is no response, all contacts listed will be called.

If the student is absent with no contact from home for more than one day, this will be recorded as a safeguarding concern and other relevant agencies will be contacted.

If any student's attendance falls below 96%, the student's Basecamp teacher/tutor is required to have a conversation with the student's parent/carer (Phase One and Phase Two), or directly with the student (Phase Three and Phase Four). A meeting involving the parent/carer and student may also be called by the Basecamp teacher/tutor, to discuss any extra support required to improve attendance. The Basecamp teacher/tutor will record this meeting on Progresso and can request advice and/or support from the Attendance Team.

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.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence

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data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Accountability for attendance is devolved to the Deputy Headteacher who reports to Governors on attendance on a termly basis.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school through devolved responsibility to the Deputy Headteacher, who is responsible for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting this to governors.

The Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Team also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and involving the EWO, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level.

- Reports concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher.

- Works with Education Welfare Officers and other Additional Needs team staff to tackle persistent absence.

- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

- With the Education Welfare Officer, advises the Deputy Headteacher when to issue fixed- penalty notices.

7.4 Basecamp Teachers/Tutors

Basecamp teachers/tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Team accurately and promptly within the official close of register times (9.10am and 2.00pm, respectively).

Basecamp teachers/tutors will monitor the attendance of their students and identify any difficulties which they can raise with the student and/or their parents/carers in the first instance. If attendance drops below 96%, Basecamp teachers/tutors of the student (Phase One and Phase Two), or speak

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with the student directly (Phase Three and Phase Four). If there is no improvement, Basecamp teachers/tutors will work with the Attendance Team to meet with parents *(as described in Section 6, above)*. For persistent issues and/or where intervention from other agencies may be necessary, Basecamp teachers/tutors will discuss this on an individual basis with the school Attendance Team *(as described in Section 6, above).*

7.5 Front Office/Reception Staff

Front office/reception staff are expected to take calls and process messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system accurately and promptly.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in connection with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the Department of Education's guidance on school attendance.

Code Definition Scenario

/ Present (am) Student is present at morning registration **** Present (pm) Student is present at afternoon registration **L** Late arrival Student arrives late before register has closed **B** Off-site

educational activity Student is at a supervised off-site educational

activity approved by the school **D** Dual registered Student is attending a session at another

setting where they are also registered **J** Interview Student has an interview with a prospective

employer/educational establishment **P** Sporting activity Student is participating in a supervised sporting

activity approved by the school **V** Educational trip or visit Student is on an educational visit/trip

organised, or approved, by the school **W** Work experience Student is on a work experience placement

Code Definition Scenario

Authorised absence C Authorised leave of absence Student has been granted a leave of absence

due to exceptional circumstances **E** Excluded Student has been excluded but no alternative

provision has been made **H** Authorised holiday Student has been allowed to go on holiday due

to exceptional circumstances **I** Illness School has been notified that a student will be

absent due to illness **M** Medical/dental appointment Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R Religious observance Student is taking part in a day of religious

observance **S** Study leave Year 11 student is on study leave during their

public examinations **T** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school **Unauthorised absence G** Unauthorised holiday Student is on a holiday that was not approved

by the school

N Reason not provided

Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) **O** Unauthorised absence School is not satisfied with reason for student's

absence **U** Arrival after registration Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code Definition Scenario

X Not required to be in school Student of non-compulsory school age is not

required to attend

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody **Z** Student not on admission register Register set up but student has not yet joined

the school **#** Planned school closure Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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