ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 08.12.2023
Last reviewed on:	01.12.2023	
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

> School census guidance

> Keeping Children Safe in Education

> Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

> Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Katie Rees and can be contacted via telephone on 0208 9944782

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer (with support of the designated senior leader) is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Karen Frain and can be contacted via telephone on 0208 9944782 or email: admin@hogarth.hounslow.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in the morning and in the afternoon.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

> Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents/carers to the deputy headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. The school gates are open from 8:45am every morning for softstart activities and the registers are closed at 9am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55am as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised if medical evidence is provided, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and can provide evidence of such an appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> After the register has closed will be marked as late using the appropriate code (L). If a pupil arrives after 9:30am they will be marked as U.

Any child that arrives late (after the gates have closed) must be accompanied to the school office where an explanation must be provided for lateness by an appropriate adult. Frequent lateness will be looked at and a meeting may be held between the deputy headteacher and parents /carers to find possible solutions to persistent lateness. Rewards may be given as incentives or alternative arrangements made in extenuating circumstances in agreement with the attendance team, headteacher and the parents/carers.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police or social care

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a school attendance support officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels during parent consultations and on end of year reports.

Class attendance and lates are also reported in the weekly newsletter.

Where attendance has significantly improved celebration attendance cards may be written and given to children during celebration assemblies.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a close family bereavement, hospitalization or an emergency safeguarding circumstance. This list is not exhaustive,

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or on The William Hogarth School website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

> Class attendance is celebrated every week in Celebration Assembly and in the school newsletter. The class with the highest attendance gets a 15 minute reward decided by the class and the class teacher

> A school attendance display in the hall shows the class attendance winners each week

> Individuals that have improved their attendance over time are recognised with a congratulatory postcard during Celebration Assembly

> Each term, individuals who have 100% attendance can go to the 'Attendance Shop' and choose a prize.

> Children who have 97% attendance or above for one academic year will be entered into an end of year raffle to win prizes.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level or more frequently if necessary

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will follow the DfE School Expectations document and flow chart (appendix 2):

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Issue letters to parents/carers whose child's attendance falls below 96% (in line with government targets)

> Monitor individual attendance to record improved attendance or further decline in absence

> Communicate with parents/carers any further decline in attendance and engage with parents/carers to meet and discuss support available, including local welfare support

- Set targets for attendance over a 4 week period of 90% that can be reviewed

- Refer the child to the school attendance support service (SASS) if targets are not met

- Liaise with the SASS team to provide evidence and attendance records for the individual

- Restart the process when and if needed according to advice from the SASS or if triggered by internal monitoring and attendance thresholds not being met

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Katie Rees, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

DFE EXPECTATIONS
SCHOOLS ARE EXPECTED TO*

Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.

ALL PUPILS-Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

ALL PUPILS- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

ALL PUPILS -If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners

PUPILS AT RISK OF BEING A PA-Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

SEVERLY ABSENT PUPILS-Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

SUPPORT FOR COHORTS WITH LOWER ATTENDANCE THAN PEERS-Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER-Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

MONITORING-Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.

*Taken from DFE School Attendance Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL ACTION FLOW CHART

Regular tracking/monitoring of attendance(weekly)

Attendance registers are completed daily, and correct attendance codes are used. School staff will explore data to identify early patterns of absence. Termly attendance, and network meetings with the School Attendance Support Officer will be held to review data, discuss early patterns of individual absence, and locality issues.

Each day a child is absent, and the parent/carers have failed to contact the school, absence enquiry calls, texts and emails are made. It may be necessary for school staff to conduct home visits, where the parent/carer continues not to respond, and the pupil fails to attend school. **If unauthorised absence continues and a Social Worker or other service is involved, they must be informed of the absences, and a TAC/F meeting can be considered to address the school concerns and identify barriers to attendance, and referrals made where required.**

Where attendance has declined and is below the school's expected levels of attendance, a letter of concern is sent to the parent/carers**(Template1)**SCHOOL ACTION ATTENDANCE CONCERNS. The 'School Attendance Everyone Is Responsible' Leaflet and School Attendance Information Leaflet to outline the risks of irregular school attendance could be included. **Attendance monitored weekly.**

Attendance fails to improve

Where no improvements to attendance are made and unauthorised absence continues, an appointment letter is sent to parent/carers **(Template 2)**SCHOOL ACTION MEETING INVITE. **Attendance monitored weekly.**

Support

Where barriers have been identified and support is required, school-based support is provided. Schools and parents can seek support and advice from the Early Help and Family Hubs, and any additional support services should be explored and offered with referrals made through the Portal.

