



# Attendance Policy

**Date of Adoption by Governing Body:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair of Governor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date to be Reviewed:** November 2016

# THE JOSEPH ROWNTREE SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Guidance Principles

The Joseph Rowntree School aims to ensure that all students receive an education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

- The school aims to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels secure and part of a group.
- The school will establish an effective system of incentives, rewards and recognition which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping.
- The school will also challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The school will support aspects of the Children Act 2004 'Every Child Matters' by implementing the Attendance Policy. The outcomes it addresses are:
  - staying safe
  - enjoying and achieving
  - making a positive contribution
  - achieving economic well being

### AIMS

The core aim of this policy is to increase awareness amongst students, parents and teachers of the need to assist the provision of the best possible educational programme both by encouraging 100% attendance, and by planning the activities which enhance classroom learning, but take place elsewhere, in such a way as to minimise their impact on other lessons. The priority which the school appears to give to classroom activities conveys a message to students. When absence appears passive or activities take students from their lessons, the message received may not be that which was intended.

### RATIONALE

Every student has a fundamental right to be educated – parents and teachers have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.

Students do not learn exclusively when they are in classrooms in school. There are many worthwhile visits and activities beyond the classroom which provide valuable learning experiences which can be acquired in no other way.

However, the overall quality of learning is aided by the provision of a structured and coherent programme of educational experience. It is difficult for the body of teachers involved in a student's education at any one time to plan effectively, and hence for students to achieve their potential if those students are not in the classroom when they are expected, whether their absence is authorised or not. The increasing demands for regular assessment add their own incentive to achieve 100% attendance.

## **GUIDELINES**

- Parents and students should be encouraged to consider 100% attendance as the norm.
- All unplanned absences should be explained by a telephone call to school prior to 8.30am on the first and any subsequent days of absence. If absence is to be longer than three days it is helpful if the parent/guardian can advise the school of this as soon as possible.
- Where absence is due to medical reasons, a medical note will be requested by the school where it is an extended absence or where there appears to be a trend of absence appearing.
- If a student is a known truant then absence should be reported to Head of Year and followed up on Day 1.
- Unexplained absences should, on the third day, be reported to the Head of Year who will contact the home to find out the reason for the absence (or agree that the Attendance Officer/Pastoral Manager contact home).
- Attendance figures will be reported to parents in the annual Record of Achievement. Comment will be made praising 100% attendance, or attention drawn to lower levels and reference made to the problems this may have caused.
- Subject teachers should identify absentees clearly each lesson, through the SIMS register system. If a known truant is absent, or absence is frequent this information should be passed to Head of Year and Tutor. Where a student on the immediate contact sheet is absent this must be highlighted through the 'on call' system immediately.
- Absent students should be required to copy up missed work. If absenteeism was unauthorised, then additional work may be appropriate. This will be co-ordinated, where more than one subject is affected, by the Head of Year. Parents will be informed. The system will often include after school detentions to make up missed time in school.
- Where he/she considers it necessary, the Head of Year will put a student on lesson report in order to monitor attendance.
- Leave of absence. Any and all leave of absence requests are assessed on an individual basis. If an absence is required for whatever reason, then a form should be collected, completed and returned to the school office well in advance of the requested leave. The attendance officer will write to you to inform you of the outcome of your request. Under the current guidance, very few requests are able to be granted.

- Holidays should not be taken in term time. Except under exceptional circumstances, all requests for leave of absence during term time will be declined and if the student is then absent from school, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Where a holiday is taken during term time, parents/guardians can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60, which if unpaid within 7 days, rises to £120. These notices are issued per parent/guardian and per pupil.
- Departments and teachers should consider whether the tasks, materials and atmosphere within the classroom are positive, and allow each student a sense of achievement. We do not wish to drive students into truancy. 'Attendance for Learning' should always be a priority.
- Parenting contracts are used at the school as a vehicle to improve attendance. A parenting contract is an agreement between a parent/carer and either the L.A., or the governing body of the school. The parenting contract is a way for the school, the family and the L.A. to work together to help improve the students behaviour and attendance and practical support will be offered involving help from the school or outside agencies.
- The school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the L.A. A parent is committing an offence if he/she fails to make sure that his/her child attends regularly, even if they are missing school without their knowledge. Parents can be prosecuted up to £2,500 or imprisoned for up to 3 months for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order which means the parent has to attend a parenting class.

## **PUNCTUALITY AND NON ATTENDANCE**

Students who are frequently late to lesson will be put on attendance report by their form tutor/HOY. Persistent lateness will also lead to after school detention and the use of the Inclusion Room.

If a student is late to school (arriving after 8.45am) they will be issued with a lunchtime detention. Failure to attend this detention can lead to students serving an after school detention or spending time in the Inclusion room. If it persists tutors will pass this on to the Head of Year who will arrange a detention and contact parents. If lateness persists the matter is referred to the Deputy Head, which could result in an attendance panel meeting being called with parents.

If a student truants from a lesson then the subject teacher/Head of Department will detain the student via the School Detention System in order to make up the time missed (the Head of Year is also informed).

## **SUMMARY**

A student's attendance is the foundation of the partnership between school (as laid out in the Home-School Agreement), and home. The parent ensures the student attends, the school encourages this, monitors it and provides an appropriate structured programme of experience. All three elements are essential in following the route to the highest levels of achievement for each student.