



Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other School policies (all available on the School website), in particular, Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy, the Home School Agreement and the Students Who Cannot Attend School for Health Reasons Policy. It has been written in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, in particular, the statutory guidance [‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#) (2024) (‘the Guidance’).

The school recognises full attendance at school is essential for all students to make progress and participate fully in the life of the school. As noted in the Guidance, ‘attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare in school’. School Attendance is a legal requirement.

All students should aim for 100% attendance, and no lateness. Attendance which is 90% and below is defined in the Guidance as ‘persistent absence’. It equates to:

- ½ day missed every week
- 4 weeks of lessons missed in one year (in addition to missed time spent in assemblies, the tutorial programme and participating in extra-curricular activities etc)
- ½ a year missed over 5 years of secondary school

‘The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of...key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment’ (para 12 of the Guidance).

2. Aims and Objectives

- To maximise the educational attainment of all students by promoting the importance of a whole school culture of attendance and punctuality
- To work in partnership with parents and carers and where necessary, the relevant Education Welfare Service and other professionals in local boroughs to ensure high levels of attendance are maintained
- To investigate and identify the causes of non-attendance in a timely manner
- To keep an accurate and up-to-date record of attendance for all students
- To communicate clear expectations and procedures which are consistently and accurately followed
- To promote and incentivise good attendance.

As stated in the Guidance, ‘attendance is the responsibility of all’ and ‘improving attendance is everyone’s business’. The School’s Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) is Claire Leek, the Junior Deputy Head; she can be contacted by email (cleek@hbschool.org.uk). It is the role of the SAC to set a clear vision for improving good attendance, maintain systems for tackling absence and to monitor and evaluate progress.

3. Timings of the School Day for Students:

School Building opens:	8 am (8.30 am on Wednesdays)
Morning Registration:	8.35-8.40 (8.55-9.00 am on Wednesdays)
Tutorial/Assembly:	8.40-9.00 am (other than on Wednesdays)
Period 1:	9.00 am-10.10 am
Morning break:	10.10 am-10.30 am

Period 2:	10.30 am-11.40 am
Move to Period 3:	11.40 am-11.45 am
Period 3:	11.45 am-12.55 pm
Lunch:	12.55 pm-2.00 pm
Move to Period 4:	2.00 pm-2.05 pm
Afternoon Registration:	2.05pm
Period 4:	2.05 pm-3.15 pm
Period 5:	(Sixth Form only on some days) 3.15 pm-3.45 pm

4. School Procedures: Recording attendance and punctuality

Daily registration of all students is a legal requirement. If a student's punctuality is a concern, their Form Tutor or Head of Year/Key Stage will follow up with the student and contact parents as appropriate.

Registers are taken at 8.35 am each morning, and tutor registration closes at 8.40 am. On Wednesday mornings the register is taken at 8.55 am and closes at 9.00 am. Any student arriving at the classroom after the registration start times (that is, after 8.35 am (or after 8.55 am on Wednesdays)) is marked as Late.

Other than on a Wednesday, all students arriving after 8.40 am must sign in on Inventory at Reception. Students arriving after 8.40 am and before 9.00 am will be marked in Late by the Attendance Officer.

Students arriving after 9.00 am will be marked as U (unauthorised absence) by the Attendance Officer. The absence will have to be authorised for this code to change; otherwise it will remain as unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registers are taken promptly at 2.05 pm each afternoon at the start of Period 4. Students arriving after 2.05 pm to lesson must report to Reception – they will be marked as U (unauthorised absence) and will be required to explain their absence.

Subject teachers are required to record attendance and punctuality at the start of each lesson. The Attendance Officer will check for any unexplained absences each period and will investigate immediately. The Attendance Officer will follow up with the relevant Heads of Year/Key Stage and the SAC regarding any concerns.

Form Tutors should inform Heads of Year/Key Stage and SAC if they feel the attendance of a student in their form is giving cause for concern.

Sixth Form students are allowed to sign out and leave school from 12.55 pm if they have no afternoon lessons and if they are not otherwise required to be in school.

Students can go home during the school day only if a parent has emailed Attendance and sought permission in advance or if the school has phoned home because they have become unwell.