School meeting

Parent/carers and pupil attend the school meeting. Parental responsibility in regard to school attendance is outlined. School-based and additional support services discussed, where identified referrals made. Depending on the service involved or required there may be a need for a multi-agency Team Around the Family/Child meeting, where professionals could be invited. A parenting contract and plan of support is completed, this will outline the support and agreement by all to improve school attendance. **The plan will include a 4-week 95% attendance target (Template 3)** SCHOOL ACTION PARENT PUPIL CONTRACT/PLAN

Where the parent/carer have not attended the school meeting. The parent pupil contract/plan is completed in their absence and sent to the parent/carer. Which will outline the school concerns and support, and include the **4-week 95% attendance target**. During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue. **Attendance monitored until the target review date.**

Attendance target review-Achieved

The school target is reviewed and has been achieved, for authorised reasons or there has been an improvement but % levels are still a concern. An extended **4-week 95%** attendance target letter would be issued **(Template 4)** SCHOOL ACTION EXTENDED TARGET. During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue and support offered. Where the improvements have not been sustained and attendance declined, depending on the length of time since the last target/meeting the school should consider a further meeting/target.

Attendance target review-Not achieved

The school attendance target is reviewed and has not been achieved, and **attendance is 90% or below with unauthorised absence**. A referral is made through the Portal to the School Attendance Support Service, with all supporting documents attached(parent/pupil contract/plan, letters and an registration certificate).

Attendance-Deteriorated

The school attendance target was previously achieved, and has declined with unauthorised absence following a period of monitoring, depending on the length of time since the last target/meeting the school should consider a further meeting, and a further **4-week 95%** attendance target letter can be issued **(Template 5)** SCHOOL ACTION ATTENDANCE DETERIORATED During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue and support offered.

Where a pupil has a confirmed medical condition

Schools must monitor the attendance and liaise closely with the relevant medical professional (CAMHS, GP, hospital Consultant etc) to agree if the medical condition is preventing the pupil from attending school regularly, if so, the absences should be authorised. Where an agreement has been made *not to* authorise absences, the school non-attendance procedure should be followed (as above) SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH A MEDICAL CONDITION

Where a pupil has a Special Educational Need/Disability (SEND)

Schools must monitor the attendance and liaise closely with the SEND officer, to inform of any attendance concerns. Where an agreement has been made *not to* authorise absences, the school non-attendance procedure should be followed (as above) School must adhere to their SEND policy SEND CODE OF PRACTICE

Term Time Leave

Term Time Leave information should be included in the schools; Attendance Policy, Newsletters, and available on the school website to ensure that parent/carers are fully informed of the process and legalities.

Headteachers are strongly advised not to authorise term time leave unless there are "exceptional circumstances", and an application is made in advance.

The School Attendance Support Service recommends that when making a decision to authorise the absence, all circumstances should be considered, such as safeguarding risks, levels of attainment, history of attendance and also the previous 190 day's (equivalent to 1 academic year), if attendance is above the school's average i.e, 95% and they consider there to be exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may be more likely to authorise the request as it is deemed that the pupil has "regular attendance".

Where term time leave is taken for 3 or more consecutive days, and not authorised by the Headteacher, A school letter must be sent to the parent/carer informing that the leave is not authorised **(Template 6)**SCHOOL ACTION TTL LETTER A Local Authority Term Time Leave Leaflet could also be included
TTL LEAFLET

Where the leave has been taken and the parents have returned, a referral can be made to SASS, the attendance threshold for the referral to be actioned is 92%. A CFAN is completed with all supporting documents attached, i.e., registration certificates for the previous 190 days from the date the pupil returns to school showing the "G" code for 3 days or more, the parent's request and the school's letter advising that the leave is unauthorised. This is sent to SASSDuty **(Template 7)**CFAN

Daily absence enquiries/SASS contact request

Where the pupil has failed to attend school with no contact from the parent/carer. The school should call the parent/carers numbers on each day of absence, if no response any additional contact numbers on file should be tried. School staff can also carry out home visits to establish the pupil's reason for absence. **Where there are other services involved such as Children's Social Care and Family Support, they should be contacted to discuss the absence and establish when the pupil was last seen.**

On the **third** consecutive day of school absence, the parent/carer has failed to respond to all enquires and the pupil's whereabouts are unknown, a referral should be made through the Portal requesting for the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) to make contact/home visit. The referral should outline the contact attempts made by school, and include an attendance certificate showing the absences, all contact details, and any siblings who attend other schools should be included.

Schools must copy in SASS Duty and the school daily absence enquiry calls will continue. **If the concerns are deemed to be in relation to Safeguarding/Child Protection, please contact Children's Social Care directly.**

Once the referral has been received, the allocated officer will call, text WhatsApp and email the parent/carer and any additional contacts available, to establish the reason for absence. **Where a response is received the school will be updated and the referral closed.**

Where no response is received, a home visit is conducted. <u>In order for a home visit to be conducted on the same day, the referral must be received by the officer before 1.30pm.</u> The school will be notified of the outcome of the visit within 24 hours.

5 days after the home visit is made and absence has continued the officer will conduct checks. <u>The school process for non-attendance should be considered and proceed</u>.

Where the school and Local Authority have exhausted all reasonable enquires to establish the whereabouts of a pupil, the school should consider if the criteria (Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) have been met for the pupil to be removed from the school roll. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.