



# SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Recommended by:</b>	Associate Principal
<b>Recommendation Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Chair of Governors
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Position on the board</b>	Chair of Governors
<b>Ratification Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Next Review:</b>	February 2023
<b>Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):</b>	School

Gospel Oak School takes attendance in the Sixth Form very seriously and we acknowledge that good school attendance plays an essential part in academic development for post 16 students.

All post 16 courses are intensive and students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time.

As well as timetabled lessons students also have direct study periods on their timetables for assignment catch up, homework, personal development, online work experience and UCAS applications.

As students are granted the privilege of studying at home 'free periods', we would expect them to be committed to spending their time effectively, but this privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not meeting his/her work commitments. In such cases students will be scheduled to work within school and have extra directed study periods added to their timetable.

Sixth form students should strive to achieve consistently good attendance as poor attendance will affect academic attainment. Students should therefore aim for at least 95% attendance for the year. An exemplary record of attendance says a huge amount about the student as a person: that they are dedicated, well-motivated, organised and someone who takes their responsibilities seriously. Good attendance also plays an important part when applying to higher education establishments or employment.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives, Gospel Oak School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### **Whole-School Policy for School Attendance**

Gospel Oak School aims to:

- Improve the overall percentage of students at school to above 95%
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and Governors
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Promote effective partnerships with external services and agencies
- Recognise the needs and support of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

## **Partnership**

### **What the school expects of students**

- Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn
- Attend registration, tutor time and directed study sessions
- To sign in if they arrive after registration time
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school
- Make every effort to make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours
- Provide medical evidence of any appointments made inside school time

### **What the school expects of parents/carers**

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school, on time and prepared for the day
- To contact school on the **first day** their child is absent for any reason and then on **all** subsequent days if the absence continues
- To **not** taking holidays in term time – these cannot be authorised
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school
- To provide evidence to support absence such as an appointment card/letter, a copy of a prescription slip with name and date visible or medication packaging with name and date visible. Alternatively if none of the above are available a note, signed by the parent/carer, school explaining the reason for absence.

### **What parents/carers and pupils can expect from school**

- A Sixth form education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Regular communication with students and parents/carers

## **Absences**

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school, set by the Department for Education:

- The student is too ill to leave the house
- The student has a hospital appointment – evidence required for authorised absence
- The student has toothache and has an emergency appointment
- A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- There is a close family bereavement
- Interviews for courses/employment that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form. Students should not miss lessons to attend interviews, shifts and inductions for part-time work
- University and Employer Open Days – students may attend no more than two of these events in an academic year
- Work experience – requests for term-time leave for essential work experience (e.g. medicine, law) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. These requests should be submitted at least a month in advance (Online work experience should be carried out in Directed Study time on site.)

Unacceptable reasons for keeping a child away from school are:

- To mind the house
- To look after siblings
- To go shopping
- To celebrate a birthday
- Sleeping in
- One child is ill, so all are kept off school
- Minor ailments such as a tummy ache or headache
- Because it is the end of the week or term
- Driving lessons
- Adverse weather conditions
- House maintenance appointments
- Deliveries

If a student is absent from school longer than a period of 5 days due to illness parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence.

Leave of absence may not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours unless it is to engage in work experience arranged through school.

## **Signing In and Out**

It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school building at all times.

Students must make sure that they sign in each time they are late to school then sign out each time they leave the building throughout the day.

## **In-school procedures**

We are keen to identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity to give parents/carers, students and the school the ability to intervene early and prevent further decline. We will do this by following the procedures outlined below;

### **Unexplained absence process**

If a student is absent from school and we have received no communication from parent/carer the Head of Year will make contact on the morning/1<sup>st</sup> session missed of students' absence requesting a reason and return date.

An sms/email detailing any unexplained absences will be sent to the parent/carer if no communication has been received. A reply is requested stating the reason for the students' absence to enable attendance records to be updated; if no reply is received, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### **Persistently Absent process**

A **warning letter** will be sent home to parents/carers when attendance drops below 95%.

This early notification is intended to share our concerns with you and give you the opportunity to intervene/contact the school so that early support/intervention can be put in to place, if needed.

### **STAGE 1 – Attendance officer/Tutor PA Report**

#### **Attendance below 90%**

- Should attendance decline to 90% or below students will be issued with Persistently Absent report by their tutors, this will be detailed weekly to closely monitor students attendance
- Tutors will discuss any issues/barriers that are impacting your child's attendance to school.
- A letter will be sent to parents/carers informing you of your child's attendance.

*Attendance will be monitored closely for 7 weeks.*

### **STAGE 2 – Head of Year intervention**

#### **Continued poor attendance**

- A letter will be sent to the parents/carers of the student informing them of the situation and inviting them into school for a meeting with the Head of Year where we will address the main issues and agree targets and support actions to help improve your child's attendance.
- An Attendance Agreement will be issued and action points put into place that are agreed by the Head of Year and the student.

*We will monitor and review your child's attendance over the following weeks to identify any significant improvement in their attendance. If this has been achieved, then no further intervention/action will be taken at this stage. Should attendance not improve, or decline further we will implement the next step, as agreed at the previous Attendance meeting.*

### **STAGE 3 – Head of Sixth Form Intervention**

#### **Failure to meet the requirements set by the attendance agreement**

- A letter will be sent to the parents/carers of the student informing them of the situation and inviting them to a meeting.
- The student will be asked to meet with the Head of Sixth Form with parents/carers. The Attendance Officer and Year Team may also be invited.
- A written warning will be issued if appropriate.

### **STAGE 4 – Senior Leadership/Head Teacher Intervention**

#### **Continued failure to meet requirements of attendance agreement**

- Possible request to leave Sixth Form if student is persistently absent from school and refuses to engage in intervention procedures.
- Appropriate disciplinary proceedings will be decided by the Head Teacher.
- The parents/carers of the student will be involved in the process.

### **Holidays**

**Government legislation does not permit parents/carers to take their child/ren out of school during term time** as this can have a detrimental effect on their academic progress.

Holidays **will not be authorised** in school time parents/carers wishing to apply for exceptional circumstances need to complete an *Absence Request* form at least 20 school days prior to the absence and give to your child's Head of Year. Upon receipt of a *Absence Request* a decision will be made, (the Head of Sixth Form decision is final), and parents/carers will be notified either in writing/or verbally of our decision, course of action and how the absence will be recorded on our system. If this request is not agreed the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you may receive a Holiday Penalty Notice (fine) from the Local Authority.

A copy of this form can be downloaded on the Gospel Oak School website, in the Policy section, under Attendance or by contacting the Sixth Form Head of Year Miss Bradnick.

# ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

1

Tutor Intervention

Meeting held with students whose attendance is below 90%

Continued poor attendance

2

Head of Year Intervention

Parental meeting with student and HOY, attendance agreement completed

Failure to meet requirements of attendance agreement

3

Head of Sixth Form Intervention

Parental meeting and written warning

Continued failure to meet requirements of attendance agreement

4

Senior Leadership/Head Teacher Intervention

Possible request to leave Sixth Form