



Attendance Policy

2014

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Responsible Officer	Assistant Headteacher



1. Title:

Attendance

2. Purpose

Heolddu has a policy of full-time attendance for all. The school aims to develop an ethos, which clearly demonstrates to pupils, parents and the wider community how much good attendance and punctuality is valued. We believe that attendance at school is a vital pre-requisite to effective learning. If pupils are not in school, they cannot benefit from the educational opportunities that the school offers. Recent published research has highlighted the correlation between low absence rates and high external examination success rates. The school is committed to maximise both variables.

The policy focuses on promoting attendance and addresses the issue of non-attendance when it occurs, the processes in place and the responsibilities of staff, parents, and governors.

The school is required by statute to keep two registers of attendance:

- a) an admissions register – which acts as a school roll.
- b) a daily register of attendance – showing whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent.

3. Aims

- To initiate procedures which maximise attendance at school and minimise instances of unauthorised absences and internal truancy.
- To initiate procedures which monitor attendance levels for individuals and groups in school and in specific lessons.
- To make full use of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) in pursuit of attendance objectives.
- To seek parental involvement in pursuit of attendance objectives.
- Create and maintain a caring school environment where pupils are treated as individuals and understand the value of attendance at school
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils, parents, and carers.
- Adopt a consistent approach to attendance issues and provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils, parents, and other interested parties.
- Record attendance accurately, including the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absences, as a register is a legal document, which must be maintained according to prescribed guidelines.
- Record reasons for absence diligently and ensure prompt follow up action to deal with absenteeism.
- Monitor attendance accurately and regularly and communicate information to relevant parties.
- Promote good communication links with parents.
- Reward good attendance and highlight improved attendance.



(3. Aims cont'd)

- Regularly examine the curriculum to develop ways of improving the quality of learning and pupil attitude to attendance.
- Tackle specific attendance problems and have established strategies to deal with them e.g., re-integration programmes and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) referral.
- Tackle problems such as bullying which could be a contributory factor to some pupils missing school.
- Inform new staff and supply staff of the methods adopted in the school to deal with attendance related issues.
- Foster effective inter-agency links.

4. Policy

An attendance register is a legal document and must be treated as such. Some of the records of certified extracts of attendance registers are admissible as evidence in courts and it is therefore vital that they should be accurate. The register is a record of our numbers on roll and is consequently used to calculate our level of funding. The accurate completion of attendance registers is a point of reference in this process and is integral to the management of attendance.

4.1 Registration

The school registers the attendance of all pupils in designated form rooms at the beginning of the morning and, in lesson 5 subject based rooms. The time for commencement of registration is:

Morning Registration: 8.30am

Attendance data information is administered through Lesson Monitor.

Under no circumstances should pupils mark registers.

4.2 Authorised/Unauthorised absences

The government insists that all schools in their attendance data must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence. This is published annually as a school performance indicator. Individual pupil absence, both authorised and unauthorised, are included on school reports.

Parents and carers can explain absences, but **they cannot authorise them**.

Only the school can decide whether explanations about absence are acceptable and can be authorised.



Example of Authorised Absence:

- Sickness,
- Non–Routine Medical/Dental Appointments which is Supported by Medical Evidence,
- religious observance,
- unavoidable causes such as close family bereavement,
- Court Appearance,
- Public Award/Presentation,
- Sporting Event,

Examples of Unauthorised Absence:

1. Routine medical/dental appointments – these need to be made outside school hours.
2. Lack of uniform.

4.3 Leave of Absence/Holidays in Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. The school will consider any application for leave of absence, taking into account factors such as the time of year and overall attendance pattern of the pupil. It is good practice to invite parents to school to discuss any proposals, prior to an application being made.

The Head Teacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Parent working abroad for a fixed, medium-term period,
- Family is returning to country of origin,
- Parent returning from active tour of duty.



4.4 Punctuality

As well as good attendance, good punctuality is paramount to the school. Pupils need to arrive by 8.30am as daily activities are organised during tutorial time. If there is a valid reason for a pupil arriving late to school (such as an emergency medical appointment), then it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school.

Pupils who arrive late to school must report to the school reception office. Here the receptionist will ask pupils to sign the late book. If a pupil arrives late for school, they will be placed into breaktime detention. If this occurs, twice in one week, the pupil will be placed into afterschool detention. Parents and carers are reminded that The LA may issue a FPN for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct, if in excess of 10 sessions.

Arrivals are marked as 'L' on the register and are counted as present for statistical purposes. Late arrivals outside these times are denoted as 'U' (late after registration has closed) and are counted as unauthorised absences.

4.5 Contact with Parents

If no valid reason is given to the school on the morning of a child's absence, the school will contact parents/guardians to highlight their child's absence from school by Class Charts notification or telephone. Parents/guardians have the option to message via Class Charts the reason for absence or connect directly to the school to follow up this absence. Information regarding requests for unauthorised absences will be sent to parents of individual pupils via Class Charts APP.

4.6 Medical Problems

During the normal school day, the Family Engagement Officer and other staff members trained in First Aid are available to deal with any medical problems. Pupils feeling unwell should not be given permission to go home without reporting to the Family Engagement Officer.

4.7 Study Leave

The school does not support study leave. The official leaving date for pupils in year 11 is the last Friday in June; Pupils in year 13 are expected to attend school until the day of their last examination.



