HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Aspiration. Respect. Excellence

GLF

Where Children Grow, Learn and Flourish

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

School Attendance Guidance

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre

POLICY OWNER	Headteacher	MONITORING & EVALUATION BY	
SSB APPROVAL		DATE APPROVED	
PERIOD FOR REVIEW	Annually	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	July 2027
POLICY TYPE	Public document	PUBLICATION	School website

PURPOSE AND LINK TO TRUST POLICY

1.1. This policy should be read alongside the GLF Schools Attendance and Punctuality Policy, which sets out the Trust-wide approaches, statutory requirements and guiding principles. This policy applies to all pupils on roll at Highdown School, including Sixth form pupils.

1.2. This school policy provides local information for families and staff, including:

- Key contact details
- How to report an absence
- Support available
- Local authority procedures for leave and legal intervention

2. OUR ATTENDANCE ETHOS

2.1. At Highdown, we believe that attendance is central to learning, wellbeing and belonging. We are committed to:

- Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where all pupils feel they belong
- Working in partnership with families to support strong attendance
- Identifying barriers early and responding with care, understanding and appropriate support
- Maintaining high expectations alongside a supportive, individualised approach

3. KEY ATTENDANCE CONTACTS

3.1. Families are encouraged to make contact as early as possible if they have concerns about their child's attendance. This enables opportunities for early support, discussion of barriers and timely intervention before concerns become more established.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Champion	Ms L Matthews	head@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Miss H Smith	hesmith@highdown.reading.sch.uk
SENCO	Mrs J Arnold	hjf@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Dr S Capaldi	hsc@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 7	Miss S Pearce	sapearce@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 8	Mr M Flynn	maflynn@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 9	Mr A Gordon	algordon@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 10	Miss S Bonnett	sabonnett@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 11	Mr P Arnold	paarnold@highdown.reading.sch.uk
Head of Achievement Year 12	Mr K Prior	hkp@highdown.reading.sch.uk

4. HOW TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

4.1. Parents and carers must inform school, at their earliest opportunity, on the first day of their child's absence and each day thereafter.

4.2. Absence can be reported by using the Class Charts app - ClassCharts Parent App

4.3. Where no reason is received, the school will follow up with parents and carers to establish the reason for absence and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. This may include first-day calling and repeated contact attempts.

4.4. Home visits or welfare checks may also be completed as part of the school's wider attendance support and follow-up procedures, or where there is a known safeguarding concern.

4.5. Where absence relates to illness or a medical appointment, the school may request reasonable evidence where there is doubt about the reason for absence. Wherever possible, appointments should be made outside the school day and pupils should miss the minimum amount of learning time necessary.

4.6. Where a pupil is absent from school, learning is not routinely provided for completion at home. This is because teaching, explanation, feedback and support are most effective when pupils are in school. Where absence is longer-term or linked to medical needs, the school will consider appropriate support on a case-by-case basis.

5. PUNCTUALITY

5.1. One of the most important parts of helping pupils thrive at school is being at school on every day possible and on time. Arriving on time ensures that pupils do not miss vital learning opportunities and they can begin their day calmly.

5.2. Our school day starts at: 08.40

5.3. If a pupil arrives at school after 08.40, this will be recorded as late.

5.4. If a pupil arrives at school after 09.10 (close of register), this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and directly impacts their attendance percentage.

5.5. In exceptional circumstances, late arrivals may be authorised. This would typically require parents and carers to notify the attendance team using Class Charts and provide supporting evidence.

5.6. In line with Department for Education statutory guidance, registers must close no later than 30 minutes after opening. Arriving after the close of register impacts upon a pupil's attendance rate, with each late arrival after the close of register constituting a one-session absence.

5.7. Our school day finishes at: 15.10. Parents and carers are expected to arrive promptly and punctually when collecting their child.

