



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

ATTENDANCE

Aspiration – Respect – Excellence

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
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HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

ATTENDANCE

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy/policies:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion

Introduction

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre recognises that every child has a right to a full-time education and there is an indisputable link between school attendance and academic outcomes. Our aim is to maintain a culture of high attendance by having clear expectations understood by all stakeholders. This policy sets out those expectations together with the procedures and responsibilities for delivering outstanding attendance across all year groups and cohorts in compulsory education.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring the daily attendance of all students and for ensuring that attendance registers are completed by staff according to statutory guidance. The Attendance Officer is supported by the Attendance Assistant who has delegated responsibility for following up on unexplained absences and making first day phone calls. The senior leader who champions attendance across the academy is

Dr S L Capaldi (Associate Deputy Headteacher (Culture and Attitude))
hsc@highdown.reading.sch.uk

The Attendance Officer works closely with the Head of Achievement in each year group to promote outstanding attendance and to meet with key students and their families to remove barriers to attendance. In addition, the Assistant Head of Achievement in each year group has a delegated responsibility to oversee and support attendance for the cohort of disadvantaged students in their care.

The Attendance Officer and the Senior Leader (Attendance Champion) work cooperatively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team to put in supportive action plans and targets for students with persistent¹ and/or severe² absenteeism. A representative of the School Attendance Support Team meets three times per academic year with the Attendance Officer and the Senior Leader (Attendance

¹ Persistent is lower than 90 % attendance.

² Severe is lower than 60 % attendance.

Champion) to review statutory documentation (including registers) and attendance levels across the academy.

The Headteacher remains ultimately responsible for student attendance within the academy. There is a named Link Governor who will review policy and procedures with the Senior Leader (Attendance Champion).

Reporting and Recording Absence

- All students must be registered daily once in the morning and again at a designated time following a lunch break.
- In law, it is the **parent's responsibility** to provide evidence for illness or other reasons for absence. Parents are expected to report and qualify any absence for their children via the Attendance module of Class Charts before the start of the academy day. If the academy is not satisfied with the reason given, then further documented proof will be requested.
- Only the Headteacher or his/her representative can authorise absence. Whilst parents can give reasons for absence, the academy will judge the acceptability of the reason and whether to authorise the absence.
- The Attendance Officer will ensure that the attendance register is coded³ accurately and in a timely fashion when absence is authorised and for amending N codes (missing marks) to O where absence is unexplained, or the reasons given not authorised.
- Parents are notified, **on the same day**, via Class Charts, Parent Mail, telephone call and ultimately by written warning where absences remain unexplained.
- Parents, students and teachers have access to up-to-date information about attendance via the Class Charts app. Summative information about attendance is included in student reports issued at three key information points during the academic year.

Promoting Outstanding Attendance

Parents and students are regularly informed about the link between attendance and outcomes both from national data but also for our academy's cohort. Opportunities to underline the importance of attendance are:

- Excellence Evenings for parents and students at the beginning of each academic year,
- Year group assemblies led by senior leaders and Heads of Achievement,
- House assemblies held six times per year promoting the inter-house competition for attendance and punctuality,
- Form mentors weekly session to promote attendance within their group,
- Student challenges e.g. Year 11 Springboard to Success,
- Parent information letters,
- Individual Highdown Excellence Plans and Highdown Excellence Plans+.

Tackling unauthorised absence and absenteeism

³ Appendix 1

Applications for leave of absence during term time must be made in advance by the parent/carer directly to the Headteacher (see Leave of Absence form, Appendix 2). Leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and parents will be made aware that taking unauthorised absence leave of absence could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution. Holiday will not be authorised in term time.

