



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Effective from: February 2022**

**Reviewed : February 2022**

**Next Review Due: September 2024**

*Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.*

School Attendance: Department for Education  
October 2014



## Article 28 : Your RIGHT to LEARN and to go to school

Heathland Whitefriars Federation expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. At Heathland Whitefriars Federation, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

### 1. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them

### 2. Rights and responsibilities



Article 3: Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child.

#### 2.1 The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance

## **2.2 Head Teacher:**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with School policies and procedures

## **2.3 Attendance Team**

- To take responsibility for attendance/punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings
- To meet with the DSL to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality
- To liaise with the LA and make referrals where necessary
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used effectively and having the desired impact
- Work with the teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required, the policy is approved by the Headteacher
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data from SIMS for the DSL to analyse
- To work with families with poor attendance and punctuality, putting measures in place to help improve this
- To organise meetings with outside agencies and parents of children with poor attendance and punctuality to put measures in place to support attendance and punctuality
- To maintain clear communication with the staff regarding attendance and punctuality within their classes
- To support the DSL with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- To report any instances of home-education and children moving abroad to the Local Authority
- To follow the LA Attendance System and liaise with the Court officer
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day of absence calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received
- To monitor weekly attendance data for classes
- To promptly inform the DSL if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To record reasons for absence on SIMS
- To implement the daily checking of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions
- To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy
- To report attendance in the termly census, as requested
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- To keep parents informed of school procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils

## **2.4 Teachers and Classroom Staff**

- To ensure quality first teaching every day with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system
- To take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMS system
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance

- To provide a welcoming and safe environment which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children
- To establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs
- To liaise with the DSL regarding any attendance concerns
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings

## 2.5 Parents

If a child is absent from school for any reason parents should telephone the School Office as soon as possible to report the reason for this absence. If the child is arriving late at school for any reason, parents should let the office know, preferably the day before. Medical appointments should be confirmed with an appointment card or letter. If a child is absent for 5 or more school days then medical evidence is required. Parents should try to schedule appointments out of school hours if at all possible

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child. This includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may impact on learning

## 2.6 The Local Authority

The LA through the Attendance Team is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment and involvement in entertainment and child protection

## 3. Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance



**Article 29: Your right to become the best that you can be.**

We aim to ensure that good attendance and punctuality (above 95%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school. We aim to do this in the following ways:

### 3.1 School Newsletter

The school newsletter/Heathland Hub is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality

### **3.2 School Attendance Board**

The board includes attendance information and the effect of poor attendance on educational outcomes. Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality, is also included.

### **3.3 Breakfast Club Daily**

The school offers a daily Breakfast Club. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:45am, ensuring they are on time for school.

### **3.4 The School Learning Environment**

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

### **3.5 Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

### **3.6 Attendance Rewards**

At the end of each week a certificate is given to the class with the highest attendance.

### **3.7 Sharing Attendance Data**

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

### **3.8 Parents Evenings**

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance.

### **3.9 Emails and Text Messages**

Parents of children who arrive to school late (after 9.00am) or are absent are sent a message to remind them of the importance of being on time and in school. This messages also indicates who they can speak to for help if they need further support with getting their child to school.

## **4. Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

### **4.1 Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

### **4.2 Morning Register**

Class registers remain open until 9:00am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and click 'save' on SIMS. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.00 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.00 am the register must be correct and submitted. From 9.00 am the school playground gate is closed. Children arriving between 9:00am and 9:20am are recorded as 'L' (late before

register closed) in the register. The office staff check that the children who have arrived late have been marked in the registers and correct any mistakes or input codes for children who are known to be absent. The School Office then begins first day absence calls. Children arriving after 9:20am are recorded as 'U' (late after register closed) in the register.

#### **4.3 Afternoon Register**

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

#### **4.4 School Attendance Letters**

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality.

#### **4.5 Punctuality**

Emails are sent daily to parents whose children arrive at school late (after 9.00am). The Attendance Team monitor punctuality regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited into school to discuss the concerns with the DSL.

#### **4.6 Monitoring First Day Absence**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made.

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Speak to the parents/ carer face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The Attendance Team must establish a reason for every absence.

#### **4.7 Attendance Meetings**

The DSL monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 90% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance are invited to work in partnership with the school.

## **5. Exceptional Circumstances**



### **Article 28: Your right to learn and go to school.**

In line with The DfE guidance, and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is authorised by the headteacher due to exceptional circumstances only. It is not a parental right to take leave during term time. Parents must make a request for leave during term time giving the exceptional circumstances for the request and it is at the headteacher's discretion to determine whether that request should be granted.

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil

Any parent requiring an absence for their child for an exceptional reason should complete the application for exceptional leave of absence form at least two weeks prior to the time they wish to have leave.

Please note, holidays during term term will not be authorised and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

## 6. Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Headteacher’s authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken by the Local Authority

### Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school.

- The amount of the penalty is £60.
- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to their attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: “If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.” The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child
- ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her
- These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record

For more information please see: <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23603/school-attendance-and-intervention-model-policy.pdf>

<b>Related documentation</b>	All safeguarding related policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>○ Keeping Children Safe in Education</li> <li>○ Special Educational Needs Policy</li> </ul>
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