

# Attendance Policy

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<b>Author:</b>	<b>Assistant Headteacher</b>
<b>Approved by the Board of Trustees:</b>	<b>September 2022</b>

## Key Details

<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mrs N Bibby</b>
<b>Chair of Trustees:</b>	<b>Mrs R Whipps</b>
<b>Deputy Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mr A Edwards</b>
<b>Assistant Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mrs K Ashwood</b>
<b>Attendance Officer:</b>	<b>Mrs J Robinson</b>

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# 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Constructive, prompt and effective two-way communication is vital if this is to be achieved.

We aim for all students to achieve at least 96% attendance during the academic year.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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 alternative educational provision
- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day to commence learning at 8.45am.

The register for the first session (Form registration) will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 10.30am. The register for the second session will be taken during Period 4.

### 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6) and on each day of the absence unless the period of absence has already been agreed.

This should be done by telephoning the school on 01652 648276.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

If an absence pattern or concern arises regarding attendance, absences for illness may not be authorised. The school reserves the right to contact parents or visit the home as and when necessary.

### 3.3 Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to absences due to exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement or a pre-agreed part-time timetable.

Exclusion from attending school is recorded as an authorised absence.

### 3.4 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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 and either attend school for part of the day/return to complete the school day.

*Parents should telephone the school, email via the school admin email address or send a letter in advance to their child's form tutor or the school attendance officer. [jrobinson@huntcliffschool.co.uk](mailto:jrobinson@huntcliffschool.co.uk)*

Replace with

Parents should telephone the school or send a letter to the attendance officer with evidence in advance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### 3.5 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed 10.30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed 10.30am will be marked as late after registration, using the appropriate code (U).

All pupils who arrive late need to sign in through reception to ensure they are recorded as late on the register.

Students who are consistently late will be placed on punctuality report to their form tutor and may be asked to repay the time at break or after school.

### 3.6 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

On the first day of unreported absence this will initially be done via text, message on school Gateway app and/or email. This may also be followed up by telephone or in some cases a home visit will be made.

The school operates a daily absence notification procedure. Parents are expected to inform the school each day a child is ill, including if a child was sent home the previous day through illness, unless the length of absence period has been agreed by the attendance officer.

### 3.7 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents via student academic tracking reports which are issued twice yearly. Parents can request attendance figures from the school at any time by telephone or via the school admin email address.

## 4. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

'Exceptional circumstances' are at the discretion of the Headteacher and not a parental right.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3.
- 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.

Unauthorised absences which will not be approved includes incidents such as

- missing the school bus
- birthdays or weddings
- concerts
- illness where a child is considered well enough to attend school
- holidays taken without prior authorisation of the Headteacher.

## 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is pivotal in supporting all students to make the best possible educational progress, and as such rewards are provided as follows:

- All students with 100% attendance for the previous week, will be entered in to a prize draw. There will be a weekly prize draw for every year group.
- Letters may be sent to parents half termly for all students demonstrating improved attendance.
- Half termly celebrations may be held in school for all students with 100% attendance or showing a significant improvement in attendance.
- All students with 100% attendance at the end of the school year attend a celebration event and are entered into a prize raffle.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to notify the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

**For safeguarding purposes, the school operates a daily absence notification procedure. Parents are expected to inform the school each day a child is absent. This includes if a child was collected from school the previous day through illness, unless the length of absence period has already been agreed by the attendance officer.**

If a pupil is absent we will discuss the reasons for this with the parent/carer.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education inclusion officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Board of Trustees.

The termly report to the Board of Trustees includes data on all monitored groups of students. This analysis is completed half-termly and identifies given reasons for absence, strategies employed to support students and parents and also the numbers of students showing an improvement in attendance.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Board of Trustees.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher, Senior Management and the Pastoral Support Officers
- Works with Education Inclusion Services to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Makes home visits.
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class Teachers/Form Tutors**

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

### **7.5 Office Staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion). At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trustee Board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy which is displayed on the school website.

