

## The New School Attendance Policy

Approved by AC 02/10/18

Due for review Oct 2020

### Why is attendance important?

The New School Rome's primary obligation is to provide quality education to students.

At The New School Rome we expect children to attend school and arrive punctually every day the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so or the reason for absence or lateness is unavoidable.

The most important way to promote good attendance is to ensure that both pupils and parents have a positive relationship with the school and a positive home-school relationship should be maintained throughout the school year. Unwarranted absence risks creating a negative student and parent culture which encourages the perception that absence is acceptable.

Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to do well in the future. Regular attendance helps children to realise responsibility, develop resilience and grow in confidence.

Further research has shown 73% of students with or above 95% annual school attendance achieve A\* - C passes in all examinations, whilst only 35% of students with attendance at 90% or below achieve A\* - C passes in all examinations. (Ofsted, 2014)

In many cases, a single missed lesson leads to misunderstanding in the future. Absences from examination classes, which often entail essential coursework tutorials, are intrinsic to underachievement and should therefore be prevented wherever possible.

We strongly recommend that parents do not remove students from school for holidays. We consider such absences as unauthorised.

### What is good attendance?

Anything less than 100% attendance means that your child is missing out on their education.

For example 90% attendance is the same as missing half a day each week, or one whole month a year off school.

Punctuality is also very important. School starts at 8.45 am each morning.

Students in the Senior School are expected to arrive promptly at 8.40 to prepare for the start of the school day.

Students in the Primary School are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 8.40 in order to engage in meaningful warm-up activities before the register is taken at 08:45 and lessons start.

Students must:

- attend all lessons on time and equipped
- follow school procedures if they arrive late for school (after 08:45) by going to the office and informing either Gina, Jonny or Kate of their arrival.

## **If your child is absent**

If you know your child is going to be absent from school, you should:

- Call the school or email before 8.30, if your child is not able to attend through sickness or other valid reason for absence (e.g. emergency dentist appointment).
- Inform the school by note or email, at the earliest possible convenience if the absence is planned.
- Place a note in your child's planner to confirm the reason for absence on the day of their return.
- Avoid making non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Remember: If a student is absent due to illness for more than 5 days in a row, including Saturday and Sunday, a doctor's certificate is required that states that the student has recovered and is well enough to return to school.

The school will contact parents if they are in any doubts as to the whereabouts of a child, in accordance with Italian Law and our school Safeguarding Policy.

### **Examples of Authorised absence:**

- 1-4 days illness (when informed by email/phone)
- More than 5 days illness (confirmed with doctors cert)
- A holiday or day off if agreed with the form tutor / class teacher that the trip has some educational value.
- A family emergency

### **Examples of unauthorized absence:**

- When nothing has been communicated by the parent
- If the absence is for 5 or more days and a doctor's note has not been received.
- Holidays
- looking after brothers and sisters
- birthdays
- general trips, e.g. shopping

## **Consequences of regular absence or lateness**

Notification to parents is on the total number of absences in an academic year. Only the number of unauthorised absences will be taken into account if sanctions are being considered.

If the equivalent of 5 days (authorized and unauthorized) are missed during an academic year:

- Form tutor / class teacher talks to student and sends standard email to parents (see appendix 1) which will remind them of our policy and the reasons attendance is important.
- After 10 days absence a further email will be sent from The AC Chairperson
- After 15 days absence The AC Chairperson will call the parents in to discuss and establish the circumstances of the absences and to draw up an attendance agreement between parents, student and school.

If a student accrues 5 days of lateness

- Form tutor talks to student and sends standard email (see appendix 2) to parents which will remind them of our policy and the reasons that punctuality is important.
- After 10 days lateness a further email will be sent from The AC Chairperson
- After 15 days lateness The AC Chairperson will call the parents in. (Attendance/Punctuality agreement set up between parents, student and school).

## **Educational Need and Attendance**

1. The New School Rome's primary obligation is the education of its students.
2. The School must exercise reasonable responsiveness to accommodate a wide range of student needs in order to best support academic success.
3. If a student's unwillingness to attend school is caused by his or her limited academic success, The School will endeavour to provide reasonable alternatives or supports for those students at risk of not succeeding academically.

## **Discipline and Attendance**

1. The School has an obligation to provide a learning environment that is safe and orderly to support the academic success of all students. This means that The School must set reasonable expectations for student behaviour, including school attendance, and may impose reasonable sanctions when those expectations are not met.
2. For a secondary student, failure to attend school may be considered behaviour that is subject to disciplinary sanctions. For students less than 16 years of age and their parents, school attendance is a legal obligation. Teachers and other school staff who must accommodate unnecessarily absent students may have less time to respond to the needs of students who are more regular in their school attendance.
3. Students should not be subject to sanctions for failure to attend school if lack of attendance is beyond the control of the student. Some absences should be excused without disciplinary penalty. Illness, school-sponsored trips, or "unavoidable" occurrences (bereavement, family emergencies, legal appointments) would be examples of excused absences. It is also reasonable to require a doctor's verification of the illness in some circumstances. It is not reasonable to do so in every case and will be at the discretion of the Tutor.
4. The School may define by policy what are authorised and unauthorised absences. The determination of whether an absence is authorised is made by the school, not by the parent.
5. Authorised and unauthorised absences should not be combined for the imposition of sanctions under the attendance policy.
6. Absences should not include classes missed because of attendance at a school trip or activity.
7. The New School Rome Attendance Policy Document should provide reasonable flexibility in the administration of disciplinary action. Tutors should be given and are expected to use judgement in the determination of authorised versus unauthorised absences and also in the imposition of a range of sanctions for lack of attendance.

## **Relationships between Attendance and Grades**

1. Significant lack of attendance in a course of study might reasonably be expected to negatively affect academic performance which would negatively affect a student's grade in that course.
2. Grade reductions may result from absences in the following situations:
  - a. Failure to attend catch-up sessions as assigned for the completion of catch-up work.
  - b. If rewards for attendance and participation are given, the denial of those points or percentages for absenteeism is a reasonable practice.
  - c. Additional work may be assigned to make amends for class time lost due to absences. However, the failure to complete make-up assignments satisfactorily within a reasonable time is a separate act and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action.
3. Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to do well in the future. Regular attendance helps children to realise responsibility, develop resilience and grow in confidence. Further research has shown
  - a. 73% of students with or above 95% annual school attendance achieve A\* - C passes in all examinations (Ofsted, 2014)

- b. Only 35% of students with or below 90% annual school attendance achieve A\* - C passes in all examinations.
4. In cases where attendance is below 80% students may not be presented for examinations. This will be at the discretion of subject teachers. Provisions will be made for students who have been "dropped" from a class because of excessive unauthorised absences.
    - a. This recognises that the primary purpose of an attendance policy is educational rather than disciplinary.
    - b. The total number of absences which result in a student being removed from a class should be reasonable and discussed at a meeting between student, parents, The Chairperson and, if appropriate, class teacher(s).
  5. Ultimately, if a student is persistently absent or late then their place at school could be withdrawn.