



HIGHFIELD ACADEMIES

Attendance policy

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	MAY 2024
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	MAY 2026
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	DANNY MILLS

1. Statement of Intent

- The school aims to work together with parents or carers to ensure that all learners registered at the school have as high a level of attendance as possible. We aim for 100% and make allowances where we need to recognise medical or SEND needs.
- Attendance has a direct correlation with progress. Good attendance will contribute to good progress in school and better outcomes in later life for our pupils.
- Attendance that is good or better is desirable in all groups of learners. Good attendance for Children in Care is vital. This is reviewed at termly Pupil Education Plan (PEP) meetings.

2. Parents' or Carers' Responsibilities

- Parents or carers have a legal duty to ensure that young people of compulsory school age attend school. As parent(s)/ carer(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your young person attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.
- Parents or carers should ensure that if their young person is absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness, they should contact the school as soon as possible on the first morning of absence.
- Parents or carers may not authorise their young person's absence, only the school can do this on the basis of the information provided by the parent or carer. Should parents or carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their young person's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.
- Parents or carers should ensure that their young person arrives at school in time for the start of registration or is ready for the school transport when it arrives – drivers are advised by the LA to wait no longer than 5 minutes for a young person before they depart without them. If a young person arrives late (after 9.00) their parent/carer/taxi driver should report directly to the school office.
- Where parents or carers would like their young person to have any time out of school they need to ask permission in line with the guidance on the special leave request form available from the school office. In short, leave will only be authorised in exceptional or unavoidable circumstances. The young person's current level of attendance may be a factor in the Headteacher's decision.

3. School Responsibilities

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a young person's educational progress.
- Registers will be called twice daily 9.00am and 1.15pm. Registers will close at 9.15am and 1.30pm. Any young person arriving after the register is called ~~closing of the register~~ will be recorded as 'late' marked with an 'L' for that session unless this is by arrangement as a reasonable adjustment because of a disability. An 'L' mark does not impact on a pupil's attendance. Where such arrangements are in place, the school will have discussed these with a representative of the Local Authority. 'Late' marks after registration is closed are marked as a 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the official guidance. The Headteacher will inspect the registers periodically in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained. Attendance is also monitored each half term so that attendance issues are identified and addressed at an early stage.
- Should a class teacher have particular concerns about a young person's attendance or punctuality, they should speak to the Headteacher.
- If attendance continues to be poor or could be improved, the Leadership team will work with the family and class teacher in developing strategies to improve attendance both in the short and longer terms. As parents or carers it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your young person attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. With effect from September 2015 schools have been advised by the government's Department for Education (DfE) that the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold will be 10%. This means that if a young person has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.
- If a young person is absent the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register.
- Attendance data and case studies form part of school evaluation evidence.
- Should school transport be late in bringing students in, it is the transport company/driver/escort who should inform the school of the delay and the reason for the delay. The school office will relay this information to the class teacher/staff who greet the young persons from their transport in the morning. Persistently late transport will be reported to the LA for investigation.
- Should school transport be late in collecting students from school at the end of the day, the main office will contact the company to find out the reason and an estimated arrival time. Admin staff will then contact parents or carers to inform them of this delay.

4. Attendance and Safeguarding

- There are clear links between the Attendance policy and the Safeguarding policy and we

treat absence as a potential safeguarding risk. For this reason we use the procedures described below to ensure that all learners are safe.

- If a student is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by their expected time of arrival, office staff will contact the parent/carer via phone or email or through the class teacher using the Class Dojo app to establish the reason for absence. Illness is authorised at the discretion of the school and medical proof may be requested in circumstances where there is persistent absence or where the school may doubt reasons for absence.
- The calls process will be followed according to the tables at the end of this document (Appendix 1 and 2) where there is no known and authorised explanation for absence.
- Proof of appointment will be sought for all medical appointments that are within the school day. This will be gained prior to the appointment wherever possible.
- A list of non-attendeers and late comers is compiled every day and sent to the Assistant Head and the Headteacher. Attendance is a standing item at weekly meetings between Teachers and Leaders and at Leadership meetings – it is a constant focus.
- Attendance patterns and figures are analysed on a half-termly basis by the school office and reviewed by the Assistant Head and Headteacher. Where there are patterns of persistent absence, unexplained absence or absence falls below the national target for SEND settings, guidance and procedures will be followed according to advice from the Local Authority Attendance Officers. School will seek to follow the attendance flowchart to address absence through the letter system, parent contracts and legal panel process where necessary.

Attendance Procedures

Where the reason for extended absence is known and acceptable to school as a non-safeguarding concern, such as post-operation recovery, we will extend the timeframe for home visits. In these instances home visits will be agreed with parents/carers but will generally be every 2 weeks. Home visits may be replaced or complemented in these instances with video meetings as long as the young person's wellbeing can easily be ascertained via video. Where there is any history of concern around the young person's safety at home, visits will be more regular and agreed by the DSL.

Pupils deemed at higher risk:

- **Children subject to a child protection plan**
- **Children in Care (CiC)**

If these children are absent and there has been no contact - notify the key worker or social care practitioner within the first 24 hours.

Schools must notify the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub immediately if:

- **It is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm**
- **There is information that a pupil is, or may be, a victim of criminal activity**
- **At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Appendix 1: Reason for absence is known

Day 1-4 of absence	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Record reasons for absence on SIMS2. Leaders to consider home visit for students RAG rated as high risk
Day 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Class teacher to phone parents to check on well-being and expected date of return.2. Record all actions on SIMS3. If students are RAG rated as high risk: DSL/DDSL with 1 other staff member to make home visit following home visit policy. Complete 'home visit/video link' form after visit. Visits to be ongoing with continuing absence.
Day 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Department leader to phone parents to check on well-being and expected date of return.2. Record all actions on SIMS
Day 10	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DSL/DDSL with 1 other staff member to make home visit following home visit policy. Complete 'home visit/video link' form after visit. Visits to be ongoing with continuing absence.2. Record all actions on SIMS

Appendix 2: Where reason for absence is unknown

Day 1 of absence	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Send absent message to parents/carers (Class Dojo from Teacher) and Email from school office.2. Telephone and Dojo parents/carers if a response is not received, leave a message if possible3. Contact all contacts on SIMS4. Record actions on SIMS
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Day 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeat steps from day 1 2. If students are RAG rated as high risk: DSL/DDSL with 1 other staff member to make home visit following home visit policy. Complete 'home visit/video link' form after visit. Visits to be ongoing with continuing absence. 3. If student has been seen, record next steps as discussed with parents/carers. 4. If no contact made leave a note at home.
Day 3 onwards Still no contact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeat steps from day 1. 5. All students: DSL/DDSL with 1 other staff member to make home visit following home visit policy. Complete 'home visit/video link' form after visit. Visits to be ongoing with continuing absence. 2. Notify social worker 3. Record on 'My Concern' and contact and make a MASH referral.
Day 10 Complete missing pupil checklist	<p>Must be completed by the 10th day of the absence, when one of the following criteria applies:</p> <p>A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence</p> <p>A pupil ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family is not known</p> <p>A pupil has not returned from holiday within 10 school days of the expected date of return</p> <p>A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the young person is unknown</p> <p><u>School must continue investigations, while the Local Authority undertake their investigations.</u></p>