

THEALE GREEN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Purpose and background

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for pupils to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE and A-Level results and excellent school attendance.

This policy is in line with the West Berkshire Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence and leave from school¹.

Rationale

This policy is designed to encourage maximum attendance by each student, to minimise persistent absence and lateness and to identify, through monitoring, and improve attendance rates for groups and individuals. This will take place in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and other support agencies as necessary.

Legal background²

It is the duty of parents or carers of children of secondary school age who are registered at school to ensure that they attend school regularly³.

Schools are required by law to have an admissions register and an attendance register. If a pupil fails to attend, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

Schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent without permission for 10 days or more.

Schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. At Theale Green these sessions are Registration with tutor at 8.35am and period 5 at 2pm.

Schools must record and follow up any absences.

The School Day

The school day at Theale Green runs from 8.35am to 3.00pm and is divided into 5 teaching sessions. There is a break between sessions 2 and 3, from 10.55 to 11.15, and between

¹ See WB: <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36810&p=0>

² Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

³ See 1 and further amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016

sessions 4 and 5, from 1.15pm to 2.00pm. During public exam times, the second break will take place between periods 3 and 4, from 12.15pm to 1pm.

Students are expected to attend all lessons on their timetable. Tutor registration period and period 5 will be counted as session 1 and session 2 marks for the legal purposes of morning and afternoon registration.

Additionally, all lessons will be registered using the School Information Management System (SIMS) and this data will be used to monitor student attendance.

Lateness

Students are expected to arrive to all lessons punctually. Lateness will be recorded and monitored. Repeated lateness to lessons will lead to sanctions.

Lateness to school in the morning or to morning registration period will result in a 20-minute detention on the same day, unless it is outside the control of parent/carer and student. Repeated lateness may lead to lateness being coded as unauthorised absence.

6th Form Study Periods

In the 6th form, students will have some periods allocated to study, and these may not require supervised attendance, if so directed by the Director of Sixth Form.

Reporting Absences

Absences must be reported to the school absence line, by parents or carers phoning the absence line, before the start of the school day on which the absence falls. Details of the reason for absence should be given, rather than a report of general lack of wellbeing.

Should a student be absent without parents or carers informing the school, a message will be sent to parents or carers requesting information about the absence.

Absences with no reason given, or a reason that is judged to be insufficient, will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

Medical evidence will be expected before authorisation of an absence of more than 2 days due to illness or medical appointments. Authorisation will be at the school's discretion.

Evidence can take the form of Doctor's/Nurse's note, medical appointment card or medication labelled with the student's details). If a student is subject to an attendance target, medical evidence may be required for any absence during this period.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will oversee the recording of absences and notify tutors, Heads of Year and SLT of issues arising. The Attendance Officer will make first contact with parents in order to establish reasons for non-attendance.

Tutor Monitoring

Where there is a concern over a student's level of absence (usually below 97%), the tutor will discuss attendance with the student, offer support and monitoring, and often contact parents.

Head of Year Monitoring

Should a student's attendance fall below approximately 95%, the Head of Year will discuss attendance with the student, offer support and monitoring, and contact parents, often requesting a meeting to discuss the issue. Usually a concern letter will be sent to parents to highlight the importance of regular attendance at this point.

SLT Monitoring

Should a student's attendance fall below 95%, he or she is at risk of Persistent Absence (PA) and strategies to improve attendance will be raised at attendance meetings, Student Action Meetings and with the Educational Welfare Service. Once at risk of PA, absences will only be authorised with medical evidence. Medical evidence can take the form of doctors' appointment cards or names prescriptions, or notes from a surgery. Over-the-counter medicines or non-time-specific doctors' notes are not acceptable.

EWS Monitoring

Students with attendance below 90% may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service in order to improve their attendance. An Educational Welfare Officer will be assigned to each case and will work with the student and family. Home visits and target periods are some of the measures that the EWO will take. Parents whose children fail to hit targets can have legal measures taken against them.

Fast-track process

Students with attendance below 90% may be alternatively be placed on a fast-track attendance intervention programme. See Appendix 1 for details of this process.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)⁴

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued when:

- An excluded pupil is found to be present in a public place during school hours on the days of his/her exclusion
- Continued Persistent Absence takes place over a sustained period
- A parent or carer has taken a child out of school for a planned leave of absence (e.g. a holiday) and it has not been authorised by the school

Requests for Leave in Term-time

Requests for planned leaves of absence from the school must be made in writing using the form found on the school's website (copies can be requested from the Attendance Officer).

⁴ See The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Each individual case will be considered on its merits but leaves of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and FPNs may be imposed (see above).

