



The Hinckley SCHOOL

Attendance Policy 2023-24

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Reviewed by: M Thomas

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Attendance Policy

"Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best school will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and, in some cases, it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour." (DfE)

Our main aim for our Attendance Policy & Relationships policies is to ensure our pupils are safe and feel a sense of belonging in our school community.

1. Our mission

- The Hinckley School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible
- It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students
- Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance
- If there are barriers which affect a student's attendance, we will work in partnership with our families, students and external agencies to investigate, identify and support our families and students as much as possible, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times

2. Aims:

Government expectations:

Our school will:

- Encourage full attendance and punctuality
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- Acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance and improvements in attendance
- Ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- Promote good attendance including persistent absence
- Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents will:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their child(ren) attends school regularly
- Be proactive in avoiding school hours for appointments and visits

All students will:

- Be punctual to school and their lessons
- Be encouraged to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality (above 96%)
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism
- Be acknowledged for excellent and improved attendance

In addition, the school will:

- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued
- Communicate regularly with parents/carers about their child's attendance, absences and punctuality
- Work with parents/carers to remove any barriers which may affect a child's attendance and punctuality
- Work with all members of the school team plus any relevant outside agencies to develop and maintain the whole school attendance policy
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance
- Ensure staff take registers accurately and timely
- Regularly share information to parents/carers and students informing them of attendance, absences and punctuality
- We will ensure regular evaluation of attendance policy and procedures by the school Leadership Team and the School Governor

3. Procedures

The school is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students who are on the school's admission roll with the accurate attendance code.

- Registration occurs each morning and begins at 8.30am and ends at 8.50am. Students not in their tutor rooms at 8.30 am in the morning receive a late mark. If a student is late during registration a break time detention will be set. Persistent or extended lateness will incur a 1 hour after school detention
- Subject teachers are responsible for ensuring an accurate register is taken during every lesson within the first 10 minutes of the lesson
- Students will be reminded about the importance of punctuality and lateness results in sanctions being set
- First day contact between parents and school will be made by phone call and followed up by a text message if necessary
- Staff are supplied with clear guidance on what is authorised and unauthorised absence following DfE guidelines
- Any emerging attendance concern/problem within a Year Team will be discussed and action planned within the fortnightly targeted attendance meeting. Here further action is decided upon involving both internal and external agencies

3.1 Leave of Absence

Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.



Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance (at least a week before it commences) and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Leicestershire Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 (1) of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis by the Headteacher.

3.2 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorized absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If medical appointments take place in the morning, students are expected to come into school after the appointment, unless there is a medical reason that prevents this. If a child does not return to school and there is not a medical reason for their absence the remainder of the day will be marked as unauthorised.

3.3 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives to school late will be marked as late using a L code. Pupils will be issued with an hour after school detention on the same day unless the parent/carer informs the school of an exceptional reason for the lateness or any reason beyond the control of the pupil or parent/carer.

Pupils who are persistently late without any justified reason will be marked as U on the register and this will be counted as an unauthorised absence.

3.4 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Pastoral Leaders for each year group will make phone calls and/or email each morning to ascertain reasons for the absences which are marked as a N. Vulnerable/SEND pupil will be



prioritized when making phone calls. When contact is made N codes should be changed to the appropriate code and a note recorded on SIMS. In instances where contact has not been made a note should be added to SIMS. If contact has not been made for a vulnerable student Pastoral Leaders should inform the Attendance Officer and a home visit completed on the same day if possible.

After three days of absence a home visit should be completed by the Year team to offer support to the family if required and to ascertain the length of absence.

If any safeguarding concerns arise as a result of any of these communications; Year staff should report this immediately to the DSL via CPOMS.

In addition, any student with a social worker who is absent for three or more days (or whose emerging pattern of attendance is likely to lead to persist absenteeism) will be reported to their social worker. If further absence exists, the DSL may follow procedures for reporting pupils as CME (Child Missing in Education) if it is unclear where the child is during this period of absence from school and/or contact from home has not been successful. A child must be considered CME and reported to CME@leics.gov.uk if they are absent for 10 consecutive days, without any successful contact made between the school and home.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

4.1 Term-time absence

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and must be submitted at least one week before.

