



High Halstow Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Dated: September 2023

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils and to enable them to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. The academy's ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The academy will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy. [Working together to improve school attendance.](#)

The academy's expectation for attendance is at least 96%

At High Halstow Primary Academy we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all our pupils. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

AIMS

- To maximise attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Attendance Advisory Practitioner and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To set out and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Principal (Attendance Lead: Mrs G Stangroom)

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns
- To monitor individual pupils, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.

- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/ or punctuality is an issue
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of the policy and practice
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of attendance for each child in their class via Bromcom
- Send any notes from parents to the office daily or update on Bromcom directly
- To promote good attendance with pupils and parents regularly

Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and coordinate the use of the Bromcom to manage attendance
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Principal whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised
- To liaise with LA if there is a concern about a child's attendance.

Pupils

- Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the academy and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

Parents

- Parents have a duty under the law to ensure their children attend school. If parents do not do this, they are liable for prosecution.

ADMINISTRATION

- The academy uses Bromcom to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relation to attendance. Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE LATENESS

- The gates open from 8:35am. Registration closes in the morning at 8.45am when the gates are closed.
- Pupils arriving after 8:45am must report to the School Office so that their attendance and meal choice can be recorded.

- Registration opens in the afternoon at 1:00pm and closes at 1:10pm.
- Pupils arriving after 9:15am for the morning session will be officially absent from the morning session, and after 1:20pm for the afternoon session. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example, a doctor's appointment. It is advised that medical evidence is given to the academy to keep on record. If the academy is not in receipt of medical evidence it is not obliged to authorise the absence.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality
- Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of others.
- Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern our Principal or Office Team will contact the family and liaise with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP).

Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.
- Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Assistant Principal or Principal should be informed.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments (Appointment Card, letter inviting to appointment etc)
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

In the case of a child's absence being as a consequence of medical need, we are keen to work closely with parents/carers to ensure that education provision is maintained.

If absence due to illness becomes a concern, medical evidence will be required before any further absences are authorised. Such evidence will include: a GP appointment card, letter regarding hospital appointments, copy of a prescription or packaging/labels from medication bought from a pharmacy with a receipt.

The 1996 Education Act clearly states, "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carer of the child shall be guilty of an offence". The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school may result in prosecution in the courts or a penalty notice being issued.

In the event of 10 unauthorised sessions recorded, a referral may be made to AASSA. If your child incurs 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a six-school week period, a penalty notice may be issued resulting in a £60 penalty notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice, within 28 days, will result in a court prosecution for your child's irregular school attendance.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Revised regulations on education from September 2013 state that no holidays will be authorised in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity or learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons on their return. Should a child's attendance be a cause for concern there may be a referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Proposed holidays taken during term time should be put in writing (email, letter, note in link book), addressed to the Principal, advising of the dates the pupil will be absent from the Academy, and the date of intended return.

Revised regulations on education – related penalty notices (from September 2013)

The Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice within 28 days will result in prosecution.

The procedures and consequences outlined above applied equally to persistent lateness.

OTHER ABSENCE

In some instances, there may be a need to apply for leave for special circumstances and these will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or unauthorise the absence. The parent/carer should email or write to the Principal to consider the request.

CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day. If the child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided by the parents. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents/carers then the local Police will be informed of the situation. The Principal will also contact the Referral Team at Social Services to inform them of a possible problem.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

All absences both authorised and unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the year within their child's report as well as through MCAS.

ATTENDANCE PROMOTION

We aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently

ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes will be used to indicate the reason for absence

- L** late - between 8:45am and 9.15am for the morning session and between 1:10pm and 1:20pm
- U** Late - Late after 9.15am (morning) and 1:20pm (afternoon) - unauthorised absence for whole of morning or afternoon session
- M** Medical - hospital admission, dental, optician, hospital or doctor's appointment
- C** Other authorised absence - bereavement, family reasons, child performance
- G** Unauthorised holiday absence

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Attendance data will be analysed to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:

- Incomplete weeks
- Monday and Friday absences
- Lateness
- Periods of extended absence
- Periods of unauthorised absence
- Children with attendance below 90%

This data will be discussed with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner as part of the regular meetings held at school.

The Principal and Attendance Advisory Practitioner will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually.

Systems and Structures to Tackle Attendance and Punctuality Issues

When children's attendance and punctuality is a concern to the school the following systems and structures are followed:

On the first day of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents called to enquire about child's wellbeing• Establish when the child will return. Enter 'I' for illness or 'M' for medical appointment on system• If no contact can be made, emergency contacts are called.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If contact cannot be made or an acceptable reason cannot be established, absence is recorded as 'O' unauthorised.
When initial concerns are raised about attendance for a pupil	An 'Attendance Concerns' letter is sent out inviting parents/carers to meet with the School, stating that unless attendance improves they may be liable for a penalty notice
After 5 or more days of unauthorised absence following the 'Attendance Concerns' letter – within 6 week period	A letter will be sent outlining that we will be working with the Local Authority to initiate a penalty notice
If attendance does not improve or attendance drops below 90%	Prosecution might be considered for further periods of unauthorised absence. Action may be taken by the school and local authority against parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child is properly educated. The action may result in a formal warning, a fine, or an appearance at court.

System for Punctuality

On the fourth instance of lateness	'Lateness Concerns' letter is sent to parents reminding them of the importance of punctuality, school timings.
Following 3 more instances of lateness	'Attendance Meeting' letter is sent out stating that the parent must come into school for a meeting with the Principal and/or Attendance Advisory Practitioner to address concerns.
If punctuality does not improve	Prosecution might be considered for further periods of unauthorised absence. Action may be taken by the school and local authority against parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child is properly educated. The action may result in a formal warning, a fine, or an appearance at court.

Removing a Pupil from Roll

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. ([Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#))

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will

make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. ([Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)).

Education for Health Needs including Mental Health'

The school will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult to cope with due to their mental health issues.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where a member of staff has a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

In order to support parents with their child's progress, the school will liaise with parents openly and honestly in a sensitive manner where mental health concerns have been identified in relation to absence.

If a student is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their mental health issues, the school will:

- Liaise with any agencies working with the pupil.
- If felt appropriate, a referral will be put into the Single Point of Access (SPOA) to request support.
- Liaise regularly with parents/carers and the pupil.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will implement an action plan in conjunction with the parents/carers and the student to support with any stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. The plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the student is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of students with mental health issues, the school will consider:

- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- A 'Time Out Card', which allows a pupil to request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time away from a situation they are finding difficult.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.