



Attendance (students)

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Purpose, Values and Aims of Highfields School

Our Core Purpose

To be an inclusive, happy community that values every individual and inspires them to achieve their full potential.

Our Values

Inclusion, fairness and equality
Respect and tolerance
Celebration of achievement
Personal reflection, honesty and mutual trust
Care for our environment

Aims – to achieve our core purpose and values we aim to:

- Respect all students and staff as individuals
- Celebrate diversity and promote equality
- Provide appropriate levels of challenge
- Develop understanding and enjoyment of learning
- Support and encourage individuals to make a valuable contribution to society
- Be a reflective school seeking continuous improvement
- Play an active part in our community
- Nurture physical and emotional well being
- Promote a happy, safe and stable environment



1. Summary

- This policy explains Highfields School's Attendance policy.
- The responsibilities of staff and Governors are stated.
- It includes definitions of authorised and unauthorised absence.

2. Purpose

To interpret legislation, directives and advice on the attendance of students for Highfields School.

3. Scope

This document applies to all students in school.

4. Implementation & Process

4.1 Introduction

Regular attendance is essential if students are to:

- Progress effectively in their learning;
- Enjoy the satisfaction of worthwhile achievement;
- Gain full benefit from the wider opportunities available;
- Establish and sustain friendships;
- Demonstrate reliability essential for future progression;
- Avoid the drift into anti-social behaviour which can arise from excessive unstructured time;
- Benefit from the safeguards that attendance at school can provide

4.2 Aims

1. To promote the regular attendance of all students through both positive encouragement and close monitoring.
2. To promote punctual attendance at the beginning of each session and attendance throughout each day.
3. To impress on parents/carers and students the importance and benefits of regular attendance.
4. To promote the same high levels of attendance in the Sixth Form.

We strive for excellent attendance to help students make as much progress as possible and to gain benefit from the wider aspects of education.

Government research says that where attendance levels fall below 95% a students' academic performance and achievement is badly affected.

4.3 Approach

1. To ensure efficient and effective systems of registering, monitoring, checking and follow-up.
2. To liaise closely with parents/carers, the Student and the Educational Welfare Officer when problems of attendance and time-keeping begin to emerge.

3. To respond actively to all absences and covering notes which give cause for concern.
4. To set annual targets for high levels of attendance and monitor progress towards these targets.

4.4 Actions

1. Effective regular monitoring of attendance and time-keeping including accurate registration, late arrivals check, analysis to establish trends in non-attendance.
2. Electronic registration in every lesson. Attendance registers are a legal document - as are the school attendance records. The codes used are national codes. If a student arrives late, after the close of the register, without good reason they will receive a 'U' mark. This will be classed as an unauthorised absence from school. Students who arrive before the close of the register will receive an 'L'.
3. First day absence calls or My Ed messages sent by Year Managers to verify absence, medical/dental appointments and targeted calls to parents/carers of students whose attendance has caused concern or to the parents/carers of students who are vulnerable for other reasons.
4. Follow-up procedures in the event of absences/repeated lateness (after close of registers):
 - follow up of unexplained and unexpected absence for safeguarding and educational reasons;
 - insistence on presentation of an explanation from parent/carer or official medical/dental appointment card;
 - immediate interview with pastoral staff if an absence is suspicious;
 - letter sent to parent/carer when attendance is below the school target;
 - parents/carers notified of unauthorised absence; interviews arranged if appropriate and support provided if necessary;
 - referring students to an Attendance Panel when deemed necessary;
5. Sanctions imposed can include penalty notices to parents/carers. Penalty notices can be used in a range of circumstances. In particular, they can be used:
 - where it is clear that parents/carers could ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time but they are not willing to do so.
 - From September 2024 where a holiday is taken in term time without the school's permission. Any leave of absence can only be for exceptional reasons and is authorised on a case by case basis.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority based on information provided by the school.

6. Close on-going liaison with parents/carers of students known to be vulnerable or potential non-attenders.
7. Close liaison with relevant outside agencies.
8. Building the confidence and self-esteem of potential poor attenders through close and regular contact with members of the Pastoral team or other advisers as appropriate.

9. Supporting poor attenders through individual target setting and reviews with pastoral staff and the educational welfare officer. Provide praise and rewards for particularly strong attendance.

10. Removing students from the Attendance Register

Schools can only remove a student's name from the attendance register when they are confirmed as starting at another school or with permission of the Local Education Authority if the student is to be home educated or has been permanently excluded from the school. If a child has had 10 sessions of unexplained continuous absence they should be reported through Starting Point to the child protection services.

4.5 The Legal Position

The parents/carers of registered students of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and punctually, and will be committing an offence if they fail in this duty.

The DFE Guidance states that the school should refer unauthorised absences to the Local Authority who have the legal power to impose fixed penalty notices. Fixed penalty notices may be imposed for persistent non-attendance or unauthorised absences.

It is only the school who can authorise an absence.

What does “authorised” absence mean?

- Illness – we may occasionally ask for an appointment card or prescription to confirm this.
- Emergency dental/medical appointments. (Routine appointments should be made wherever possible after school hours or in the school holidays.)
- A day of religious observance.
- Family bereavement.
- Attending an interview for college or work experience placement.
- Absence due to “exceptional circumstances” if approved by the Headteacher and within the guidelines of the Local Authority.

What does “unauthorised” absence mean?

Examples would include:

- Looking after members of the family
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Absences taken without prior application
- Running errands
- Persistent minor ailments without the support of a doctor's note.
- Lateness after the close of morning register

Unauthorised absences are classed as truancy; where the school has not given permission for the student to be absent. Deliberate truancy and repeated lateness is punished by detentions after school to make up the time that was missed. The absence can also be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

A note from a parent/carer when there are unauthorised circumstances will not change the absence to “authorised”.

