**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Shenfield High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and carers should work closely with the school to overcome any issues that may affect their child’s attendance.

For a student to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 95% + attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school’s attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department of Education. Each year the school will examine the attendance figures and set targets in accordance with the decision of Governors. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals, and will work with the EWS service to monitor improvements and ensure excellent collaboration between us and the appropriate outside agencies.

**School Procedures**

Registration in the morning begins at 8.40 am and ends at 9.00 am. Registration will be closed at 9.00am. Any student arriving after this time and before 10.00 am will be marked as late. Students registered after the start of school but before the end of the registration period (including up until 10.00 am in the morning), will be treated as present, but coded as ‘late before the registers close’. An authorised absence will be recorded if the student has an authentic note from a parent detailing an appointment or other authorised absence, in which case the appropriate absence code will be entered.

Afternoon registration will take place at 12.20pm and register will be closed at 12.30pm during lesson 4. Staff are asked to ensure that all lesson registers are completed within ten minutes of the lesson starting. All students must be marked as either present or absent on all registers. Staff must take care to record the mark on SIMS carefully so that missing marks do not occur. All registers must be completed for both safeguarding and for data purposes.

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. If there is no known reason for the absence of registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. No other code apart from ‘/’ – present, or ‘N’ – absent, or ‘V’ – ‘visit’ or ‘P’ – approved sporting activity must be used by teaching staff or tutors taking the register.

Punctuality must be recorded on Sims in right click comment boxes, staff must record the number of minutes late a student is. The Behaviour and Standards Team will analyse patterns and put in appropriate interventions to prevent persistent lateness to school, and to lessons (see frequent absence).

Sims data will be analysed after each registration period has closed, first day absent contact made, and then the Behaviour and Standards Team will be made aware of all of that day’s absences with reasons as known. Internal truancy will be tracked by The Attendance Officer using lesson monitor, and The Behaviour and Standards Team will be made aware immediately of any issues arising.

Parents are advised to contact the school via the schools’ absence line or by email direct to the Attendance Officer. In the event that no contact is made and after the registers have been closed, the school will make contact with the named parent/carer as indicated by SIMs. The Attendance Officer will update the registers with any received information. If no contact is made with the school during a student’s absence, a note signed by the parent must be brought into school on the first day of the student’s return.

Any student who is absent for 5 days without contact being made by parents/carers will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral for “A Child Missing from Education”. This will be filed in by the Attendance Officer. After 20 days of no notification absence, a student could be taken off role by the school.

**Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. This should be reported to the Behaviour and Standards Team, who will discuss it in fortnightly meetings with the Attendance Officer.

Following that discussion the Attendance Officer will write to parent(s)/carer(s) alerting them of the pattern. After 2 weeks the Attendance Officer will then have a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s). Parents will be informed that medical evidence will be asked to be produced at each absence, until the attendance reaches at least 90%. If attendance/punctuality does not improve after a further 2 weeks of monitoring, the Attendance Officer will arrange a School Attendance Panel meeting. The ‘Attendance Panel’ is overseen by a member of SLT or a Governor to and agree an ‘Attendance Contract’ between the student, parent and school. This contract will be reviewed every two weeks and ended after one term if attendance has improved to acceptable levels. At that meeting, any further barriers to attendance will be discussed and the school will attempt to resolve difficulties and put available, relevant interventions in place.

Special attention is paid to the attendance of our Pupil Premium (PPG) students. Persistent Absentees from this cohort, (those with absence rates under 85%) will be referred to our Family Engagement Officer (FEO). FEO will work with individuals, small group and families for a set period of time – usually 6 – 8 weeks in a bid to educate students and their families about the importance of good attendance. During that time, students will undergo individual and group counselling to try and resolve any barriers to attendance. The FEO will also work with parents of persistent absentee students from the PPG cohort, who are often ‘hard to engage parents’ to offer support and encouragement in helping them fulfil their legal duties as parents.

In the event that this intensive support does not secure a positive improvement in the young person’s attendance, then the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who operate as legal enforcers of attendance. The trigger for referral to the EWS is 8 unauthorised consecutive sessions of absence.

Students who are persistently late to lessons may be detained by the Behaviour and Standards Team to make up the time that has been lost to learning times. This is a generic detention and is run at lunchtimes by a senior teacher.

Students may also be placed on a report card designed to monitor attendance and punctuality. If punctuality does not improve, the student will be subject to the school’s Behaviour for Learning Policy, and further consequences will be applied as per the policy.

**A Welcome Back**

It is the responsibility of the form tutor to welcome back all students in their forms after an absence. They must remind the student to catch up on missed work and must also bring the student up to date on any information that has been passed to other students. If a catch up programme is required due to the quantity of work missed, the appropriate Pastoral Manager will oversee a support plan that will enable students to be quickly back on track. This may require a referral to The Interventions Team. Any concerns will be discussed with parents or carers, and the student will be closely monitored until such time as there are no further concerns.

