Attendance Policy

Governing Body Sub-Committee responsible for review:	Curriculum
Governor Body Sub-Committee Approval Date:	November 2010
Date approved at Full Governors:	
Initial Implementation Date:	September 2005
Review Date:	20th November 2016

The wording of this policy has been reviewed to reflect the change of status from Community College to Academy (December 1st 2012) and replaces other changed terminology as appropriate. The content of the policy remains unchanged from November 2011.

Principles

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Thornhill Community Academy are maximised and that the rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this Attendance Policy and should work closely with the Academy staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

The Academy will encourage and value good attendance. The Academy will recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Education Access Service and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The Academy will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

Procedures

We operate an electronic registration system – registers should be taken promptly and then saved, reasons for and period of lateness should be noted and dealt with in line with our BT system.

Registration will be carried out at 8.40 am and during each lesson. Registers will be marked promptly at this time.

Any absences will be followed up immediately by Heads of Year with a phone call or text home to find out the reason for non attendance (1st day call up).

Should a student arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late for that session. If a student does not arrive for subsequent sessions then he/she will be registered as absent.

Absences
All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents are advised to contact the Academy on the first day of any absence. A written note of any such call or other communication will be recorded by Reception staff and passed on to the Heads of Year.

Lateness
Students who arrive at the Academy after registration should sign on the Visitors' System in Reception. They should provide a reason for their lateness to their Head of Year.

This is important for Health & Safety reasons.

Term Time Holidays
The Academy urges parents to avoid if possible booking family holidays during term time. The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of the Academy for holidays during term time. We strongly disapprove of students being taken on holiday in term-time as this can seriously affect their education. We are very worried about the increasing tendency of families to choose to take holidays during term-time in order to take advantage of reduced prices. If, in exceptional circumstances, families are forced to take a holiday in the Academy time, the procedure is to write, in advance, to the Headteacher to ask permission for the absence. However, in keeping with our current policy, it is HIGHLY UNLIKELY that ANY such holidays will be authorised.

We operate a penalty notice system for unauthorised holiday.   The Penalty Notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 28 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 42 days.

Staff Roles

The Form Tutor
At Thornhill Community Academy the Form Tutor is seen as the key figure in promoting regular and punctual attendance. The Form Tutor should:
- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration;
- Carry out registration in the prescribed manner;
- Alert the Head of Year when there is a problem with attendance or punctuality;
- Use the parent consultation meetings to discuss attendance and/or punctuality issues, setting and monitoring targets as appropriate;
- Offer praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.

The Subject Teacher
Subject Teachers should:
- Take an electronic register (Lesson Monitor) at the beginning of every lesson (and ensure that the students know that a register is being taken);
- Follow up any suspected internal truancy by checking with the Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately after the lesson.
- Enter time late and reason given onto Lesson Monitor.

The Head of Year
Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year group. They should:
- Monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting individual targets for improvement as appropriate;
- Monitor the performance of individual Tutor groups, following up with individual Tutors instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed;
- Review registers and attendance and punctuality figures regularly and provide feedback to SLT;
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders, supporting the Tutor where appropriate in dealing with parents directly;
- Meet regularly with the Education Social Worker in order to discuss students who have not responded to the Academy's strategies and when necessary to make referrals;
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, commendations, rewards etc.
- Regularly check attendance to lessons via Lesson Monitor and follow up any cases of internal truancy.

The Senior Leadership Team
The Senior Leadership Team will:
- Regularly liaise with all Heads of Year on attendance issues;
- Ensure Heads of Year are provided with weekly attendance figures for their year groups;
- In conjunction with the Head of Year set attendance targets for all year groups;
- Regularly put attendance onto the agenda of Pastoral meetings;
- Ensure the electronic Attendance Board is updated at the end of every week.

Communication
Thornhill Community Academy's Attendance Policy will be communicated through:
- The student planner;
- The Home School Agreement;
- Regular newsletters home;
- A précis in the parent's prospectus;
- Guidance and advice in the staff handbook.