

Attendance and Children Missing Education Policy

My Choice School will monitor, record and report the attendance of our students.

Any student who has infrequent, irregular or persistent non attendance is at risk. Non attendance at school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

Children who are at particular risk of missing education are:

- Children at risk of harm or neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveler Families
- Children of Armed Forces Families
- Children who are Looked After
- Children and young people supervised by the youth justice system
- Children who are in families that are insecurely housed or homeless
- Children at points of transition between year groups (Yr6 to Yr7) and between schools
- Children who do not experience a good enough expectation placed on them of attending school by parents or carers
- Children who are frequently missing from their home or care setting

Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of:

- Underachieving
- Being victims of abuse
- Becoming NEET
- Becoming victims of child sexual exploitation
- Forced Marriage
- Becoming victims of criminal exploitation

My Choice School will have responsibility for obtaining and retaining the contact details, recording the admission details and attendance details of all students and will engage with parents / carers and professionals to identify children who have issues with nonattendance, are CME and work with all involved to identify supports for children at risk.

My Choice School will obtain the contact details (including 2 emergency contacts) and pertinent information for student using the School Admission form. This form will be provided to parents and carers prior to school admission and the Headteacher will check that all details are provided as

indicated on the form. Consent forms will also be completed by parents and carers prior to the student commencing at school.

Students will not commence at school if the School Admission form is incomplete. It is the responsibility of the parents and carers to inform the school when details change. The School Admission form will be used as the primary contact list for students.

The Admissions Register is held at the school in hard copy and is completed by the Head of Education (or by the Headteacher if instructed to do so by the Head of Education) when students are placed on or removed from roll. Students will be removed from roll if they have completed their Yr11 with us at My Choice School or if the Head of Education is instructed to do so by the local authority when a student under school leaving age transfers to another school roll.

Attendance

Attendance will be recorded through the attendance registers by the class teachers or TAs. This is kept in hard copy and as an e register.

Students are expected to attend school between 9am and 2.30pm.

Standardised registration codes are used.

AM session

Students will be marked as late before registers close (L) if they arrive between 9am and 9.30am.

Students will be marked as late after registers close (U) if they arrive after 9.30am. This mark will not count as attendance however the students will have their participation recorded on the Record of Points throughout the session.

Attendance after 10am will be marked as absent.

PM session

Students will be marked as late before registers close (L) if they arrive between 12.30pm and 1pm.

Students will be marked as late after registers close (U) if they arrive after 1pm. This mark will not count as attendance however the students will have their participation recorded on the Record of Points throughout the session.

Attendance after 1.30pm will be marked as absent.

Students are expected to remain at school for the lunch period unless they are leaving school accompanied by a parent or carer.

Attendance is reported to the local authorities and professionals regularly by school, often daily. This may be direct to the local authorities or via Welfare Call.

If students are likely to be late or absent My Choice School expects the parent or carers to make contact with the school to inform them. The school should be contacted by telephone after 8.30am or if, telephone contact is not possible, by email to the Headteacher. My Choice School recognises that the attendance of our students will be influenced by their difficulties and their trauma and for many students attending school is a target for them to work towards. My Choice School will work with parents and carers to support and understand their difficulties, however we must know where the students are and whether they will be expected in school and at what time. The Headteacher and all school staff will take a proactive approach and contact the parents / carers students who have not arrived at school.

If students are attending external provision such as colleges, training providers or tuition services their attendance will be recorded on the school register in line with the standardised register codes. The teacher will contact the external provision to ascertain that the student has attended.

Some students have a Blended or Remote Learning timetable; their teacher must have daily contact with students who are not attending a registered education setting.

Frequent, unexplained absence from school is a safeguarding concern and referrals will be made to professionals in order to safeguard students.

CME - Children Missing Education

My Choice School will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain the welfare of students who are missing education or who have infrequent attendance. My Choice School recognises that our students are among the most vulnerable and at risk groups and we also recognise that school attendance can be difficult for them. Ascertaining the welfare of students who have not attended school will be made without judgement, prejudice and is a supportive process.

Where a student has not arrived at school and the school has not received a telephone call or an email to advise of their absence from the parent or carer, the school will endeavour to contact the parent or carer. This will be on the instruction of the Headteacher and may be carried out by the teacher

or DSL. The school will be aware of additional caring responsibilities of the parent or carers or their working hours and so My Choice School recognises that contact may not be achieved immediately and that voicemails or emails may be left by the school. Context will be taken into account and the level of vulnerability and risk of the student.

If during the school day contact is unable to be made to ascertain the student's welfare then the 2nd emergency contact will be used. In many cases this is likely to be the social worker for the student however it may also be a relative, or trusted friend or neighbour of the parent.

If absence is persistent or frequent then the following reasonable steps will be taken.

- The Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the student and parent / carer to discuss issues and supports and plan a re-engagement with school. This may also involve the social worker if appropriate and is intended to develop a supportive team around the child. The re engagement may include an adjusted timetable or possible transport support for the parent / carers.
- The Headteacher may initiate a more formal forum for addressing the issue if attendance persists or if it is not possible to arrange a meeting with the parent / carers. This may take place through the PEP process involving the Virtual School or it may take place through an EHCP Annual Review involving the SEND caseworker.

It is expected that My Choice School will engage in continued discussion with professionals and parents / carers following either of the above actions. It may be that safeguarding referrals are made and that discussions are held with the safeguarding team.

Some CLA students are moved out of county by their local authority and are unable to continue attending My Choice School. In such cases the Head of Education will maintain contact with the social worker to ascertain the location and welfare of the student until they are able to be removed from roll and confirmed to be on roll elsewhere.

If no contact can be made with parent / carers, or if a reasonable plan of re engagement cannot be implemented, or if there is no further confirmation of the student's welfare then the Head of Education will action a referral to the Pupil Entitlement Team and complete a **Non Attendance Referral**.

The Head of Education will discuss this with the PE Investigating Officer to explore any alternative course of action.

The parent / carers will be informed that this is the next step as the Non Attendance Referral may initiate legal proceedings and court action. It is essential throughout this process of recording attendance, absence and contacts with parent / carers and records of meetings that all documentation is held securely and in the attendance section of the Student File. This chronology and information will be required to support the Non Attendance Referral and may be produced in court.

The Non Attendance Referral will be completed and emailed to:

West Sussex:

Pupil Entitlement Team – Senior Investigating Officer

Jennifer Watson

jennifer.watson@westsussex.gov.uk

0330 222 8354

PEI Advice Line 0330 222 8200

East Sussex:

CME@eastsussex.gov.uk

01273 481967

Policy link:

Safeguarding

Reviewed May 2021

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