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## Appendix 2 – Letters (SC001)

Dear

**Student Name:**

**DOB:**

At Huntcliff School we are committed to providing high quality education and improving outcomes for all our pupils. In order for a child to reach their full potential, we expect a high level of school attendance, so they are able to maximise their learning and achievement.

I enclose a copy of <<insert pupil name's>> attendance record which shows an attendance of << insert % attendance>> from <<insert date>> to <<insert date>>

We would like every pupil to aspire to achieving 100% attendance and would like to express our initial concerns regarding your son/daughter's attendance level. It is appreciated young people sometimes become unwell, but as parents it is important to be aware of the level of your child's school attendance, as it may have a detrimental effect on their educational attainment.

I will continue to monitor <<insert pupil's name>> attendance and, with your co-operation, I would anticipate an improvement. I may take the opportunity to speak with your child in school should I feel this is an appropriate action in raising attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, or are experiencing any difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

<<< Insert Name >>>>

**Headteacher**

Enc: Registration Certificate

## **Appendix 2 – Letters (SC002)**

Dear

Student Name:

DOB

You may recall my letter dated <enter date of last letter> expressing concern with <<insert pupil name's>> current level of attendance. Since that letter there has not been the anticipated improvement as the attendance remains a cause of concern at << insert % attendance>>.

We therefore would like to work with you regarding any issues impacting upon your child accessing their educational opportunities. We can offer a variety of support, interventions and actions in order to improve their school attendance for this current academic year.

As a school, we strive for all our pupils to achieve 100% attendance and we ask that you as the parent support this. Secure, regular school attendance, will support your child to achieve their aspirations, improving their life opportunities for the future. As the parent you have a legal obligation and parental responsibility to support your child to achieve this. Under Section 444(1/1A) of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence for a parent to fail to secure the regular school attendance of their child.

We must also advise you that it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether an absence is authorised or not, taking into account the reasons provided. Due to <<insert pupil name's>> continued irregular school attendance; we now require medical confirmation to support any future absences. We will accept this in the form of a doctor's letter, a copy of a prescription for medication, or the packaging containing the child's name.

Once we are in receipt of this information the Headteacher will then be able to make an informed decision based on the evidence provided on whether or not to authorise the absence. No further absences will be authorised without appropriate evidence being provided to school within 10 days of the initial absence.

Please note, unauthorised absences are used as evidence for the consideration of any statutory action including prosecution in the Magistrates court under Section 444(1/1A) of the Education act 1996, or issuing of a penalty notice i.e. fine (£120 per adult per child, reducing to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt).

We look forward to seeing positives changes in <<insert pupil name's>> of child school attendance, supported by yourself as the parent.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 2 – Letters (SC005)

Dear

**Student Name:**

**DOB**

Further to my previous correspondence I am disappointed that <child's name> school attendance is still a cause for concern. I have enclosed a copy of the registration certificate which identifies that <child name> has ..... % attendance from <date> to <date>. There are ..... unauthorised absences during this period.

“

Include here what has been offered – this is a summary of your evidence so far which needs to be detailed. This needs to show to the courts that sufficient non judgemental efforts have been made to support the family with any needs in order to secure attendance

For example:

- I invited you to a meeting on <insert date> which you failed to attend and did not give apologies/called to cancel/were not at home when I visited. Please note: (it is always advisable to undertake a home visit particularly when legal proceedings/penalty notices may be instigated)
- A Support Plan was put in place to assist you in securing <child's name>'s attendance but you have failed to engage with the services offered/I have not seen any sustained effort in making the changes required/despite several reviews taking place .....
- I have attempted to contact you on <date>, <date> and <date> when your child was absent from school but have not received any communication from you/have received explanations for the absences but these were not supported by any medical confirmation as requested. As per our policy <put where this is> we ask that parents contact the school on the first day

”  
of any absence.

I must advise you that it is an offence under the Education Act 1996 if a parent or carer fails to secure the regular school attendance of a registered pupil. This matter will be passed to the Education Inclusion Service for consideration of the relevant statutory action, which could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

I would like to meet with you <at home/at school> on <date> at <time> which will give us the opportunity to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

**Headteacher**