

# Attendance Policy

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Rationale and Aims

It is the right of every young person to receive full-time education. Young people who fail to attend school regularly cannot receive a coherent education program as absence disturbs the continuity of the curriculum and also damages social relationships. Young people with poor attendance records will inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits.

Research shows that good attendance and punctuality go hand in hand with good examination results and the positive life habits necessary for future success. Good attendance also reduces the risk of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Regular attendance also encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills.

The school displays a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality and values its partnership with parents/guardians to promote good attendance. This policy advocates close working relationships with all stakeholders to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance.

With this rationale in mind, Henlow CE Academy aims to:

- Ensure that all pupils are appropriately supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain at the highest possible levels.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, carers, staff and governors.
- Register pupils accurately and effectively.
- Maintain a high attendance record and a low unauthorised absence rate.
- Further develop a positive relationship between home and school.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to pupils and parents.
- Promote effective partnership with the School Attendance Officer (SAO) and other agencies.
- Encourage pupils to catch up with work missed.
- Encourage pupils to maintain high attendance levels by use of a reward system.
- Publish attendance figures for parents, carers and governors.
- Analyse attendance rates (%) and at pertinent points in the year certain attendance rates will trigger standard letters that will be sent to the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s).
- Analyse and report on sub groups as defined by the Headteacher and governors.

## **Attendance and the Law**

Under section 7 of the Education act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

In March 2001, a further offence has been introduced where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend school regularly, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444 (1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000). It is clear from the law that parents risk prosecution if their child does not attend school regularly. It is therefore important that the school and parents/carers work together closely to overcome problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that no term-time holidays are granted and as such these will ordinarily be denied. The Headteacher will consider granting leave of absences that are requested in advance and that have strong compassionate grounds. If leave of absence is taken without the school's approval, this will be viewed as an unauthorised absence.

The school will work closely with the Access and Inclusion Service where attendance or punctuality does not meet the school's expectations. The SAO visits regularly to support regular attendance and help remove barriers that might be preventing a pupil from accessing the education to which he/she is entitled.

## **Absences authorised by the school**

We will communicate with Parents/carers about planned absences such as Approved Educational Activity (AEA) and sporting fixtures by Parentmail/letter. In these cases parents/carers will be asked to complete a consent form.

## **Authorised unforeseen circumstances**

The school should be notified on the day of absence in the event of illness, bereavement or other family emergency or severe disruption to transport where there is no possible means of getting the pupil to school safely (e.g. very heavy snow), upon return to school the pupil should bring in a letter explaining the absence.

## **Planned absence which may be authorised**

These require a letter or email to the school office. This should be done six weeks prior to the absence. Examples of this include:

- Medical appointments that cannot be organised outside school time
- Occasional care for a family member if the pupil is a known young carer
- Religious holiday (guidelines state three days)
- Visit to another educational establishment (AEA)
- Occasional extra-curricular activity which gives the pupil significant benefit
- Attendance at a family wedding or funeral
- Court involvement

### **Term time Holiday**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations (The Education regulations 2013) remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and should determine the number of days a pupil can be absent if leave is permitted.

A parent/carer wishing to make a leave of absence application, must complete the Leave of Application Due to Exceptional Circumstances form which can be seen in appendix 1. If the leave of absence is refused but the leave of absence is still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice will be requested from Central Bedfordshire Council in accordance with their policy. You can find out more about the CBC approach to term time holidays at [https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil\\_support/522/school\\_attendance/6](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/522/school_attendance/6)

### **Appointments during school hours**

We do ask that parents try to avoid taking pupils out of school for medical appointments where possible, but recognise that this is not always possible. If it is unavoidable, pupils must sign out at the main office and provide written evidence. If regular appointments are necessary, for example orthodontic procedures, we ask that parents try to make these during school holidays.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

This is a term used by the DfE to denote an absence of greater than 10% for a pupil regardless of whether or not they are authorised. The links between poor attendance and poor attainment are well documented; any such levels of attendance will be reported to the SAO.

## **Missing Children Procedure (2012)**

A missing Child Referral Form should be used when a child 'disappears' e.g. when parents/carers move without providing a forwarding address, when it is suspected that a family has gone on an extended holiday without school agreement or when a child doesn't return within two weeks of the expected return date of a family holiday.

If the school has Child Protection (CP) concerns the school should contact social services and if the school suspects that a crime has been committed, then the school should contact the police. If a pupil is in this situation, the school will complete the Child Missing in Education form and submit it to Central Bedfordshire.

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ChildMissingEducation.ofml>

## **Procedure**

- An Electronic register will be completed during morning registration (08:45 -09:00) and at the beginning of Period 4 (13:35-13:55). It is a legal requirement that a register is taken twice daily and it is the responsibility of the tutor at these times to ensure that it is taken accurately. Staff take an electronic register in every lesson.
- If a pupil arrives later than the registration period, after 9.00am they will be given a late mark. If the pupil arrives after 9.15am, the register will have been closed and the pupil will receive an unauthorised mark and the parent/carer will need to provide a reason in writing.
- A pupil that arrives late and misses a registration will need to report to the main office and sign in.
- No pupil should leave school without permission. Any pupil that must leave school during the day (e.g. for an unavoidable medical appointment) must sign out at the main school office and, if they return to school before the end of the day, should sign back in at the main school office upon their return.
- In the event that a pupil is unwell, they should first report to the office (as directed by a member of staff). One of the first aiders will log their attendance to the medical office and contact parents/carers to advise them of the issue, together they will make the judgement about whether or not it is appropriate to send the pupil home.
- Parents/carers must contact the school office on the first morning of a pupil's absence (preferably before 09:00am) and on each subsequent day of absence. Parents should inform the school if the absence is likely to be for longer than 3 days in order that appropriate educational support can be organised. Upon return to school, a letter explaining absence should be handed in to the tutor who should send it to the school office via the registration boxes.
- Pupils whose attendance rate falls below 97% will be monitored by the Head of Year and the form tutor.

Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored by the school and School Attendance Officer. If following this intervention there is no improvement, advice will be sought from the school's Education Welfare Officer, as to what next steps should be taken. At this point, the implementation of the Local Authority penalty notice system will be considered if appropriate

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Attendance data is available on the Ofsted Schools Data Dashboard. Consultation will take place with school and the School Attendance Officer to develop and maintain the attendance policy. Certain attendance figures will trigger standardised letters at various points in the year; these will be sent to the pupil's parents/carers. Attendance procedures will be reviewed by the Headteacher and governors.

### **Implementation and Review**

This policy will be published on the school website and made known to parents/carers, staff and governors. A copy is available on request from the school office. This policy will be reviewed annually or as required.