**Toot Hill College Student Attendance:**

**Policies and Procedures**

Please find below an outline and summary of the expectations of and absence procedures for student attendance at Toot Hill College, divided into the following sections:

1. The importance of attendance
2. Expectations of attendance at Toot Hill College
3. a) Authorised absence procedures – absences known about in advance

b) Authorised absence procedures – unexpected absences

1. Safeguarding procedures: What if a student does not attend College and we do not know the reason why?
2. Disciplinary procedures: What happens if a student regularly does not attend timetabled periods?
3. Other: What is the College policy on students make use of the facilities in Bingham?
4. a) Year 13 only – What if I want to apply for a regular authorised weekly absence?
5. **The Importance of Attendance:**

Ensuring and monitoring student attendance at College is of the utmost importance for two central reasons:

1. **Safeguarding**: We have a statutory responsibility as a College for the safety and wellbeing of students; this includes knowing whether they are in College or not and, if not in College, finding out - to the best of our ability - the reason for their absence to play our role ensuring they are not at risk.
2. **Student achievement**: We have a further responsibility as College to support – to the best of our ability - all students in achieving their full potential while studying with us. One of the greatest factors that influences student achievement is, simply, their attendance to College.

*For further information on safeguarding as a ‘statutory duty’ of schools and Colleges, please see below:*

**What does the Department of Education say on the matter?**

The Department for Education lists the ‘Safeguarding of children and young people’ under its Statutory Guidance (please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> for further information).

In its guidance, it explicitly states that the document ‘contains information on what schools and colleges should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools and colleges must comply in order to keep children safe’ (pg.3).

In its publication, ‘Keeping children safe in education’, it also clarifies that:

* ‘Children includes everyone under the age of 18’ (pg.5) and therefore these safeguarding measures apply for students in both Year 12 and Year 13.
* (While Year 13 students will turn 18 at different points throughout the year, the College has a uniform policy for all current students so that it is both fair and possible to administer effectively; nevertheless, please see later for some additional policies for Year 13 students only in recognition that they do turn 18 during the course of the year).

Finally, it makes explicit that schools and College must closely monitor attendance and address non-attendance if the College is unaware of the reason for it and has not authorised it. This is part of safeguarding young people:

* ‘The law requires all schools to have an attendance register’; this is our morning registration period, which is monitored so that unexplained absences are addressed.

**What does this mean in practice?**

As such, in order to fulfil our responsibility safeguarding the young people we work with the College must know, to the best of our ability:

* That a student is in College.
* If a student is not in College, that there is a reason for this which means we know, to the best of our ability, that the young person is not at risk.

If the College knows a student is not in College, but does not know the reason for this, then as part of safeguarding the young person the College will let a parent/guardian know that the student is not in College and we are unaware of the reason for this.

1. **Expectations of attendance at Toot Hill College:**

* All students, both Year 12 and Year 13, are expected to attend morning registration, which takes place 8.25 – 8.45am every day, for the following reasons:
  + Attendance to registration is important for our safeguarding procedures – it is the main way we know for sure whether a student in College that day or not (this is especially important given that students have free periods in College, so if they do not attend registration, it will not be until their next registered lesson that we know where they are, thus fulfilling our statutory duty).
  + This is time that the students spend with their mentor, whose role is to help support a student’s wellbeing and provide pastoral support and guidance throughout their time with us; if students are not in registration this key relationship cannot be built.
  + In addition, it is the mentor that writes a student’s UCAS, Apprenticeship and Employment references in Year 13 – this is not possible if a mentor does not know the student well enough.
  + This is one of the main ways we communicate information to students in College including daily notices, information regarding cover, letters to distribute and other information such as invites to events and message from staff.
* All students, both Year 12 and Year 13, are expected to attend all timetabled lessons, as well as their weekly timetabled mentor period. Out of a possible 38 periods in the week, this amounts to the following number of timetabled periods for each year group:
  + Please see below for a breakdown of timetabled periods per week for each year group:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Each week is broken down into a possible 38 periods of 45 minutes each.*** | | |
|  | **Year 12** | **Year 13** |
| **Timetabled lessons** | 24  *(4 subjects of 6 periods each)* | 18  *(3 subjects of 6 periods each)* |
| **Timetabled private study periods** | 6 | 6 |
| **Timetabled weekly mentor period** | 1  *(Wednesday Period 7)* | 1  *(Wednesday Period 8)* |
| **Total:** | **31** | **25** |

* + The remaining periods can be used for:
    - *Homework / Coursework assignments.*
    - *Extending their learning in subjects using the library of resources for each subject located in the Study Atrium.*
    - *Preparation for pastoral activities using the Handbooks available in the Study Atrium, which include University Applications, Organising Work Experience, Interview Preparation, Researching Destinations, University Prospectuses, Student Finance guides, as well as others.*
    - *Extra-curricular activities which include the Toot Hill Passport (Year 12 only), Duke of Edinburgh, the Student Union, Sports clubs, the Sports Leaders award, the Extended Project Qualification (Year 13 only), the Engineering Scheme, World Challenge, the National Citizenship Service, as well as others.*
    - *If your child is still struggling to fill their time in College, please contact their mentor or Head of Year, who will be happy to source additional work or structure additional study time for them.*

1. **Authorised Absence Procedures:**

If a student cannot attend College for a whole or part of a day, this absence needs to be authorised by the College so we know the reason for the student’s absence and, therefore, in this way we are fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities.

