



MONK'S WALK
SCHOOL

**MONK'S WALK SCHOOL
KNIGHTSFIELD
WELWYN GARDEN CITY
HERTFORDSHIRE
AL8 7NL
www.monkswalk.herts.sch.uk**

**admin@monkswalk.herts.sch.uk
01707 322846**

Attendance

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Responsible member of SLT: Toby Eager-Wright

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Introduction

1.1 Aims

This document describes Monk's Walk School's policy for attendance. Monk's Walk School believes that regular and punctual attendance significantly contributes to educational achievement.

The overall aim of the Monk's Walk School Attendance Policy is to maximise student attendance in a manner consistent with educational achievement for all students within the school. The specific aims of the policy are:

- To encourage all students to achieve excellent attendance throughout the school year.
- To continue to improve attendance rates for all students.
- To support students and parents in improving attendance.
- To raise achievement by improving attendance.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the policy for attendance are:

- To ensure that students are aware of the need for excellent attendance and understand the link between attendance and achievement.
- To ensure that students and parents support the school in promoting excellent attendance.
- To ensure that parents and students are clear about the legal requirements in relation to attendance at school.
- To ensure that staff support students in promoting excellent attendance by following the procedures in this policy.
- To acknowledge and reward excellent and significantly improved attendance.
- To monitor attendance effectively.

1.3 This document

The following sections of this document cover:

- **Responsibilities**, the respective responsibilities of the various parties who are responsible for and influence attendance.
- **Attendance**, definitions of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised attendance.
- **Registration and notification of absence**, the processes for registration and absence notification.

Responsibilities

A shared responsibility for maintaining good attendance.

2.1 A Shared Responsibility

Responsibility for attendance is shared by:

- Students
- Parents
- Subject Teachers
- Form Tutors
- Heads of Department
- Heads of Year
- The Attendance Officer
- The Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)
- The SLT Link for each year group
- The Deputy Headteacher (*Students*)
- The Headteacher
- Trustees

2.2 Students will:

- Attend school every day, and arrive on time.
- Ask the teacher for catch up work if they have been absent, and make sure it is completed.
- Know their current attendance percentage and continually aim to improve it.

2.3 Parents/Carers will:

- Support their child's learning by ensuring that they attend school every day.
- Only allow an absence in absolutely unavoidable cases of illness, or for other authorised reasons (See paragraph 3.3).
- Telephone the school on the morning of any absence to inform the Attendance Officer of the reason, using the 24 hour attendance hotline (01707 322846 Ext.1)
- Keep the school updated on a daily basis, by telephone or email, until the child returns to school.
- Not take their children on holidays during term time.
- Emphasise to their child the impact excellent attendance has on academic performance.
- Collect their child from the School reception for a pre-arranged appointment that requires the child to leave the school premises. (a pre-arranged appointment is one that has been communicated by the parent to the school attendance officer, the form tutor or the head of year).
- Inform the school if someone other than the priority contact is to collect a child for a pre-arranged appointment. The person collecting the child must be already listed as a contact on the child's SIMS profile.

2.4 Subject teachers will:

- Keep an accurate electronic attendance register for all classes, to be completed within the first ten minutes of each lesson.
- Remind students regularly of the impact of good attendance on their performance in the subject.
- Challenge all absences from lessons, stressing the negative impact on learning.
- Set catch-up work for students who have been absent from lessons.
- Ensure that the School's Attendance Officer is informed of any students who will miss registration due to a subject based activity (e.g: school trip, music lesson, sporting activity, etc). Teachers will also ensure that the absence of any student due to take part

in a school based activity is communicated, without delay, to the School's Attendance Officer without delay prior to the start of the activity.

2.5 Form tutors will:

- Use form time to promote the need for excellent attendance.
- Maintain an accurate daily attendance register.
- Use the weekly attendance update sheet to celebrate excellent and improved attendance and challenge poor attendance.
- Ensure that students update their attendance in their planners every week.
- Remind students that if they are absent their parents must phone the school every morning to keep the School's Attendance Officer updated.
- Target and provide increased pastoral support for all students whose attendance has dropped below 97%.
- Reward students whose attendance is Excellent or has improved.
- Refer on-going attendance problems to the Head of Year for support.
- Inform the school attendance officer if a parent of a child, or a child, in their form informs them of an appointment they are required to attend out of school.

2.6 Heads of Department will:

- Analyse attainment data in relation to attendance and take action to address issues highlighted.
- Ensure that all teachers in the department provide catch-up work when a student has been absent.
- Provide opportunities for students to catch up work outside normal lessons if necessary
- Ensure that systems exist within the department to provide work for students on a prolonged absence (including exclusion) and to support their return to lessons.

