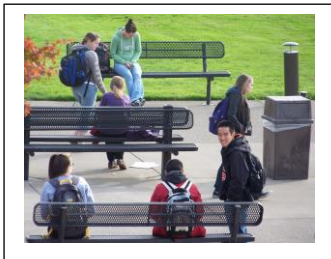
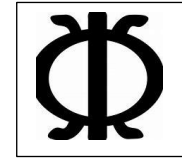


AC

ARUN COURT

THERAPY & EDUCATION

'Resilience and Perseverance lead to success'



ATTENDANCE POLICY

ETHOS & AIMS

We recognise that we work with student's whose attendance at previous settings has been weak. One of the reasons we wanted to gain school status was because when our students were dual registered they would often refuse to attend their main placement school. We want to encourage our students to value education and to see it as a privilege that is sadly not available to all children in the world. Our students are in a school that has long holiday periods, has therapy in place so that a student can leave a session at any time, a flexible curriculum up to the end of year 9 and a later start time. So, for students who don't like school, or find school overwhelming we are a really good compromise. We also do not have many of the 'school structures' such as uniform or calling teachers by family names.

We know it is very hard for parents who may feel threatened, controlled or are highly anxious about their child's well-being to encourage them to attend but it is really important that we work together to ensure attendance is high. We actively teach perseverance and resilience every day, and these valuable lessons lose impact if they are not consistently attended therefore hampering your child's mental health recovery.

WHEN AND HOW IS ATTENDANCE RECORDED?

- We record attendance twice daily in a paper register which is then entered into an electronic system.
- Attendance is recorded at the first lesson in the lower school and then again after lunch in the early afternoon
- Attendance is recorded at the first lesson in the upper school and then again after lunch in the early afternoon
- A student is marked as absent if they are not in school by 10.05
- A student is marked as absent if they are not present at 13:05
- It is important to understand that if 'late' is recorded that is allocated as a whole missed session – morning or afternoon
- If a student is marked absent the school office is notified and they will call parents to find out the reason for the absence. The reason for the absence is recorded and provided it is for a designated reason within the register codes it is classed as 'authorised'
- If a family cannot be reached by phone we will keep trying ALL numbers on the student registration form. This is very important with regards to safeguarding as there have sadly been cases where single parents have died unexpectedly and their child has been at home, unable to contact for help, in some cases this led to a further death of a child.
- Unauthorised absence is recorded as such, and this may include holidays taken out of school vacation periods

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE BECOMES A CONCERN?



In November 2019 we were pleased to receive a successful Ofsted report, however attendance was highlighted as a concern. Funding LEAs, mainly Surrey and Hampshire, have also expressed concerns about attendance and parents need to be aware that as 'auditors' of public finance the authority has the right to ask us to move to end a placement that a student is not attending – **non attendance is a key indicator that a placement is not suitable, even if this non-attendance is due to high anxiety or even hospital admission. Attendance becomes a concern if it is less than 96%.**

To help improve attendance, we have therefore enhanced and simplified our attendance response into the following staged format.

STAGE	ACTION	WHO MAY BE INVOLVED?
0 – INFORMAL	Your child’s keyworker will have been informed that there is a concern around attendance. They will ring you to discuss what issues there may be and how we can support. Following on from this a member of the strategic leadership team may call you to discuss resolving the situation and offering a variety of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, student and staff
1 – MEETING OF PROFESSIONALS	If the situation does not improve, then you will be sent a letter expressing concerns and suggesting a multi-professional meeting. At this meeting we encourage you to invite as many professionals as possible to help us all work together to create a plan. Most plans last for just 5 weeks over which a significant improvement of full attendance is expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services invited by the young person’s parents • Various professionals on the school staff
2 - PLACEMENT AT RISK	At this stage a young person is either continuing to show low attendance or their overall attendance has dramatically dropped to a very low percentage (below 75%) All our young people are vulnerable and for us to be able to take on the legal responsibility of ‘safeguarding’ them we need to have physical access to them. At stage 2 therefore it is often the case that we will make referrals to external services such as children’s care and CAMHs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brokering Local Education Authority • Children’s Services • CAMHs • Commissioning and Legal Services • Services invited by the young person’s parents • Various professionals on the school staff
3- TERMINATION MEETING	At this stage we end the placement by mutual agreement, and have a meeting to try to decide better options for the young person. In some cases this may include A2E providing short term support prior to another school being found, or it may be discussion around other services such as an ‘at home’ package from Big Bear Bespoke Education (a sister service)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brokering Local Education Authority • Children’s Services • CAMHs • Commissioning and Legal Services • Services invited by the young person’s parents • Various professionals on the school staff
Timescales	<p>It is important that parents understand that the timescales are much shorter, and attendance is being rigorously monitored. It is possible that without a dedicated and rigorous response from families a placement could end within a 10-week period. Please work with us and support us in our aim of continuing to provide a good educational placement to your young person. Your young person’s anxiety is better served by attending our mental health recovery school where they can receive support from therapists and the well-being team – staying at home only provides a short term answer, as they need to access support.</p>	

ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE POOR ATTENDANCE AND MAINTAIN GOOD ATTENDANCE

What is considered good attendance?

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education.

- Good attendance is considered above 96%, or approximately no more than one day of absence each half term.
- 85% attendance results in half a term absence over a year
- 90% attendance result in one day absence every two weeks or 4 weeks over a school year

How can we support your child to attend?

- An innovative timetable with lots of therapy and well-being work to reduce student anxiety and coaching to encourage growth mindset
- Therapy animals on site, themed days and events all help make school feel like an exciting place to be
- Our Wellbeing and SEND team can support you with home visits, strategies around behaviour, including building your confidence as a parent, to help you to challenge negative or controlling behaviours from your child around attendance
- Use of the learning pathway document and meeting to set short term targets with designated rewards
- Attendance is rewarded and praised
- Our timetable allows for shorter sessions and regular breaks to really help support students with attendance issues, later and staggered starts also mean highly anxious children can be supported
- The Key Worker system allows students to be greeted by a friendly face each morning, and to have someone to check in with during the day for reassurance
- We understand that the young people have mental health needs and parents will want to react sympathetically to signs of anxiety however allowing them to stay at home is only delaying the issue – **if they are in our setting, they can access the resources and therapy support to improve their mood and deal with their anxiety. Potentially losing their school place is more anxiety-inducing.**