6. UNDERSTANDING ATTENDANCE

6.1. We use presence bands to monitor the attendance of all pupils and to proactively identify when support may be needed:

Presence band	Days missed	Impact on learning and progress
97%-100%	0-5 days	Strong position for learning and achievement
95%-96.9%	6-9.5 days	Some risk to progress
93%-94.9%	10-12.5 days	Increasing risk to progress
90%-92.9%	13-15 days	Significant risk to progress
0%-89.9%	15+ days	Persistent absence requiring targeted response

7. ATTENDANCE SUPPORT

7.1. A graduated response framework (as outlined in the Trust policy) underpins the support and intervention available for pupils and families through partnership working to understand barriers and agree appropriate actions.

7.2. Tier 1: Universal support (for all pupils and families)

- Clear communication with families about attendance expectations and procedures.
- Attendance education through assemblies, tutor time and parent communications.
- Daily attendance monitoring and first-day absence contact.
- Recognition and celebration of good and improving attendance through rewards and positive communication home.
- Supportive transition arrangements for new pupils and those moving between key stages.
- Access to pastoral, SEND and wellbeing support where concerns are identified early.

7.3. Tier 2: Individualised support

- Attendance conversations and meetings with pupils and parents/carers to explore barriers.
- Attendance monitoring periods with agreed targets and regular review.
- Personalised attendance support plans.
- Early Help referrals and family support.
- Adjustments to routines, timetables or pastoral support where appropriate.
- Check-in/check-out arrangements, mentoring or key adult support.
- Support for pupils experiencing anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), friendship difficulties or other barriers to attendance.
- Joint working with curriculum, pastoral and SEND staff to promote engagement and attendance.

7.4. Tier 3: Higher-need support

- Multi-agency meetings involving external services and professionals.
- Targeted support from agencies such as Brighter Futures for Children, Early Help, CAMHS, health services or social care, where appropriate.
- Attendance contracts and formal attendance support plans.
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments and support linked to SEND, medical needs or mental health needs.
- Review of alternative provision, reintegration programmes or phased return arrangements where appropriate.
- Statutory interventions and legal processes where support has not secured improvement and thresholds are met.
- Ongoing review and coordination by the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO and other relevant professionals

7.5. Where there are early signs that a family may require support with their child's attendance and/or punctuality, the school will usually contact parents and carers to explore any barriers, agree supportive actions and review progress. Where further support is needed, a more formal plan or bespoke intervention may be put in place in line with the Trust policy and local resources.

7.6. Where pupils have special educational needs, medical or health needs, or an allocated Social Worker, the most appropriate member of staff will help coordinate support. This may include

the Senior Attendance Champion, SENCO, pastoral lead or Designated Safeguarding Lead, working in partnership with families and external agencies as needed.

8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

8.1. Leave of absence requests during term time for leisure and recreational purposes will not be authorised. Requests for leave due to exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, in line with statutory guidance, the GLF Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy and local authority protocols.

8.2. Leave of absence request forms must be completed prior to a planned absence. Forms are available from the Highdown website and the school office.

8.3. Where absence is unauthorised and thresholds are met, a referral may be completed to the local authority which could result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or further legal intervention.

8.4. Please see information below relating to Reading Borough Council's specific approach and expectations surrounding penalty notices and legal interventions.

8.5. Local Authority Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention (Reading Borough Council / Brighter Futures for Children)

In accordance with the Reading Local Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, a Penalty Notice may be issued where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Unauthorised absence includes a combination of:

- Code G – unauthorised term-time holiday;
- Code O – unauthorised absence;
- Code U – late after the register has closed.

Penalty Notice Charges
From August 2024, under the national framework:
First Penalty Notice

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- Increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. [gov.uk], [brighterfu...ildren.org]

Second Penalty Notice (for the same child within three years)

- £160 per parent, per child.
- No discounted rate applies. [Fixed-Pena...of-Conduct | PDF], [gov.uk]

Third Offence

- A maximum of two Penalty Notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period.
- Where the national threshold is met for a third time, alternative legal intervention is likely to be considered, including prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or other legal measures such as an Education Supervision Order.

Term-Time Leave
Reading follows the national expectation that leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised leave may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

The school will always seek to work with pupils and families to remove barriers to attendance and will follow a support-first approach in line with the Department for Education's 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance before considering legal intervention, unless the circumstances indicate that enforcement action is appropriate