

# Coopers

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY GUIDANCE



We take attendance extremely seriously at Coopers. It is proven that if a student's attendance drops by just 5% their achievement and therefore exam success can drop significantly.

Regular attendance at school is vital for your child's education and future prospects. Our computerised registration system enables us to identify and give recognition to the majority of our students with excellent attendance and punctuality records and to alert you at an early stage if we have any concerns regarding your child's attendance. We should like to take this opportunity to clarify the legal requirements and to let you know what you can do to support the school and enable your child to derive the maximum benefit from his/her education.

If your child is unfit to attend school please contact the school in person or by telephone on 0208 467 3263 on the **first day of absence** as well as any subsequent days thereafter.

### **Only the school is legally empowered to authorise an absence.**

The following reasons for absence cannot be authorised by the school and would therefore be classed as **unauthorised** eg:-

- A child allowed to stay away from school on his/her birthday;
- A child taken on holiday during term time
- Any absence for which the school has not received a valid explanation from the parent/carer.

### **Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents/guardians can be prosecuted and fined in such circumstances.**

We are committed to working with you to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and would urge you to contact your child's Tutor at an early stage if your child is reluctant to attend school. Coopers use a text messaging service to keep parents regularly informed of events, newsletters and reports. It is also used to contact parents/carers if a child is absent from school without a valid reason. It is therefore important that your mobile phone numbers are kept up to date and the school advised accordingly of any changes.

Further details can be found in Appendix B; 'Coopers School: A Staged Approach to Supporting Attendance'.

### **REPORTING AN ABSENCE**

The school has a 24-hour Absence Reporting answer phone for parents to report absences Tel: 0208 467 3263 (Dial 1 when instructed by message) or text 07860 002420, clearly indicating your child's name, form and reason for absence. Alternatively parents can email [attendance@coopersschool.com](mailto:attendance@coopersschool.com) with reasons for absence. It is essential that parents report their child's first and each subsequent days absence. If the above procedure is followed, a letter confirming the absence is not required.

### **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. These regulations state that the Principal may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not count as "exceptional circumstances". Absence during term time directly affects each student's achievement. The school works with the Local Authority in improving school attendance. For your information parent's/carers who take students on holiday during term time may be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service for legal consideration.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

We also work to absence thresholds set by the Government in reducing Persistent Absenteeism in school. All students with greater than 5 day's absence in any half term are placed in the Persistent Absence category. Having a reason for the absence or authorisation still counts as being away from school as it affects attendance as well as progress. We are therefore expected to act upon this to ensure all students attend school every day. In the event the absence is not



authorised by the school the Education Welfare Service may consider legal action if you decide to keep your child away from school.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

At Coopers we expect our students to arrive to school on time each day. The school day begins at 8.30am and students are encouraged to line up for class from 8:25am. Any student who arrives after this time and before 9:00am will be recorded as Late and should sign in at the Late Desk situated in the foyer by Student Reception. Students arriving after 9:00am should ensure that they sign in at the Attendance Office. Unless the Late is authorised, or students have a note from parents, students will be expected to sit a detention during break on the same day. If a student fails to attend the detention, a further sanction will follow in the form of a C3 detention after school and parents/carers will be advised when this will take place.

As part of the Punctuality Process: Parents/carers will receive a text if student arrives late in the morning on 3 or more occasions in any one week. If punctuality does not improve as a result of texts sent, the Additional Education Needs Team will send P1 Letter alerting Parent/Carer punctuality continues to be a concern. The letter includes information regarding legal implications ie Fixed Penalty Notice process. A punctuality pack is sent for the student to complete and return. The student may also be placed on Punctuality Report. If the problems persist the parent/carers will be invited in to discuss concerns and barriers regarding positive punctuality and set targets to support parents and students with improving school punctuality. Punctuality will then be monitored over a 4 week period by AEN Team. If punctuality does not improve, a further meeting will be offered to reinforce the school Policy and a second set of targets will be set. If no improvement is made after a further 4 weeks, the school will consider referring the case to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service for legal consideration.

Details of the process can be found in 'Coopers School: A Staged Approach to Supporting Punctuality'.

### **FAST TRACK PROCESS**

The Governing Body and school staff at Coopers take attendance very seriously indeed and consequently, in an effort to raise attendance, we have agreed with the London Borough of Bromley Education Welfare Service that we will work within the Government's initiative of Fast Track to Prosecution process.

This process involves identifying the most persistent truants and places parents immediately onto the 'Fast Track Process' where an automatic court prosecution will be triggered unless their child's attendance improves over an agreed period of attendance monitoring. If attendance does not improve, this can lead to a fine of up to £2500 or three months imprisonment.

### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**

The Governors have agreed to adopt the new powers in the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003, which includes measures to tackle poor attendance.

These measures came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and include Penalty Notices, which means that for students with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absence that the school has not agreed to, including holiday in term time) their parents/carers may be subject to an immediate fine of £60 to be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Penalty Notices will be issued to include cases of absence without acceptable cause, holidays in term time and persistent late attendance after the register has closed.

At Coopers School we consider that regular student attendance is so important, and these powers so significant, that we are bringing this change in the law to the attention of every parent/carers with a child in this school. It means that any parent/carers of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now potentially be liable to receive a Penalty Notice, issued by the Local Authority and should therefore take immediate action to secure regular attendance. Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this or if you need any help please contact the Attendance Team to discuss the situation.