2.7 Heads of Year will:

- Use assemblies to promote the need for excellent attendance, including rewarding students with excellent or significantly improved attendance.
- Analyse attendance data for the year group regularly and address issues highlighted by the data.
- Publish weekly Green/Amber/Red attendance data for all students in the year group, and display in form rooms and noticeboards.
- Provide support and guidance for all students whose attendance has dropped below 97%.
- Meet regularly with the School's Attendance Improvement Officer to review attendance and plan further intervention where required.
- Ensure identified students attend an attendance surgery with the Attendance Improvement Officer, inviting the parents to attend.
- Liaise with the Attendance Improvement Officer to issue fixed penalty notices in appropriate cases.
- Inform the school attendance officer if a parent of a child, or a child, in their form informs them of an appointment they are required to attend out of school.

2.8 The Attendance Officer will:

- Text home to parents daily if they have not telephoned the school to report an absence.
- Telephone the parents if they have not responded to the text message.
- Keep an electronic record of all reported absences.
- Reduce the number of unexplained absences by telephoning or writing to parents asking them to account for the absences.
- Produce cumulative attendance data for each year group every week.
- Manage the fixed penalty notice process, under the direction of the Head of Year and Attendance Improvement Officer.
- Organise the appointments for the termly attendance surgeries.

2.9 The Attendance Improvement Officer will:

- Send letters to parents in relation to declining attendance at the direction of the school
- Offer support to the school in discussing (by telephone) cases of declining and poor attendance with a view to taking on cases that require Local Authority intervention.
- Advise the school on good practice to improve attendance.
- Arrange home visits to 'hard to reach' parents, accompanied by a member of the school staff.
- Support the school in issuing fixed penalty notices in appropriate cases.

2.10 The Deputy Headteacher will:

- Monitor attendance and investigate trends or patterns.
- Write to parents if their child's attendance is causing concern.
- Continually investigate and implement a range of strategies to improve attendance. (see appendix A. Monk's Walk School Attendance Ladder)
- Provide regular training and guidance for all staff on improving student attendance.
- Support Heads of Year in implementing attendance improvement strategies.
- Monitor the work of Heads of Year to ensure that they are being proactive in establishing excellent attendance within the year group.
- Regularly meet with targeted students whose attendance is causing concern.
- Consult with the School Council to take account of student's opinions on maintaining excellent attendance.
- Investigate and implement alternative educational provision for students with serious attendance issues (vocational courses, work experience programmes, etc).
- Report to Trustees regarding attendance figures on a termly basis.

2.11 The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that all attendance registers are completed in accordance with legal requirements.
- Ensure that the Attendance Policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- Agree annual attendance targets with the Local Authority.
- Grant leave of absence for students in exceptional circumstances only.
- Request formal action to be taken by the AIO in extreme cases of unauthorised absence.
- Promote attendance as a key focus across the whole school.
- Provide rewards for students, to celebrate excellent and significantly improved attendance.

2.12 The Trustees will:

- Define the principles underlying the Attendance Policy
- Support the school in promoting good attendance.
- Set targets for attendance annually.
- Annually review the Attendance Policy.
- Ensure that the Policy is consistently and fairly applied to all.

Ensure that attendance is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees as a standard agenda item.

Attendance

3.1 Introduction

Attendance and non-attendance are defined and associated procedures will be consistently applied across the school. This section defines authorised absence and unauthorised absence.

3.2 Definitions

Attendance – the condition of being present at school and participating in timetabled activities, academic or non-academic.

Authorised Absence – a period of absence from school, when the student is expected to attend school, where that absence is caused by one or more approved conditions of absence.

Unauthorised Absence – a period of absence from school, when the student is expected to attend school, where that absence is caused by one or more unapproved conditions of absence.

3.3 Authorised absence

Absence is authorised, if it is for one of the following approved conditions:

- Illness
- Unavoidable cause
- Day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs
- Family bereavement
- Student interview with a prospective employer or in connection with a place for further or alternative education
- Approved work experience
- Approved off-site educational activity or tuition
- Attendance at a pupil referral unit
- Participation at an approved public performance
- Granted study leave
- Exceptional special occasion e.g. graduation, or a family wedding (normally two days maximum).

Application for authorised absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher.

3.4 Unauthorised absence

Absence is unauthorised if it is for one of the following unapproved conditions:

- No explanation is provided, or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- Minding the house or caring for siblings (except in exceptional circumstances)
- Shopping
- Unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- Family holidays
- Any condition not included in the list of authorised absence conditions
- Absences on the last day of term (including half terms), unless explained by a medical note
- Absences on the first day of a new term (or half term) unless explained by a medical note.

3.5 Penalty notices

The school may apply to the Local Authority for the issue of a penalty notice, as an alternative to prosecution in circumstances where:

- a student's absences have been unauthorised on at least fifteen sessions in the previous and/or current term, and
- the parent/carer is not willing to take responsibility for securing their child's attendance, and has not co-operated with any supportive measures.

The school will only apply to the Local Authority for the issue of a penalty notice after it has exhausted all other avenues in trying to resolve the student's unauthorised absences.

Before applying for the issue of a penalty notice, the school will send a warning letter to the parents and allow fifteen days from receipt of the letter for the attendance to improve.

