



Attendance Policy

Produced by	Suzanne Wilson HCAT Safeguarding Lead
Approved by	Trustee Safeguarding and Health & Safety Committee
Date approved	xxxx 2023
Review date	xxxx2024, or sooner if necessary.
Related Trust policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour• Child Protection• Data Protection• Looked After Children• RSHE• Special Educational Needs & Disability• Supporting Children with Medical Needs
Related national guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education• DfE: Preventing & tackling bullying• DfE: Promoting & supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.• DfE: Prevent Duty• DfE: Working together to improve attendance
Availability	Accessible via individual school's website

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) Ethos

HCAT's strapline is 'Children First'. This is central to the organisation's vision, ethos and culture and informs every decision we make. We are fully committed to ensuring pupils within the trust receive the highest quality education and acquire the necessary skills and characteristics to enable them to be happy and successful in life. We do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

The Department for Education (August 2020) state that:

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated- pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Aims of the policy

Our policy recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. It is an assumption so widely understood but insufficiently stated that children and young people need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind and achieving less in both primary and secondary school.

The overall aim of the attendance policy is to:

- Keep children safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with safeguarding practice.
- Provide a stable environment in which our children can learn.
- Support parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are of compulsory school age and registered at the academy, attend school regularly.
- Maximise educational opportunities for all our pupils, ensuring there is a consistent and fair approach with equal opportunities for all.
- Encourage good habits of school attendance with a vision on early intervention by supporting families with children in the Early Years Foundation stage.

School responsibilities

- To clearly communicate the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Refer matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service, where appropriate.
- To promote good attendance.

Parent responsibilities

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day.
- To inform school on **every** day of absence. **(See Annex I)**
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

- If parents, guardians, or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance about any barriers to learning.

Monitoring

All absences are monitored. High levels of unauthorised absences, regular days off or long period of absence will be investigated by the school's Attendance Officer.

Our internal monitoring may also identify one or more specific groups of pupils at the school who have levels of absence higher than the national average for that group, which will result in the school taking appropriate action. The internal monitoring system will focus on, amongst others, the following groups:

- Looked after children
- Free school meals eligibility
- Gender
- Young Carers
- Persistent Absentees
- Children/students with a social worker
- Years groups
- First language
- SEND

Absences are monitored every half term by the Strategic School Attendance Lead to identify any emerging patterns, trends or concerns which require swift action.

Process for following up absences

- School to make first day absence calls as soon as the register is closed if parents/carers have not already communicated with the school. Calls may be made to all adults listed on the individual child's/student's record.
- If no contact is made, a home visit may be undertaken to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.
- If necessary, contact will be made with any other agency currently working with the child/student and/or family.

Persistent Absentee (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education, if not addressed and improvements made.

Whilst it is acknowledged that pupils can be absent because of illness, there are also times when they can be other barriers affecting attendance. If this is the case, the school will start having a conversation with the parents/carers and child, if appropriate, at the earliest stage to gain a clearer understanding of these barriers. If necessary, and with consent, a referral may be made to Early Help to access wider support services.

Our schools monitor all absence, plus the reasons given for not attending school and will take the necessary steps to support the child, should their attendance show signs of deterioration. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, the school will invite the parents/carers to a meeting with the Attendance Officer, and member of senior leadership. During this initial meeting, an Attendance Action Plan will be devised, in conjunction with parents/carers, and the child, if appropriate, which will outline all parties contribution to improving the child's attendance. If after a period of 4 weeks, there are no signs of improvement, the school will either offer further strategies such as 'Parenting Contracts' or consider referring the case to the Local Authority for possible legal action, which could include a 'Parenting Order'.



Absences during term time

The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

It is the policy of HCAT not to authorise any absence other than illness or those with exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

AS OF THE 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to the maximum of £1000 plus costs.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents/carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer, and if necessary, a member of the senior leadership.

- Children must be in class at the beginning of the school day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.
- Children arriving late, but before the register has closed will be coded L, any child arriving after the register has closed will be marked as U, which equates to an absence. All registers will be closed 20 minutes from the beginning of registration.
- Due to site security, any child arriving after the register has closed will have to enter via main reception where their attendance will be recorded accordingly by Office staff. If necessary, children will then be escorted to their class.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised coded of 'M'. Proof of the appointment may be required prior to the appointment or on arrival at school.

We advise parents/carer that where possible all doctors and dental appointments be made outside of school hours or alternatively during school holidays. However, there is an acceptance that not all appointments can be pre-planned, especially ones for medical specialist or hospital treatment. Therefore, in these circumstances, we may ask parents/carers to provide a copy of the appointment letter.