4.8 Key Roles in the Monitoring of Attendance

4.8.1 Group Tutors

Group tutors are the cornerstone of the pastoral system in general and the recording and monitoring of pupil attendance/non-attendance in particular. They have a major influence on pupil attitude to attendance at school – a role that should never be undervalued.

Group tutors carry out the daily registration of the tutor group, including:

1. The accurate daily marking of the attendance register, ensuring that all information is recorded and up to date.
2. Accounting for absences through the collection and collation of absence notes, or entries in student planners.

4.8.2 Subject Teachers

Class teachers have an important role in the monitoring of attendance. They are required to mark a class register during the lessons using Lesson Monitor. Where the class teacher has some reason to question the absence of a pupil from the lesson the teacher should inform reception, and the Family Engagement Officer. In normal circumstances, the parent will be contacted, and the relevant Group Tutor and Progress Leader informed.

4.8.3 Progress Leaders/Progress Coordinators

In the context of attendance and punctuality, the Progress Leader or Progress Coordinator should assist Group Tutors as and when necessary, ensuring correct procedures are adhered to. They should monitor the registers of their groups and have an overview of the year group so that any abnormal patterns of absences are noted, which may link with other problems they are aware of.

4.8.4 Family Engagement Officer

A Family Engagement Officer is employed to monitor absences and to focus on hard-core non-attendees. The Family Engagement Officer will liaise with Progress Leaders, Progress Coordinators and/or EWO and report weekly to the Senior Leadership Team.

4.8.5 Leadership Team and Governors

The Senior Leadership Team should be briefed on attendance issues weekly by the Family Engagement Officer, and governors at least termly by the Headteacher.



4.8.6 Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is a specialist education support service, which works in collaboration with schools and other partners, to provide an effective high-quality service to children, young people and their families. The EWS seeks to ensure that all children and young people experience maximum benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

Education Welfare Officers (EWO's) have a broad role in terms of promoting welfare and raising attendance at school and other learning settings and will investigate the reasons behind school absence, undertake planned interventions, advise families about specialist support services, and make appropriate referrals to other agencies when required. The Family Engagement Officer and or members of the pastoral team will keep the EWO informed of any pupil(s) giving cause for concern. Close contact with the EWO is therefore essential if we are to improve attendance rates in the school. The EWS can refer matters of unauthorised and unwarranted attendance to Magistrates Court for prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

The Family Engagement Officer and or members of the pastoral team should keep the EWO informed of any pupil(s) giving cause for concern either in their regular weekly meetings or via the office. Close contact with the EWO is essential if we are to improve attendance rates. The EWO responds as soon as possible to any request for a visit to:

- Support parents of pupils who refuse to come to school.
- Prevent non-attendance becoming a norm.
- Satisfy all concerned re: the pupil's safety.
- Meet with the Family Engagement Officer and designated Assistant Headteacher on a regular basis to discuss specified pupils and their problems. Records of meeting to be kept.
- Provide evidence of home referrals so that the attendance record can be kept up to date.
- Liaise with other agencies e.g., social services, probation, education support.

4.8.7 Attendance Panels/Student Attendance Meeting (SAMs)

Where a child's attendance falls below 96.5%, parents will be contacted and required to attend a Student Attendance Meeting (SAM) comprising of the Family Engagement Officer and potentially the Progress Leader, Assistant Headteacher. Reasons for absence and any potential barriers to learning will be identified in this meeting and, subsequently an action plan and monitoring period will be implemented.

4.8.8 Fixed Penalty Notices

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has the power to issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each of their children, who fail to attend school regularly.

The issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices is one of the sanctions available to Head Teachers for unauthorised or unwarranted absences from school and is intended as a suitable and effective intervention for improving levels of attendance and to prevent absences becoming entrenched and persistent.

The Fixed Penalty Notices scheme will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will be used to support parents to meet their legal



(4.8.8 Fixed Penalty Notices Cont'd)

responsibilities and only where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

If after a reviewing period, the child's attendance record has not improved and he/she has incurred at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling 12-week period, then the Local Authority has the power, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each of their children.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an early deterrent intended to prevent more extended periods of unauthorised absence developing and incur a fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice will result in prosecution under the Education Act 1996

4.9 Promoting and Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school recognises the importance of good attendance and has mechanisms for promoting and commending it in place. These include the following:

- The importance of attendance is recognised by its inclusion in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- Attendance forms an important part of the school prospectus and the student planners. In both documents the dates of terms (and school holidays) are clearly stated.
- Students are encouraged to keep a personal record of attendance in their planners.
- Reinforcement of the 96.5% target is regularly made to staff and pupils alike.
- Group tutors are expected to discuss attendance issues in meetings with their Progress Leaders, identifying problem pupils and/or tutor groups. The findings are dealt with appropriately and brought to the Progress Leaders meetings for discussion with the designated Assistant Headteacher.
- An attendance summary for each pupil is issued alongside the school report and comments on significant deviations from the expected are made. Parental responses are welcomed.
- Pupils who achieve over 96.5% attendance will receive either a postcard or letter as acknowledgement of good attendance.
- Pupils who are achieving 100% attendance are entered into a monthly prize draw.
- An attendance league has been created at Heolddu and the tutor group with the highest attendance at the end of every month will receive a tutor prize.
- Pupils with attendance of 96.5% and over will be eligible to attend reward trips such as ice skating and an end of year theme park trip.
- Year 11 pupils who do not achieve 96.5% attendance will not be eligible to attend the end of year prom.