



Attendance Policy Pupils

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Responsible Officer: J Fleckney / J Barr

Introduction

Hawes Side Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Pupils learn new things every day and missing school puts them behind.

Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important to a child's success at school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Purpose of this policy

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously impact on their learning. We encourage every child to succeed.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

Linked Documentation

<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Education-and-schools/Information-for-parents-and-carers/School-attendance.aspx>

Roles and Responsibilities

Hawes Side Academy has a positive, proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents/carers to take an active role in their child's education. Parents/carers play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and reducing absence. The relationship between home and school is a vital part of a child's positive education and care.

Parents:

- Ensure their child/children attend regularly and punctually
- The parent/carer must contact the academy on 1st day of absence and each subsequent day of absence. They must state the child's security password at every contact.
- Provide the academy with at least two emergency contact numbers.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Updating the academy if their details change.

Pupils:

- Attend academy/registration punctually
- Attend all their lessons and any agreed activities when they are in school

Key Staff:

- Principal – Caroline Boothroyd
- Vice Principal – Julie Barr
- Attendance Officer – Julie Fleckney
- Administration Officer – Lynsey Hayley-Davies
- Pupil Welfare Officer – Karen Manning

The senior leadership team and key staff named above are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils, to make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the academy conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

Designated Staff:

First day response:

- Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole academy attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance

All Academy Staff:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- See pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all academy staff
- Participate in training regarding academy systems and procedures

Trustees:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Absence Procedures

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child/children attend school every day and are on time.

Parents and carers should take all reasonable steps to notify the school of the reason for a child's absence **on the first day of absence**. Please contact the academy 01253 402541, choosing option 1. Please report your child's absence with their security password.

We operate a 'first day of absence' text system. Following this, if there has been no contact from the family of an absent child within two days of the original absence, then a member of staff will telephone the parent/carers or other contacts for the child to enquire why the child is not in school.

The academy opens at **8.50am** and classroom doors and other entrances will be closed at **9.00am**. If pupils arrive after this time then they must enter by the academy office on Johnsville Avenue.

When an appointment has been made for medical reasons (and these should be made outside school time when possible) the appointment card should be shown in advance to the academy office.

A reason for absence **must** be validated by a child's parent. This must be via the academy office, not the class teacher.

School refers to guidance from the Health Protection Agency to advise parents on recommended periods of absence for specific illnesses and infections.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-9-managing-specific-infectious-diseases>

Hawes Side Academy does not authorise an absence due to illness for any child whose attendance rate is less than 93% (for any reason), without first obtaining medical evidence.

Attendance Registers

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way

Lateness

All children at Hawes Side Academy are expected to attend every day and to be on time.

The academy will be open from 8.50 a.m. Entrances will be closed at 9.00 a.m. Any child arriving after 9.00 a.m. must enter school via the academy office to be signed in on our inventory system before entry to class. The academy must ensure every child is recorded as present once on our premises, in case of emergency evacuation.

Registers are taken at 9.00am and are closed at 9.05am. A pupil arriving after this time and before 9.30am, will receive a late mark.

A pupil arriving **after 9.30am** will be given a U mark. In some circumstances, this may be changed if appropriate evidence is provided for their absence.

Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO)

Our Attendance Officer meets each week with the academy's PWO to review attendance, including cases involving individual children or families and to discuss any other matters concerning attendance and punctuality.

Referrals to PWOs are made by schools. However, PWOs do consult with other professionals and can be contacted directly by parents/carers for support.

A parent/carer may be contacted by a PWO if:

- The child has a pattern of irregular attendance (broken weeks);

- The child has had a period of non-attendance with no explanation or justifiable reason;
- The child has been regularly absent and communication between parent/carers and school has met with little or no response/improvement;
- The child is moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume their education (such pupils are treated as “children missing education”);
- A pattern of persistent lateness has developed;
- There are child protection concerns alongside poor attendance patterns;
- There are identifiable welfare issues, which are preventing a child from accessing education.

The main role of a PWO is to work with schools and families to help raise attendance levels for individual pupils, individual schools and for Blackpool as a whole to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age are in receipt of a suitable education.

