Heckmondwike Grammar School

Policy: School Attendance

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HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance Policy

Contents

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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Simon Taylor and can be contacted by telephone on 01924 402202 or via email at staylor@heckgrammar.co.uk

3.4   The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer 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 Mrs Sharon Nicholson and can be contacted by telephone on 01924 402202 or via email at snicholson@heckgrammar.co.uk

3.5   Form tutors and Class teachers

Form tutors and Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office during morning registration and at the beginning of each lesson.

3.6   School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer or Head of Year 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 and every timetabled lesson on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the first 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 every day and every timetabled session on time
- The parents of sixth form students should call the school to report their absence on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

4.   <u>Recording attendance</u>

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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15 pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school or using the 'report an absence' button on the school website.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3   Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment using the 'report an absence' button on the school website.

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 by using the 'leave of absence' button on the school website. Headteacher's may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

4.4   Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Lateness without good reason will result in a negative being issued. Repeated negatives for lateness will result in a detention being issued.

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 carry out a home visit or contact external agencies for support.
- 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 accessing external agencies for support

4.6   Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at the end of each half-term

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. 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 via the 'leave of absence' button on the school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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
- Examination leave

5.2   Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 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.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, Under section 444 of the Education Act, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record. If a school attendance improvement contract has been signed, failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered.

If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel, the matter is heard in Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record.

6.   <u>Strategies for promoting attendance</u>

Excellent attendance is celebrated by form tutors and by Heads of Year in termly celebration assemblies. Students and parents receive letters of congratulation on a half-termly basis where attendance is 98% or above in the academic year.

7.   Attendance monitoring

Half-termly attendance letters identify those students who require additional support with attendance. Where a student's attendance is between 92-95% at the end of a half-term, they will meet their form tutor weekly throughout the following half-term to check in on attendance and discuss any support needed. Where a student's attendance is below 92%, this weekly meeting will be with their Head of Year.

7.1   Monitoring attendance

School will;

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- 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

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

School will;

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, Heads of Year 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:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by AHT (attendance lead) 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
Attending the school		
/	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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil for educational provision
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
B	Off-site approved educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence for the purposes of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Pupil absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable has been granted leave of absence
D	Dual registered at another school	Pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the child is travelling with them.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

E	Suspended or permanently Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes		
Q	Unable to attend the school	Due to lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend the school	Due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend the school	Due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend the school	Due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend the school	Due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend the school	As pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend the school	In accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend the school	Because of any other unavoidable cause
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not yet established	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	Absent in other of unknown circumstances	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
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day