Term time holidays, other than exceptional reasons, will not be authorised and parents are likely to be fined.

Legal action may also be taken against parents where students are regularly absent from school. Penalty Notices will be considered following prior warning and attempts to support. Where students are regularly absent, the Year team will attempt to support the student and parent/carer to remove any barriers, if possible.

4.2 Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for unauthorised absence of their child from school. Year teams will track any patterns of absence to avoid persistent absenteeism.

If a parent/carer is issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice they will receive a monitoring period for their child, whereby their child should be in school during this 4-week period. If the monitoring period is failed, a £60 fine is issued and must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

5. Persistent Absenteeism

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90% at any time during their school life. Absence at this level is detrimental to a child's education. The school may decide that medical evidence, for instance: Doctor's notes, is required to prove illness is legitimate in certain circumstances.

All students whose attendance have fallen to 85% or are at risk of moving towards the PA will be monitored rigorously through attendance tracking by Pastoral Leaders and the Attendance Officer.

Support and action towards all PA students are automatically reviewed on at least a weekly basis. Daily contact with parents/carers will be made to encourage attendance and Year teams will work with families to remove any barriers to attendance.

6. Supporting and re-integrating students on long term absence

Pastoral Leaders alert Subject Leaders about long term absence and parental requests for work to be set which can be done at home. Subject Leaders organise setting work, leaving it for collection and the marking of returned work.

Students who have been absent long term and who need to catch up on school work may spend a negotiated amount of time in the Student Support Centre, doing work set by Subject Leaders and managed by the Pastoral Leader with support from the Inclusion team. Some students returning after long term absence will be considered for an alternative curriculum involving fewer subjects and maybe some study time in the support centre until they are able to integrate fully into the mainstream curriculum. Students who are school phobic or who have undergone recent crisis will be supported as appropriate.

7. Leadership and Management

The role of the Headteacher/Governors:

- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented and regularly updated
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils in particular 'hard to reach'
- Approves Fixed Penalty Notices and other legal action required for absenteeism

Role of the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance officer responsible for Attendance:

- Advise on and implement whole school strategies for improving attendance
- Monitor attendance data, analyse data in order to identify patterns, set targets, support and inform policy and practice
- Hold regular meetings with the DSL and Local Authority support services such as the social services team
- Hold regular meetings with Year teams to ensure every child's attendance is 96% or above
- Meet and support Year teams to discuss strategies for pupils below 96% to prevent persistent absenteeism
- Identify attendance target groups
- Monitor whole school attendance rewards and initiatives
- Ensure that all relevant staff are fully trained in procedures that relate to attendance
- Liaise with SENDCo and DSL to identify students who would benefit from a referral to the Leicestershire Attendance Team

Year Leaders:

- Ensure early intervention is in place to support students and families
- Meet with Year teams on a weekly basis to discuss attendance issues

- Monitor Year group attendance and support with strategies to improve poor attendance and celebrate good/improved attendance
- Regularly meet with Senior Leaders responsible for attendance to identify key pupils who would benefit from further strategies being implemented
- Monitor attendance for every child in their Year group using the trackers
- End of every day ensure all registers are up to date, accurate and there are no N codes
- Promote excellent attendance via tutor time and through a reward system,
- Meet with parents/carers if there are attendance concerns
- Ensure students complete sanctions for lateness and reward students who have excellent attendance and whose attendance is improving

Pastoral Leaders:

- Work with form tutors to identify and take action if there is an individual attendance concern: all unexplained absences to be followed up.
- To ensure that all registers are up to date and N codes are cleared daily
- Meet with parents if there are attendance concerns
- Investigate causes of absence and plan strategies with tutors, parents and Year Leader
- To promote good school attendance by setting targets and reward 'good/improved attendance' certificates as appropriate.
- To ensure that students who are absent for an extended period of time will have appropriate work sent home and re-integration back in to school upon their return.
- To ensure that Early Help referrals are opened as necessary to support children in attending school regularly and on time
- Ensure pupils who are late are issued with an after-school detention
- Have learning conversations with pupils who are struggling with attendance and punctuality issues
- Ensure tracker is up to date every week with a child's attendance
- To liaise with the Designated Person for Child Protection as necessary
- Identify any patterns of absence to Year Leader and to the Senior Leadership leads for attendance