Students must not ring home and arrange to be collected without permission from the Head of Year/Key Stage or, if they are not available, another member of the Pastoral Team. If a student feels unwell, they must report to the Medical Room in the Hub or to Reception where a decision will be made whether to contact parents.

Students in Key Stage 3 who are given permission to leave the school premises before the end of the school day, for whatever reason, must be collected by a parent or other authorised adult. In Key Stage 4 and 5, we are reluctant to send students home alone if ill. We will only do so with the expressed approval of parents and only if the School feels it is appropriate.

Appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 are used. The main codes are as follows:

/ present AM
\ present PM
I authorised absence for illness
M authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
C authorised absence for exceptional circumstances
L late arrival before register closed
U unauthorised absence (arrival after register closed)
O unauthorised absence
G holiday not authorised by the Head
V educational visit or trip
B attending other approved educational activity

5. Absence

a. Daily absence reporting

- Parents/carers must email the Attendance Officer before 8.30 am at attendance@hbschool.org.uk and copy this email to their child's Head of Year/Key Stage, to report absence through illness on a daily basis. In such cases, parents are requested to provide some information regarding the illness (eg symptoms or other details), to assist with school reporting procedures.
- If it is not possible to email, then please call the Attendance Officer to report daily absence through sickness on 020 8209 9734.
- Parents/carers are asked not to arrange dental or medical appointments during the school day. In the exceptional case of a medical/dental appointment being made, parents/carers should inform the Attendance Officer and Head of Year/Key Stage in advance, of the date and time of the appointment via attendance@hbschool.org.uk, supplying evidence of the appointment for the school records. In such cases, absence is only likely to be authorised for a half a day (am or pm) with the expectation of the student being in school before/after the appointment. Students in Key Stage 3 must be collected by a parent or other authorised adult for such appointments, even the appointment takes place in the middle of the school day.
- Where a student has been ill for 5 days, and further absence is required, it is expected that medical evidence will be provided to the School.
- Where the School has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of a reason provided for absence, the School may ask for further evidence (eg medical evidence in the case of an illness or, for example, documentation related to travel) in order that the absence can be authorised.

b. Planned Absence Requests

- A student's attendance at school is a legal requirement, therefore a request for absence other than for illness or medical appointments is likely to be refused. School holidays are published a year in advance on the school website, therefore there should not be a reason for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time.
- Absence for sickness, religious observance and bereavement (or other circumstances requiring compassionate leave) are reasonable requests, but requests for other absences (eg for holidays, family celebrations or visits, moving house or leisure activities) are not.
- Requests for absence to attend external music/dance exams are likely to be authorised for half a day (am or pm) only with the expectation that the student will be in school before/after the exam.
- Absence requests for medical/dental appointments are addressed above.

- Leave of absence is only granted for 'exceptional circumstances' at the discretion of the Head. The Head considers each such application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Absence will be authorised for the minimum time needed.
- Students in the Sixth Form will be able to take a limited amount of authorised absence for attendance at, for example, university interviews and other events (eg open days, subject events, offer holder days) but only in accordance with the guidance issued by the Head of Sixth Form.
- Any requests for planned absence must be made in writing, three weeks in advance where possible (and in any event in reasonable time to allow the request to be considered) to the Head (but emailed to attendance@hbschool.org.uk). Parents should provide supporting evidence depending on the reason for the request. The School may request such information to assist it in considering such requests. No authorisations will be made retrospectively.
- Permission will not be granted for any absence to study during any public examination period (for example GCSEs, A Levels), mock examinations or internal school examinations over and above that which is already provided (and therefore authorised) by the school.
- If leave of absence is not agreed by the school, then the absence is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

6. Dealing with concerns about attendance

If attendance is a cause for concern parents/carers will be contacted by their child's Form Tutor or Head of Year/Key Stage, or the SAC, so that together any difficulties resulting in, or from, this absence can be addressed. This may require a meeting between the School and the parents/carers and student.

The school is keen to work with parents/carers and students in order to resolve issues that may be causing persistent absence and recognise that there are many reasons behind a child's absence. Assisting such students may include providing access to wider support services to help remove the barriers to attendance.