Further strategies to promote attendance

- Rights Resecting Schools Programme
- Restorative Approaches
- Anti-Bullying week annually in November.
- PSHE/citizenship
- ICT curriculum content on Cyberbullying and internet safety
- Student voice
- Peer mentoring schemes
- Parent information events/information
- Staff training and development for all staff
- Counselling and/or Mediation schemes
- Regular assemblies on attendance

Links with other policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equalities Policy - Race, Sexist, Sexual, Transphobic, Homophobia, SEN and Disability
- PSHE and Citizenship Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Management of Policy

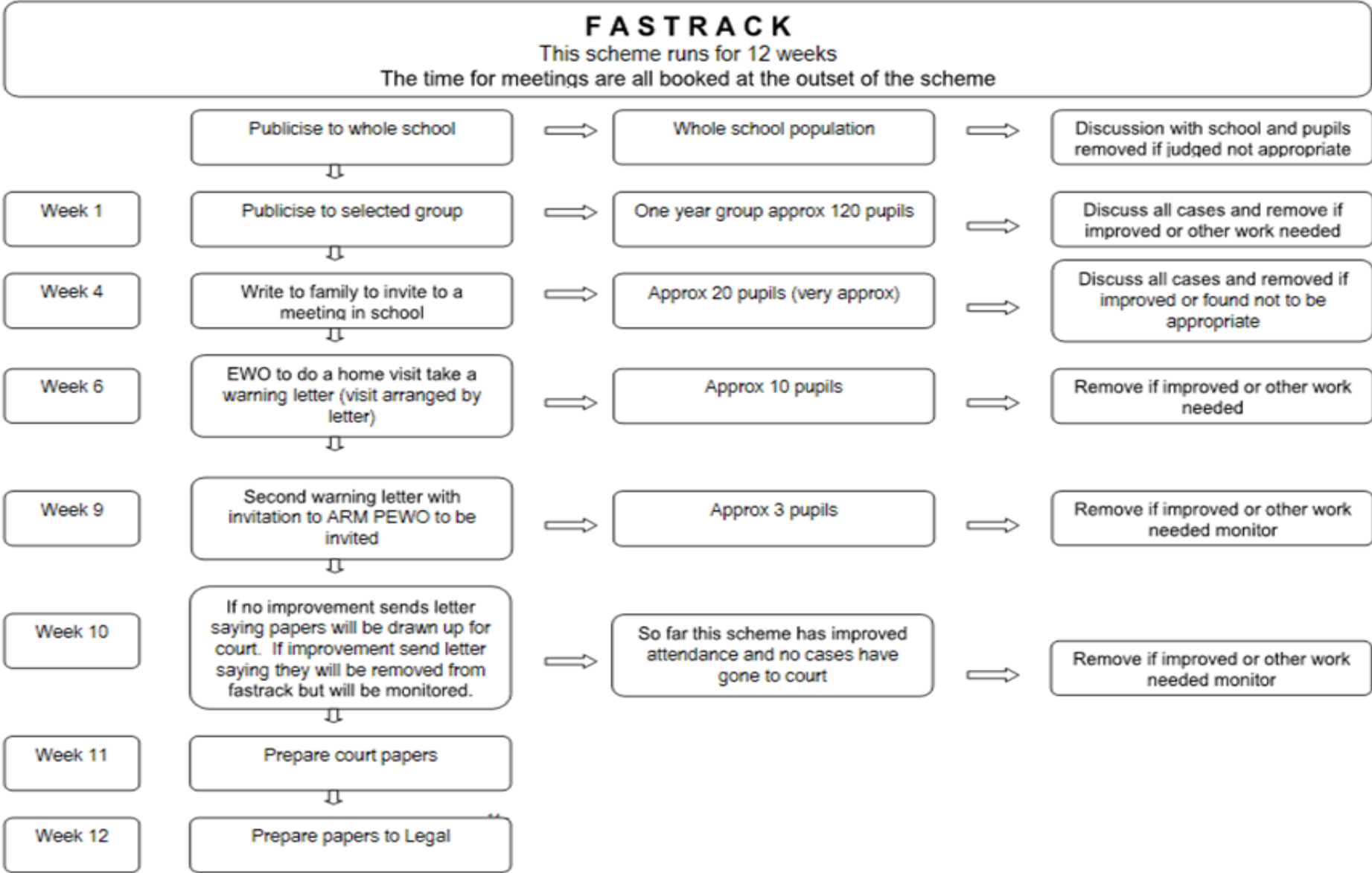
School: This policy is implemented and managed by the member of SLT with responsibility for Attendance.

Governing Body: The Governing Body has delegated the oversight, review and update of this policy to The Head Teacher.

Approval: Approved by the Head teacher 01 May 2017

Date of next review: Spring 2020

Appendix A: Fast-track process



Appendix B: WB Code of Conduct

West Berkshire's Code of Conduct for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices can be viewed and downloaded from the following URL:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36810&p=0>