AEP

Attendance Policy

Policy Owner **Sandeep Athwal**

Full Name	Position	Signature	Date	Review Cycle
Sandeep Athwal	Director		16.11.2023	Annual

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AEP

Mission Statement

School of Coding is a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high quality education to all its students and supports them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support, facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a broad range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs (including SEND and Mental Health support). Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make positive contributions to their families and find fulfillment in employment.

Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground…it's mainstream with the reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the cornerstones to a successful school
3. School of Coding should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice
4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to get to the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance.

School Ethos

High standards – students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.

Daring to Dream – students at School of Coding may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspiration to be successful, at School of Coding we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.

Traditional Values – some things often get forgotten in education, at School of Coding we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, litter free environment.

Success – can come in many virtues, at School of Coding we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.

Personalised Support - all students at School of Coding have a Learning Coach who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.

Statement of Purpose

At School of Coding we are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible and to enable they make progress and do as well as they can. For this to happen, pupils need to be in school to access the valuable teaching and learning opportunities. This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise. We promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all students at School of Coding.
Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. This is through a personalised and differentiated curriculum and stimulating learning resources, in order that students can value their time and make progress whilst at School of Coding.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that students attend school unless prevented by illness
- To reduce absence from lessons
- To improve punctuality to school
- To ensure that staff, parents/careers and students are aware of their responsibilities with regard to attendance
- To ensure a consistent and fair approach to managing and supporting attendance to school

Key Principles

Good attendance by pupils is recognized appropriately. All pupils should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance matters and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality. To support the school in our commitment to improve school attendance and punctuality, we have employed an independent Education Welfare Service – VIP Education who will provide advice and guidance to the school, parents, and pupils.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance and education does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Students should attend school every day, except when there is illness or other abnormal circumstances;

- Attendance at school should be enjoyable
- Students should feel that they are achieving, they are safe and they are supported
- Great attendance is rewarded
- Students will be made aware of their own attendance percentage and the number of sessions missed
- Students will be taught about what good attendance is and why it is important through key work sessions, skills and assemblies
- The electronic registration program follows a code system appropriate to social inclusion legislation
- Being late is unacceptable except in genuine, unavoidable circumstances
- Where appropriate, suitable adjustments are made to ensure students can attend school
- The school will provide parents/careers with regular updates with their child's attendance and punctuality via text message, phone calls, letters and the school report
- Staff and parents should encourage and support students to attend school
- Staff promote attendance by demonstrating excellent attendance themselves

Admissions Register

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each student joined the school and their personal details. School of Coding can only remove a student's name from this register where they have:

- been taken out of school by their parents/careers and are being educated outside the school system, for example home education
- moved to a new school
- ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- a medical condition certified by a medical professional that the student is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- been in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period

- The place at School of Coding has broken down and all parties involved have agreed that the student will return to their home school or
- Been permanently excluded. School of Coding will notify the Local Authority in advance of any exclusion

The importance of good attendance

Statistics show that good attendance leads to good attainment. Students with attendance below 90% are likely to underachieve against their target levels/grades by the end of each year. National statistics suggest that students who have low attendance are less likely to be successful when they leave School of Coding, based on the number of qualifications they achieve.
When completing the register, school follow the DFE school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Registration

Student reception opens at 8.20am and students are expected to be cluttered and sat in class ready to learn by 8.45am.

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required. The register will be taken twice a day, at the start of the morning and the afternoon.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g., illness, medical appointments, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping pupils off from school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive to school after the close of the register
- school refusal
- holidays taken during term time that have not been authorized by the Education Quality Manager

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Morning registration.

The morning register is taken at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.40am are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 9.45am. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - after registration closes, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness – U.

Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at 12.45pm. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 1.00pm are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 1.05pm. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - after registration closes, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness – U.

Late procedures

Parents are requested to contact School of Coding(01902 509209) if their child is going to be late and provide a reason for lateness.

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern.
2. If no improvement, the EWO from VIP Education will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
3. If still no improvement, parents and pupils will be invited to a meeting with the EWO to discuss the reasons for lateness and to offer support. Referrals to wider support services may be offered if needed. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
4. If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow Walsall Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

Reporting Absence

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact their child's Learning Coach at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. They may also contact the Education Quality Manager to discuss any concerns. Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from VIP Education themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

If a pupil is absent from school, we ask parents to:

- Contact the school office by 8.45am on the first morning of absence.
- Reply promptly to any request or inquiry concerning an absence.

If parents do not contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence, a member of the administration staff will try to contact them to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe. The school may also ask the EWO from VIP Education to establish contact either by telephone, text message or a home visit may be completed. If a reason is still not known after 5 school days, the absence will be unauthorised.

Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Wolverhampton or Walsall Local Authority Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the parent/pupil or have general concerns about the absence.
To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

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Medical Absence

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted.

Parents may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional or a copy of any prescribed medication. If the school does not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence and an M code used on the register to record when the child has attended the appointment.

Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

Monitoring attendance procedures

The school aims to achieve at least 95% attendance each year. To help with this, we monitor attendance regularly. Learning coaches inform students of their attendance weekly and set attendance targets to maintain (if 100%) or improve. Education Quality Manager and VIP Education meet weekly to monitor attendance and put actions in place to support families to improve the attendance of any students that are cause for concern.

Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied.

- A letter is sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education.
- If school attendance continues to decline, a further concern letter is sent to parents.
- If no improvement is seen, parents and pupils where appropriate will be invited into a meeting with the Education Quality Manager to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers or problems at home or at school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support services may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow the Walsall Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.