**Absence Notes**

These must be collected by the form tutor, used to amend SIMS and then returned to the Attendance Officer. They will then be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If a student has been highlighted as either a ‘persistent absentee’ - below 90% attendance, or other attendance concern, then their absence notes should be kept until they leave the school. In the event that our attendance team works with individuals to improve their attendance, case notes and minutes of meetings will also be kept until the student leaves the school, in which case they will be passed onto a new establishment or placed in the archived student file.

**Promoting Attendance**

The school will use as many opportunities as possible to remind students and parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure their children receive their education. For example, linking attendance to House Points, running termly attendance assemblies for all years, having a regular ‘attendance matters’ write up in the parent newsletter and celebrating attendance successes every half term.

**Unauthorised Absences**

No holidays during term time will be authorised. In the event of a parent taking a student out of school for a holiday, it will almost always result in a penalty notice being applied for by the school to the Education Welfare Office. Only in very exceptional circumstances would a holiday be authorised, and this only by application in writing to the Headteacher, who shall final say in the matter.

Government legislation now states that NO holidays will be authorised during term time for students. Any holiday taken will be marked on the register as unauthorised. If the student has an attendance of below 90% or another holiday is taken during the school year, a referral will be made to the EWS. EWS will issue a penalty notice.

If the holiday is longer than 20 sessions, a letter will be sent informing the parent of intention to remove the child from school roll. This will happen if the holiday or absence continues for a further 20 sessions.

**Attendance Targets**

Our school targets are 5% absence rate for 2015-2016, and a P.A. rate of 6.5% based on 10% absences. The progress towards our targets will be analysed fortnightly by The Deputy Headteacher: Support and Wellbeing, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer. Data will also be analysed by group, specifically by year group boys, girls, Children in Care, Pupil Premium students, SEND students, Alternative Pathways students and EAL students; and patterns showing lower attendance in any specific group will be discussed with relevant personnel so that appropriate strategies for tackling lower attendance of said group can be implemented and monitored for impact.

The progress towards our targets will be noted by the whole staff weekly via our staff bulletin; and updates on our progress towards our targets will be made once a term to Governors at the Standards and Performance Committee and on monitoring visits as required. Our targets will also be discussed regularly at SLT and also in briefing meetings between the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher: Student Support and Wellbeing.

**The Registration System**

The school registers students using Sims electronic registration during AM registration, and thereafter in every lesson. Form Tutors and Teachers are asked to ensure that the register is completed within ten minutes of the session starting, and that lateness after the register is taken is recorded on SIMs so that persistent lateness can be dealt with by department teams, or in the case of more widespread misdemeanour, by The Behaviour and Standards Team.

National codes as issued by the Education Welfare Service are used to record attendance information. The registers are kept for 3 years after a cohort have left the school.

Staff taking registers are expected to take every care and attention to ensure that the mark entered is accurate, and in the event that an error is made, can expect to have communication with the Deputy Headteacher: Support and Wellbeing about safeguarding issues that may have arisen due to this error.

**Fire Drill**

Sims fire drill register proformas are printed every day immediately after AM registration. Designated support staff collect year group folders in the event of the fire bell sounding and take them to the designated Assembly points, where they are distributed to Form Tutors. Once the registers are taken, they are returned to the designated support staff, who then returns them with information about any student missing to the designated Fire Drill Officer.

**Students educated offsite**

Any student educated offsite will be monitored by The Alternative Pathways Team. They will liaise with the agency providing education to that student so that attendance data is returned daily to the attendance officer, and any concerns regarding attendance are dealt with according to the policy for frequent absences above. Each student educated offsite will have an in-school and out of school key mentor who will liaise regularly, and the in school key mentor will have fortnightly meetings with The Attendance Officer to discuss and action any attendance concerns. The in-school key mentor will also be responsible for liaising with parent/carers at the start of any attendance concerns and to attend meetings between the parent and the EWS should these be required. This is part of our commitment to safeguarding such students who are not expected to be seen onsite every school day.

**Safeguarding**

The Attendance Officer will have weekly meetings with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the data and any concerns around persistent absentees. All minutes of meetings held on attendance will also be sent to the designated safeguarding lead so that students discussed can be cross referenced with the Child Protection (CP) monitoring register. All children for whom a CME (Child Missing in Education) referral is made will be placed on the CP monitoring register, which is reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding Team. Particular notice will be given to additional signs and symptoms of safeguarding concerns like Child Sexual Exploitation, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. Any such concerns arising will be referred to the appropriate outside agency such as the police, the Child Sexual Exploitation unit and Social Services.

**Personnel**

The Governor who supports the development of policy and procedure with regards to attendance is Mrs Jane Swettenham.

This policy has been developed by Jenny Comerford (Deputy Headteacher: Student Support and Wellbeing & Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Linda Jones (Attendance Officer)

Policy updated by Jenny Comerford and Linda Jones, November 2014.

This policy was presented to Governors: Standards and Performance Committee in December 2014

This policy will be reviewed in December 2015.