PWOs also work with other professionals to promote regular school attendance for children in their Foundation Stage. Although there is no legislation for 3 and 4 year olds to attend school regularly, it is known that regular school attendance in these early years is crucial to a child’s adopting of positive attendance and punctuality routines and future learning.

PWOs will assist in identifying and removing barriers which may be preventing a child receiving education through a number of ways, initially by undertaking individual casework with children of poor attendance and their parents/carers. The PWO will recognise and take account of individual circumstances and will respond accordingly. Speedy return of the child to regular attendance will always be the prime concern.

In some instances, PWO intervention may be limited to a single PWO home visit in order to remind parent/carers of their legal responsibilities or to help resolve a particular difficulty.

When, in some instances, there may be complex reasons why a child is not attending school the PWO may negotiate a plan of support. All PWO casework will involve close and continuous liaison with the pupil’s school. PWOs will ensure that schools receive regular, written feedback on pupils with whom work is being undertaken.

Where the main causes of non- attendance may be school-related (e.g. alleged bullying or racism, peer pressure, difficulties with a particular lesson or teacher) the PWO will discuss with the school in order to develop strategies to overcome these difficulties.

The PWO will employ a range of strategies with the parent/carers in their casework to bring about the child’s regular attendance and will, when necessary if no improvement occurs, refer the matter to the Magistrates Court.

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL POLICY ON PROSECUTION

Section 444(1) and (1)(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a pupil fails to regularly attend and attempts by the PWO and school fail to ensure the pupil returns to regular attendance, the PWO, on behalf of Blackpool Council, can consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parent/carers to appear before the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) / (1)(A).

444(1)(a): This is an “aggravated” and more serious offence. Parent/ carers may be summonsed to Court on this offence will have a criminal conviction recorded against their name should action be taken during this process.

Fast Track Initiative to Better Outcomes: This involves less casework and a series of letters and meetings over 12 weeks to try and improve individual pupil’s school attendance. If no or little improvement occurs, a referral to the Magistrates Court will be made under Section 444(1).

If a child/young person pupil still fails to attend school regularly, after a parent/carer has been prosecuted, the PWO will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action.

Education Supervision Order (ESO): Before initiating a prosecution under section 444(1) or (1)(A) of the 1996 Education Act, a PWO will consider whether it is appropriate to apply for an ESO under section 36 of the 1989

Children Act to the Family Court. The purpose of an ESO is to place a child/young person who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the Children's Services Authority as opposed to the parent/carer.

An ESO aims to ensure that the child/young person receives a suitable education and that they and the parent/carers receive intensive support, advice and guidance from a Supervising Officer who is required "to advise, assist and befriend".

Should an ESO fail to bring about an improvement in the child's school attendance, the PWO can later use this in evidence in the Magistrates Court as a prosecution under Section 444(1) or 444(1)(a) of The Education Act 1996.

Blackpool Council Policy on the Use of School Attendance Order (SAO): A SAO (under Sections 437-439 of the 1996 Education Act) will be served on the parent/carers of a child of compulsory school age if the parent/carers have failed to provide a suitable education and if the Children's Services Authority believes that the child should attend school.

The SAO will specify the school or Pupil Referral Unit which the child should attend. Should the parent/carers fail to comply with the SAO the Children's Service Authority will initiate legal proceedings under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act, unless the parents/carers can prove that the child is in receipt of suitable education).

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the academy has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Term time leave

As of September 2013, schools have not been able to authorise holidays in school time.

If leave is requested, parents must complete a term time absence request form. This can be requested from and returned to the school office. Granting leave will be at the discretion of the Principal. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, leave will **not** be authorised. Parents/carers must give a return date and notify the academy as soon as possible if this changes.

A list of our school holiday dates are always on the weekly newsletter for future planning.

Please visit the school website <https://www.hawes-side.co.uk/termdates>

Alternatively, contact the school office for clarification.

Religious observances

The academy will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents and carers will be required to inform the academy in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. This can be done through an email to admin@hawes-side.co.uk.

Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the academy office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Young carers

The academy understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the academy. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The academy, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy is monitored by the Principal, who reports to Trustees about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.