- After 15 school sessions are missed, the Attendance Officer, in conjunction with the Local Authority, will initiate the process to issue a Fixed Penalty notice.
- If a child is missing from academy for more than 3 consecutive days (and there are no exceptional circumstances) the Attendance Officer will arrange to visit the child for a Welfare Check in conjunction with a member of the Attendance or Pastoral Teams. See Home Visit procedures, Appendix 3.
- **The academy may delete a student from the academy roll after 20 days, of continuous unauthorised absence, but only if both the academy and the Local Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the student is, and the child is not absent because of sickness or any unavoidable cause. (See Child Missing Education (CME), Appendix 4)**
- The Attendance Officer and the Head of Achievement meet fortnightly to review attendance trends for all students in the year group. Where a student's attendance has dipped below 95 %, reasons and evidence are evaluated, and supportive actions agreed. For students whose attendance has fallen below 90 % but above 80 %, without exceptional circumstances, actions are agreed, and targets set with students and parents. Head of Achievement and the Attendance Officer continue to monitor in their fortnightly cycle. [See Appendix 5]
- If attendance has fallen to 80 %, academy attendance meetings are held with students and parents to agree targets for rapid improvement, these are monitored fortnightly. See Appendix 5.
- When attendance does not improve following academy intervention, then additional actions are taken in conjunction with the School Attendance Support Team which include:
 - Information letters
 - Warning letters
 - Attendance Panels
 - Fixed penalty notices
 - Legal action
- During any communication with student and parents, it is stressed that the academy is looking to work together to improve attendance and that suitable referrals to outside agencies, such as Early Help, for additional support could be helpful. The student's voice is key to improvement and all action plans will be made in line with therapeutic and trauma informed best practice.
- The Attendance Officer and the Head of Achievement will pay attention to the additional needs of key cohorts of students during their fortnightly reviews. Where attendance is falling for students with additional needs, any communication and actions will involve the SENCO or the Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) who has the overview for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually. The purpose of this monitoring and review is to ensure that the academy continue to comply with statutory guidance and best practice.

Appendix 1: Registration Codes

| Code | Description |
|---|---|
| Present | |
| / | Present (AM) |
| \ | Present (PM) |
| L | Late (before register closes) |
| Authorised absence | |
| C | Other authorised circumstance (not covered by another appropriate code/description, e.g. bereavement, caring for sick or disabled family member – young carer, agreed special occasions, public performances) |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) |
| H | Family Holiday (agreed) (not in excess of 10 school days in an academic year or approved extended absence - see LA Extended Leave Policy) |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments) |
| M | Medical and Dental appointments |
| R | Religious Observance (for the religious body to which parents belong) |
| S | Study Leave – should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations and would recommend this does not exceed a maximum of 15 school days in Year 11 |
| T | Traveller Absence (child in process of travelling) |
| Approved educational activity - Not counted as absence for DfE or other statistical purposes | |
| B | Educated Off Site by another education provider (NOT Dual registration) |
| D | Dual Registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment) |
| J | Interview |
| P | Approved sporting activity (participation in/attendance at) |
| V | Educational Visit (UK/overseas) |
| W | Work Experience – under Section 560 Education Act, 1996 |
| Unauthorised absence | |
| @ | DO NOT USE |
| G | Unauthorised Leave of Absence (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) |
| N | No reason yet provided (this should be changed to relevant code to indicate either authorised or unauthorised absence) |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) |
| U | Late (after register has closed) |
| Pupils not required to attend | |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence |
| Y | Enforced closure |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll |
| ! | DfE X: Non-compulsory school age absence |
| # | School closed to pupils |
| * | DfE Z: Pupil not on roll |

Appendix 2 – Request for Leave of Absence

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please read notes below and complete all sections of the form

This form is to be completed and forwarded to the Headteacher of the school. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Headteacher will only authorise in exceptional circumstances and will consider the effect on the continuity of the child's learning and overall attendance.

The application should be made **well in advance**.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for unauthorised activities during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for each child.

PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

I request that leave of absence be granted to:

Name _____ Mentor Group _____

From (first day of absence) _____ to

(last day of absence) _____

Signature of Parent/Carer _____

Date _____

Have you requested leave of absence from school before? Yes / No

Are your child's punctuality and attendance both good? Yes / No

- Reason for request and details about what makes this an exceptional circumstance:

Appendix 3 – HSP141 Home Visit

A home visit may be arranged by Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre when there are good reasons why a student (or a family member) cannot come to a meeting on site or when it is necessary to perform a Safe and Well Check to ensure that a young person is safeguarded whilst not attending school.

Rationale

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre recognises the importance of supporting students and families and that on some occasions it may be appropriate to visit a family at home. In general, a visit will be arranged when a student cannot or will not attend school and reasonable attempts have been made by phone, letter and email to resolve the matter. By visiting the student at home, it is possible both to ensure that the young person is safeguarded and well but also to work together to put plans and interventions in place to ensure a return to school.

Objectives

- Appropriate strategies are in place to increase attendance and to safeguard all students
- All students receive the required amount of support in order that learning can continue during any time of absence
- Strategies are put in place to quickly reintegrate students who are school refusing. Appropriate referrals are made where students need intervention from professionals and outside agencies. Parents are supported to help their child overcome the barriers which have led to refusal.
- Close links are maintained through open communication so that the student remains included in the Highdown community.

Reasons for a home visit

- A student has been excluded
- Concern that a student is a Child Missing Education (see below)
- A student has been absent for 5 consecutive days without a medical note/certificate
- A student has a long-term illness
- Is school refusing or has poor attendance
- Valid reasons why a parent cannot attend a meeting on the school site

Procedure

- The visit is planned with the Attendance Officer and DHT (Culture and Attitude) ensuring that all are aware of family circumstances and background and religious or cultural factors which may be important. A Risk Assessment is performed using all the best knowledge of the family, location and the needs of the young person.
- The family is contacted by phone or email to indicate that a visit is planned. Usually a mutually convenient time will be agreed but the Attendance Officer reserves the right to perform a 'spot check' to check on the welfare of a young person.
- Two members of staff will visit the home (usually Attendance Officer and DHT (Culture and Attitude) but could be AHT (Inclusion), SENDCO, HOA, DSL/DSO).
- The members of staff sign out at reception ensuring that they have informed the Office Manager of the address they are visiting and leaving a mobile phone number and an expected time of return. All staff should have a Highdown badge.

- Minutes are taken of the meeting and these are stored in the student file and sent to the parent with the agreed plan for the young person. Any safeguarding concerns are passed to the DSL at the earliest possible opportunity.
- If no one is home at the time of the visit, a short letter (on headed notepaper) is posted through the door stating the date and time a visit was made and a safeguarding referral is made on return to school.
- If staff have any concerns for their own safety or well-being during the visit, they should terminate the visit and return to school and report the problem immediately to a member of the ASG.
- Staff should sign back in at Reception on return to school and telephone the office if they are going to be late back for any reason.
- If staff do not return by the expected time and have not telephoned school, the Office Manager should call the number left at reception and inform a member of the ASG if contact has not been made.

Appendix 4 – Child Missing Education

If a young person moves out of the Borough to known whereabouts but notification has not been received that the child has been registered at a new school then, after 20 school days have elapsed, the student is removed from roll when:

- Brighter Futures for Children have been informed,
- The Common Transfer Form has been completed and submitted to www.teachersnet.go.uk

If a young person has moved away to unknown whereabouts and every effort has been made to locate the family (through council tax records, police inquiry for instance) then, after 20 school days have elapsed, the student is removed from roll and

- Brighter Futures for Children have been informed in accordance with the 2016 Document Children Missing Education⁴
- Where applicable, notify allocated Social Workers or the Social Care Access and Assessment Team
- The Common Transfer Form has been completed for a 'lost pupil' and submitted to the DfE's S2S secure site.
- Inform CME cme@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Appendix 5 – Academy Procedures for Persistent Absenteeism