Parents/carers should contact their child's Head of Year/ Key Stage if they feel their child is showing a reluctance to attend School. The sooner the School is aware of any issues and can intervene, the sooner the problem may be solved.

If a student cannot attend school for a significant period of time because of illness or injury, the school will provide support to make sure their education does not suffer, liaising with their Local Authority as appropriate.

As noted above, students whose attendance falls to 90% or below are defined by the Department of Education as 'persistently absent' and those who are missing 50% or more of school are defined as 'severely absent'. If a student's attendance falls to 90% or below, the school may decide that it is not appropriate for the student to take part in day or residential trips or extra-curricular activities until the student's attendance improves. A student's attendance and punctuality is recorded in school reports and may be included in other documentation such as school references and UCAS references.

7. Sanctions

As absence is often a symptom of wider issues, it is the School's aim to provide support for a student and family where attendance is a concern. Where that is not successful or not engaged with, then other interventions may be required. All decisions regarding such action will be made on an individual case by case basis and taking into account the School's safeguarding obligations as set out the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy, the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and the Code of Practice issued by Barnet Education & Learning Service (BELS).

The Guidance set out the full range of possible interventions.

Penalty notices may be issued within the National framework as set out in the Guidance.

BELS is the agency administering penalty notices in respect of school-related issues and it can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the Head considers that it is appropriate for a penalty notice to be issued, it will make a request to BELS.

Before requesting the issue of a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions (the equivalent of 5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks); this includes where a child has 10 unauthorised lates (Code U) in a 10-week period
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.
- Other relevant evidence.

BELS Code of Practice notes that supporting evidence for a request for a penalty notice regarding absence adjacent to school holidays may include 'parents not being contactable, international dial tones, or evidence from individuals, including the child in question.'

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

8. Student's Responsibilities

- It is the student's responsibility to be punctual when arriving at school in the morning and to attend all registration periods and lessons on time.
- Students must follow the late procedures:
 - If they arrive late to school and arrive before the end of morning registration, they are to go directly to their form room.
 - If students arrive at school after 8.40 am (other than on a Wednesday, which is a late morning registration) they should report to the Reception immediately upon arrival and sign in.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must ask for permission to go to the school medical room in the Health and Well-being Hub (or to go to Reception) and, if necessary, parents/carers will be contacted for their child to go home. Students must never contact parents/carers directly to make arrangements to go home.
- If permission has been given for a student to leave school before the end of the school day, they should sign out at Reception or, if in KS3, wait there for a parent to collect.
- These responsibilities are in addition to those set out in the Home School Agreement.

9. Parent/Carer Responsibility

- Parents/Carers should be aware of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school on a regular full-time basis pursuant to s.7 Education Act 1996.
- Parents must ensure that their child arrives at School promptly at the start of each day and in good time for morning registration.
- They are not to take their child out of school in term time other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Parents should ensure that, if their child is absent from School for an unavoidable reason, such as illness, they contact the School by 8.30 am on the day of absence (see Section 5 above).

- They should ensure any requests for planned absence are made in advance to the Head, three weeks in advance if possible and in any event in reasonable time to allow the request to be considered.
- Parents should provide supporting evidence if requesting leave during term-time depending on the reason for the request. This may include, for example, details of original flight bookings, travel delays or disruptions, medical information or other details regarding emergency situations. The School may request such information to assist it in considering such requests.
- These responsibilities are in addition to those set out in the Home School Agreement.

10. The School

- The School expects all students to aim for 100% attendance.
- The School will monitor and record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Registers taken at morning and afternoon session registration will be recorded electronically and will be completed in accordance with the Department for Education attendance and absence codes.
- The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.
- All staff are aware that the accurate recording of attendance serves to safeguard the health and safety of all students.
- The School will keep parents informed regarding any attendance and punctuality concerns.
- In addition to daily monitoring, Heads of Year/Key Stage receive weekly attendance and punctuality reports. The School will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual and group level. Governors are regularly updated with attendance and punctuality data.
- The School has granted the Department for Education access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

11. Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of the School's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

This policy was approved by Governors in September 2025 and will be updated annually.