The school will follow the Hertfordshire County Council's *'Penalty Notices Code of Conduct - Guidance for Schools and Academies'* (May 2019) in all matters relating to Penalty Notices, or any subsequently issued amendments or policies.

Registration & notification of absence

- 4.1 Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and at the beginning of period 4 in the afternoon. In addition an electronic register is taken at the beginning of every lesson during the day.

Their purpose is to:

- monitor attendance / non-attendance
- ensure students can be accounted for in an emergency
- ensure that a pupil removed from the school will not go unnoticed.

4.2 **Authorisation of absence**

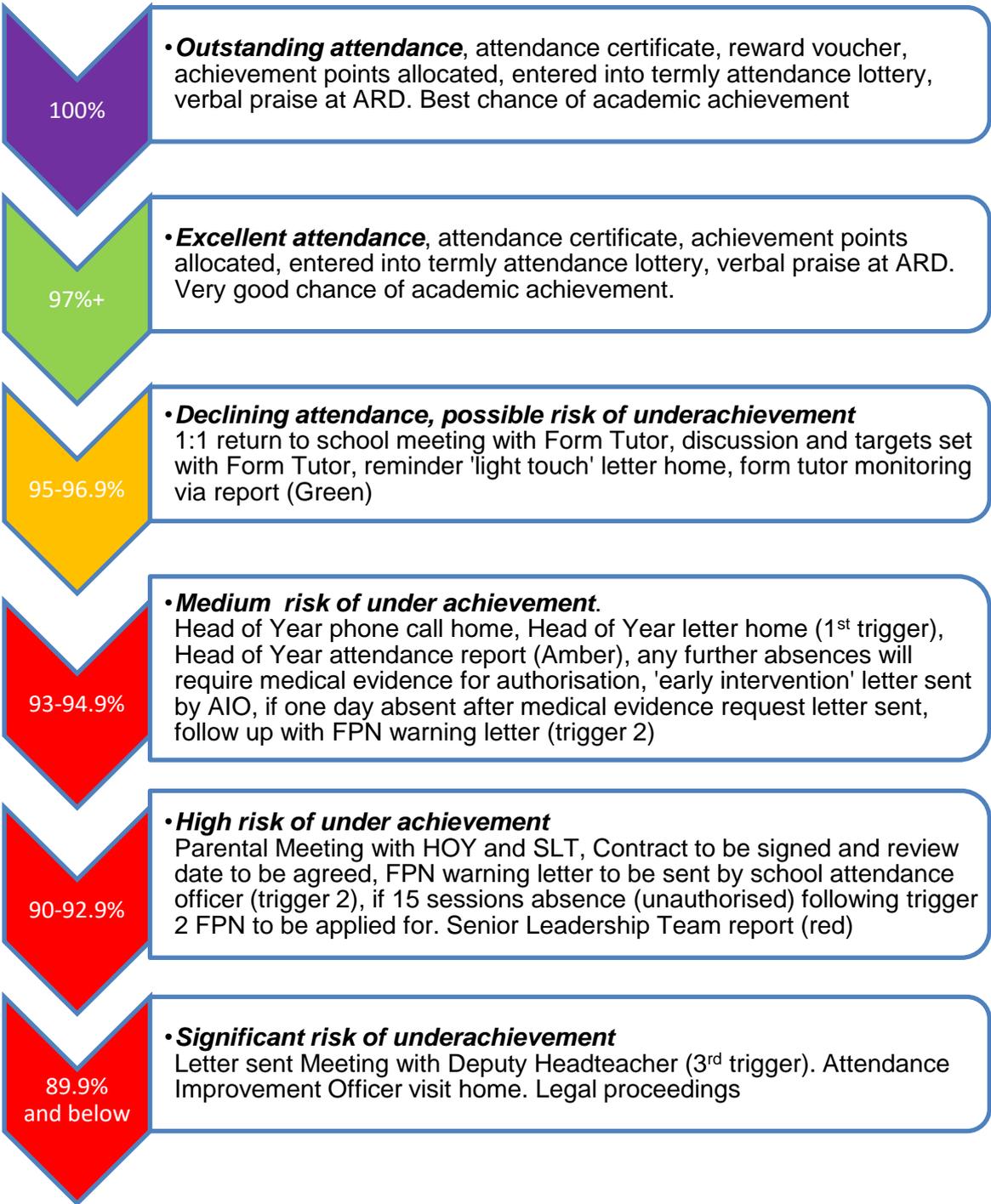
Only Monk's Walk School can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent/carer has provided a note, or has communicated an absence in an alternative manner does not constitute an authorised absence.

4.3 **Parent/Student notification of absence**

Parents/carers must provide prompt notification of absence, by telephone, email or letter. The school in exceptional circumstances, such as English language difficulties, may agree alternative means of communication.

Appendix A – Monk’s Walk School Attendance Ladder

Monk’s Walk - School Attendance Ladder



Probable interventions