Persistent Absence – DFE definition

“Persistent absence” refers to absence of more than 10%. or where actual attendance is less than 90%.

ALL absences have a negative impact on a student’s attendance record and may result in them being identified as “persistently absent” and subject to close scrutiny by school.

It does not matter whether the absence is authorised in exceptional circumstances, illness or medical appointments or is an unauthorised absence due to truancy, school refusal or other unexplained absence.

Late arrival after the register has closed – DFE definition

“Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session.

A student arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.” Highfields register closes at 9.15am every school day.

5. Consultation Process

Each policy is reviewed by the lead Senior Leadership Team member and relevant link governor before being presented to Highfields governing board for approval.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Governors are responsible for

- Ensuring that this policy is in place, is continually monitored and reviewed periodically by the Governors student and community group.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.
- Ensuring that any complaints arising from this policy are dealt with in accordance with the School’s Complaints Policy.

6.2 The Headteacher is responsible for

- Implementing this policy.
- Ensuring staff, students and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities within this policy, eliciting their support for it and allowing them an opportunity to comment on its effectiveness.
- Providing training for anyone with responsibilities in this policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of the policy and reporting to governors, periodically, on these matters.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.

6.3 All Staff are responsible for

Implementing the Attendance Policy and particular attention to attendance issues will be provided by pastoral staff including Form Tutors, Year Managers, Heads of Year and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

7 Monitoring, evaluation and Policy review

We will collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

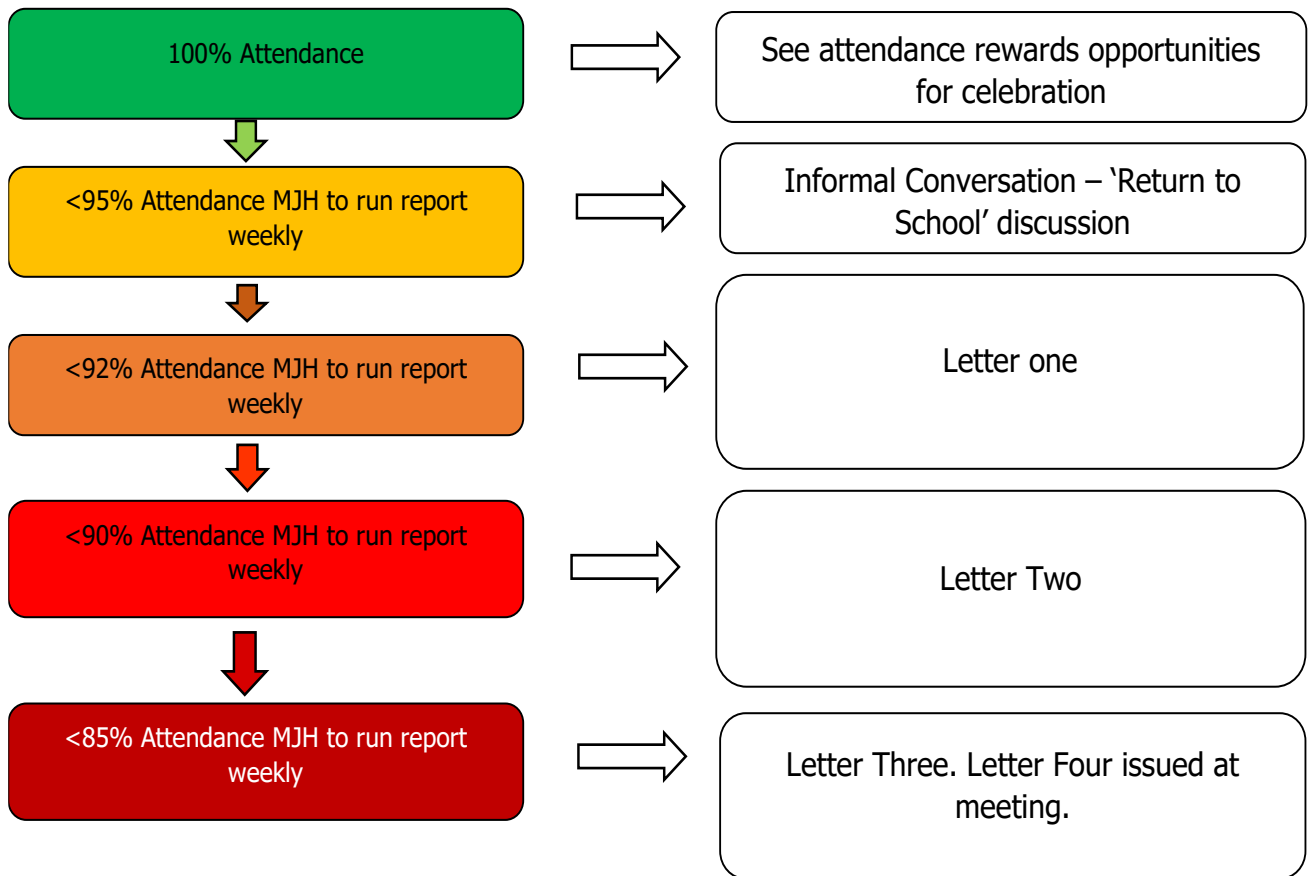
8 Associated Documents

8.1 **Associated Policies**

Supporting students with medical conditions
Behaviour & discipline policy

8.2 **Appendices**

Attendance Intervention Map: Procedure and System



*% attendance is guidance only, in T1 letters may be issued at two periods of absence

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Form available from the school website and handed in 2 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.