Role of the Form Tutor/class teacher:

- As the first point of contact with students, tutors are crucial in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Tutors/class teachers to ensure registers are completed within the first 10 minutes
- Identify any patterns in a student's attendance/punctuality, investigate all absences
- Display attendance data and attendance information on notice board in tutor room
- Attendance figures discussed with tutor group on a weekly basis and the impact of absences on learning and progress
- Ensure that pupils update their student planner and work with individual students to set personal attendance targets (weekly basis)
- All lateness to be monitored and discussed with individual students
- Report to the Pastoral Leader all students whose attendance/punctuality is raising cause for concern
- Each tutor to have a caseload of pupils they work with in order to improve attendance/punctuality
- Tutor to share pupils' attendance with tutees and parents regularly

Role of the Parent Carer:

Section 444(1) of the EDUCATION ACT 1996 states that 'IF a child of compulsory school age who is registered student at a school fails to attend school regularly at the school the parent is guilty of an offence'.

- Parent/person with parental responsibility has a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends the school regularly and on time
- Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school time
- Parents DO NOT have an automatic right to take their child out of the school for a holiday or any other period of extended leave during term time
- Contact the school on the first day of absence and if possible indicate day of return.
- Only the school within the context of the law can authorise absence this does not oblige the school to accept the reason for the absence
- All unexplained absences will be investigated and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns
- Attend meetings about their child's attendance; support the school in responding to concerns regarding attendance and work with the relevant Year team to help improve their child's attendance/punctuality
- Parents who fail to fulfil their responsibility can expect legal action: this may include Penalty Notices/Fast Track to Prosecution/Parenting Orders

Students:

- All students are expected to be on the school site by 8.25am appropriately prepared for the day
- At 8.30am students should be in their registration room
- Students who arrive after 8.30am must report to student reception: their time of arrival at school will be recorded by the member of staff on duty and the inventory system
- All students late without a valid reason will attend an hour detention
- Students are expected to remain in school all day and will not be allowed to leave the school site without permission
- Poor punctuality is not acceptable: students who consistently arrive late for the school day disrupt learning and miss out on valuable teaching time.
- Truancy from the school is taken very seriously and parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity. Students who truant from lessons will be expected to make up the time they have missed

Role of the Local Authority:

- To meet regularly with the Senior Leadership lead for Attendance to examine the effectiveness of attendance interventions.
- To communicate regularly with the Pastoral Leaders to ensure Early Help Referrals and other intervention are in place.
- To support in home visits when required.
- To work with the school and families to create family support plans as necessary.
- To support the school in ensuring legal cases are taken forward as necessary.

8. Our approach to monitoring attendance

Wave 1:

- Tutors monitor attendance of their tutees daily.
- On return from absence they speak to pupils and identify any barriers or support the student may need
- Pastoral Leads monitor the attendance of their year group and identify any pattern/trends
- Any student marked as unauthorised is followed up on their return to school
- Home visits completed on day 3 of an absence or sooner if necessary for PP/SEND students
- Pastoral Leads identify students who are at risk of dropping below 96%
- Early intervention is put in place by Year teams

Wave 2: Attendance drops below 95%

- Pastoral Leaders issue stage 1 letter – reminding parents/carers of the importance of attendance and the effect of their child's progress
- Pastoral Leader meets pupil to discuss any barriers the school can help and support with

Wave 3: Attendance drops below 93%

- Pastoral Leader issues stage 2 letter – explaining attendance as continued to decrease and has not improved and the parent is at risk of being issued a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Parent meeting to take place with Year Leader to investigate if any support can be put in place

Wave 4: Attendance drops to 90%

- LA paperwork to be completed by Attendance officer, after liaising with SENCo, DSL and Headteacher
- Monitoring period issued by LA