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Persistent Absence

From September 2015, the Department for Education has changed the threshold for categorising Persistent Absences, reducing it from fifteen percent to ten percent absence of any kind. Any student who has attendance below 90% is categorised as a persistent absentee. The Ladder School has an obligation to intervene when a student's attendance falls below this threshold. This may include a referral to the Local Authority to pursue a Penalty Notice or court action after work has been done to support parents/careers to enable their child to attend. Parents/Careers will be alerted when attendance falls below 95% so we can work together to ensure good attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Careers

- Have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends and stays at the school, and that he/she arrives on time and should not make excuses for poor punctuality;
- Should ensure that their child is appropriately dressed and brings the relevant equipment;
- Should inform the school on the first day of absence, by email, telephone, text or in person stating the reason for absence and the expected duration of the absence. If the absence continues beyond the first day, the parent should make contact with the Admin Support Assistant via telephone or in person.
- Where a student has been identified as having low attendance or will become a persistent absentee due to the absence, parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to support a continued absence from school (see Attendance Appendix).

School of Coding

- Will encourage good attendance and recognize it through attendance awards
- Will work with parents to address any problems which may lead to absence
- Will monitor attendance via the Education Quality Manager who is responsible for attendance
- Will carry out a safe and well check on the student in cases where an issue has been identified with an absence

The LA

- Local Authority will carry out their statutory duties (which may include the initiation of court action where the absence rate is unacceptable).

Contact Details

In the first instance, parents should contact School of Coding on;

- 01902 509209

If parents require further assistance, please contact the teacher.

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Rewarding good school attendance

There are weekly accumulative rewards for 100% attendance and improvement to attendance.

Requests for leave of absence

Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 make it clear that the Education Quality Manager should only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

If a parent wishes to request leave for their child for any reason, they must apply in advance and in writing using the leave of absence request form which can be obtained from the school office.

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a letter to the parent making the request informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised, and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

Parents/careers have the legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time, properly dressed, with the correct equipment and ready to learn. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This is in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, Section 444 or 444 (1A). It aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. “Persistent” means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the Education Quality Manager or in excess of the period authorised by the Education Quality Manager. (e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival to school, i.e. after the register has closed. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school.

Elective Home Education

If School of Coding receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, the school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact Walsall Local Authority Elective Home Education department.

Summary

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time. There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Just 17 days absent from school in a year could mean a drop in a GCSE grade within all subjects.

Impact of absence:

Missed number of days	Missed number of sessions	Missed number of weeks	Missed number of lessons
1	2	0	5
3	6	0.5	15
5	10	1	25
7.5	15	1.5	35
10	20	2	50
12.5	25	2.5	65
15	30	3	75
17.5	35	3.5	90

Impact of lateness over a school year:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absent
15 minutes late every day = 10 days absent
30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

If parents have any concerns relating to attendance or lateness that they wish to discuss, they should contact their child's Learning Coach in the first instance.

School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure any problems are dealt with straight away in order for pupils to feel happy and safe at School of Coding and achieve to the best of their ability. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and are on time.

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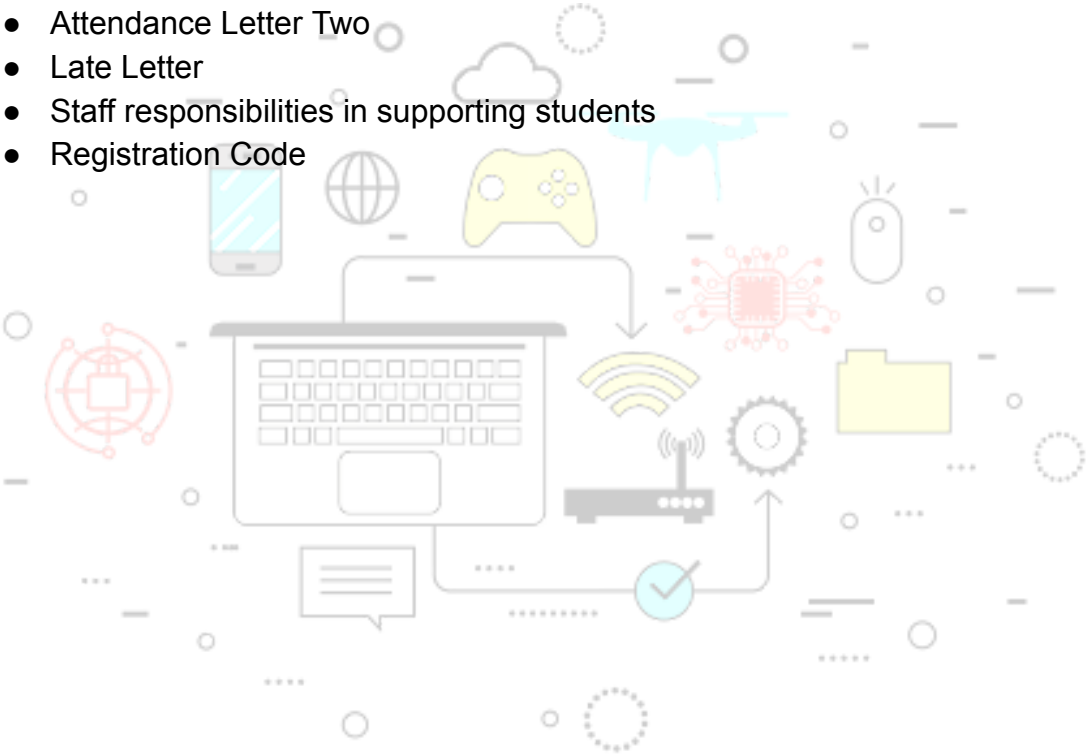
Appendix

- Times of the School Day
- Lesson Procedure
- Late Procedure
- Planned Absence
- Leave of Absence
- Request for Medical Evidence
- Examples of Medical Evidence
- Attendance Letter One
- Attendance Letter Two
- Late Letter
- Staff responsibilities in supporting students
- Registration Code



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