**If the absence is known about in advance:**

* If the absence is known about in advance, students need to collect and complete a ‘Leave of Absence’ form from the box in the College Secretary office (located to the left of the main entrance as you enter the building) labelled ‘Blank Leave of Absence’ forms.
* Students then need to return the completed form to the box in the College Secretary office labelled ‘Leave of Absence forms awaiting authorisation’.
* Finally, some form of contact needs to be made by parents to confirm that they also know about and support this application for a leave of absence; this can be by phone (01949 863972) or email ([college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk)).
* Once we receive confirmation from parents/guardians that they also support this request for a Leave of Absence, a member of the College Team will authorise it (as long as the reason is deemed appropriate), and the registers changed accordingly so that all staff members know that this absence is authorised and that the young person is accounted for.

Please see below for a summary of these steps:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Who to complete?** | **What to do?** |
| **Step 1** | **Student** | The student needs to collect and complete a ‘Leave of Absence’ form from the College reception, before returning it to the box labelled ‘Leave of Absence forms awaiting authorisation’. |
| **Step 2** | **Parent** | A parent/guardian needs to contact the College on 01949 863072 or [college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk) to confirm that they support the application for an authorised absence. |
| **Step 3** | **College** | A member of the College Team will then authorise the absence, as long as the reason is appropriate, and amend the registers to show that we know about this absence. |

**If the absence is unexpected:**

* If the student absent for an unexpected reason, a parent/guardian needs to contact the College on 01949 863072 or [college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk) so that the College is aware of the reason; once again this fulfils the College’s safeguarding responsibility to, to the best of its ability, ensure a student is safe.

1. **Safeguarding procedures:**

**What if a student does not attend College and we have not received contact from home?**

* If a student is not in College, and we have no notification where they are, this then becomes a safeguarding issue for the College and we have a statutory responsibility to, to the best of our ability, play a role locating them and ensuring they are safe.
* In addition, we also have a duty to – to the best of our ability - make parents/guardians aware that the student is not in College and we are unaware of the reason why.
* As such, if a student is not in morning registration and their absence for the day has not previously been authorised, an email will be sent to the student requesting that they let us know if they are in school. In addition, a text will go home to parents to notify them of the student’s unexplained absence, requesting that any information regarding their absence is communicated as soon as possible to the College.
* If a student does not attend a timetabled lesson, it is the responsibility of the subject teacher to investigate the reason behind the absence, including making contact with the College team to raise the fact that the student has not been in the lesson.

1. **Disciplinary procedures:**

**What happens if a student regularly does not attend timetabled lessons or mentor period?**

What if students regularly do not attend timetabled lessons?

* One of the biggest trends evident in student results is a dip in achievement if there has been a dip in student attendance.
* It is the responsibility of individual subject teachers to check student attendance in their lessons and organise the catch-up of work if a student has not attended.
* In addition, as a College Team we also monitor a student’s overall attendance to timetabled lessons each week.
* We do this by running an ‘Overall attendance’ report on Friday afternoon; this shows us each student’s percentage attendance to lessons, percentage authorised absence, and percentage unauthorised absence.
* If a student’s attendance is below 90%, we will email the student and send a text home to parents on Friday afternoon requesting information about the absences that week and to let both parties know that 10% of their timetabled lessons that week have been missed.
* 10% amounts to either 3 or more whole periods in Year 12, or 2 or more whole periods in Year 13 that week.
* If there is a valid reason for their absence which has not been previously communicated to the College, we request that contact is made with the College by a parent/guardian by the end of the day on the following Monday by ringing 01949 863072 or emailing [college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk)
* If we have not received contact from parent/guardians with additional information regarding the absence, the student will be expected to attend a College detention on the following Wednesday 3.30 – 4.30pm to catch up the work they have missed in the lessons.

Please see below for a summary of this procedure:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Who?** | **What happens?** |
| **Step 1** | College | At the end of the day Friday, the College team will check a student’s overall attendance in timetabled lessons and mentor period for the week.  If your child’s combined attendance and authorised absence is below 90%, a text will be sent home to parents to notify them of this issue. |
| **Step 2** | Parent | If there are reasons for their absence which have not previously been communicated to us, please contact us by the end of the day the following Monday on 01949 863072 or [college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:college.admin@toothillschool.co.uk) |
| **Step 3** | Student | If we have not received contact from home explaining any further context for the unauthorised absences, your child will be expected to attend a College detention on the following Wednesday after school 3.30 – 4.30pm to catch up on the work they have missed. |

1. **What is the College policy on students making use of the facilities in Bingham?**

* Toot Hill College has a close relationship with the local business community, and we have long allowed students to visit Bingham town centre during the day if they wish to make use of the local facilities. We believe this is an opportunity for students to transition from lower school to adulthood during their time with us.
* Nevertheless, once again as we have a safeguarding responsibility to know, to the best of our ability, where the student is and that they are accounted for, they simply need to sign out when they leave and sign back in again when they return. This will simply be a case of tapping their card on a card reader on their way out of College on their way to Bingham. This is once again in recognition of our safeguarding responsibility as a provider of education for children so we know where they are.
* If a parent would prefer their child not to have this privilege, they are advised to contact their child’s Head of Year who will discuss this further with them and reach a mutually agreed decision.

1. **Year 13 only:**

**What if I want to apply for a regular weekly authorised absence?**

* In Year 13, students may apply for a regular weekly authorised absence if:
* There is a valid reason related to wellbeing or achievement
* They are on track to achieve their THT
* Their attendance is proven to be reliably good
* There are no behaviour or homework issues
* They provide written confirmation that parents or guardians support this
* If an application is successful, it will be approved until the next assessment point in College.