Signing Out

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedures for releasing children when parents/carers have made a request, or the child is too ill to remain in school. The child(ren) can only be released to a parent or authorised person. When the authorised person arrives, the school office is responsible for ensuring the completion of the 'signing out' book. The school office will then input the appropriate absent code on the electronic register, if appropriate. However, if a child leaves the school site, with an authorised adult, after either the morning or afternoon register has been taken, the original mark will remain, and the signing in/out book will be referred to in the event of an evacuation to ensure all pupils can be accounted for.

Authorised Person

The Authorised Adult should be a responsible person and can include:

- a. Parent/Carer
- b. Family member
- c. Child minder
- d. Neighbour
- e. An older sibling who has the parent/carers written permission to collect the child from school.

NB: If there is a change to the regular authorised adult, for any reason, please notify the staff by informing them as soon as possible either at the door in the morning or via a phone call to the school office.

Procedures for power or network failure

In the event of the school network fails, manual attendance registers will be used for both morning and afternoon registration. Completed registers will be returned to the school office and uploaded to the system once the problem has been resolved.

Alternative Provision

Schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, they will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider to ascertain attendance information. This should be provided daily. All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up by the home school in a swift and timely manner.

The school will use the appropriate code (B) to indicate that the child is accessing alternative provision, thus demonstrating the school has confirmed that the education is supervised, and appropriate measures are in place to safeguard children.

Religious observance

HCAT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, schools will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Promoting good attendance

We celebrate good attendance throughout the year in various ways, this encourages commitment to learning.

Examples include:

- Celebration assemblies
- Attendance displays
- Individual, or class rewards for excellent or improved attendance
- Certificates
- Letters to parents, and/or pupils.

Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that 'if a child of compulsory age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.'

The Education Welfare Service may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice, when requested by a Headteacher, can be issued if the following criteria apply:

- 20 sessions or more unauthorised absences by the pupil during a 12-week period.
- Other than in specific circumstances*, the liable parent/carers will receive a formal warning of the possibility, or a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days

to affect improvement. Within the 15-day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.

**the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions (5 days).*

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a penalty notice for a first offence
- Issue a penalty notice without warning

Holidays in term time

Any holidays during term time are to be discouraged.

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence, including those for holidays, to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be an 'exceptional circumstance'.

'Exceptional circumstance' means that the parent must make the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm. All requests will be treated on an individual case by case basis.

Parents/carers should make a request for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised. Parents/carers need to request a 'Holiday Form', which needs to be completed 4 weeks prior to the leave of absence date.

Parents/carers are reminded that leave of absence taken from school without permission may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty fine, issued by the Local Authority.

It must be noted that there is no obligation on the part of the school or teachers to provide schoolwork to be completed by children whilst away on holiday.

The circumstances of each case should be considered, 'blanket approval' policies are not acceptable.

When considering a request for leave of absence we will take into account:

- The amount of time requested
- The pupil's general absence/attendance records
- Previous requests made for holiday absence and whether these are occurring annually/frequently.
- Proximity of public exams, e.g. SATs
- Pupil's educational needs and their ability to catch up
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- When the request was made

All requests will be responded to with a written response confirming the length of time requested and how the request will be coded, e.g. whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Where attendance has or is likely to fall below 90%, if the holiday is taken, all requests for holiday absence will be recorded as unauthorised, except in exceptional circumstances for example, where the previous absence has been due to prolonged medical/hospital needs. The Headteacher will use their discretion in this matter.

If, following a period of 10 days authorised absence, the child fails to return to school for a further 10 days, the school will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service leading to the possibility of removing the child from the school register.

Part-time timetables

All compulsory aged children are entitled to a full-time education. Only in an exceptional circumstance would a part-time timetable be granted, but this arrangement will be short term, and should not exceed longer than 6 weeks.

If a part time timetable is authorised, the school must notify both the Trust's Safeguarding Lead, plus the Local Authority Education Officer for Safeguarding. A period when the child is not in school, must be recorded as an authorised absence (Code C).

All schools will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead has been consulted, a risk assessment carried out and suitably robust arrangements are in place to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of any pupil on a part time timetable.

Children who are absent from school

Position Statement- national definition of children who are not receiving a suitable education:

"A compulsory school age child who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home" (revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education January 2009).

Local Authority protocols are designed to support professionals, partners and stakeholders in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are absent from school. Its aim is to identify the practical steps to be taken by professionals to locate and track children and young people missing from education.

If any pupil is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days, the school will notify the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Service. The school will include details of the actions taken to ascertain reason for their absence from school.

***** If the child has a Social Worker or if the school has particular safeguarding concerns and feels the child is at risk of immediate harm, the school will immediately notify social worker or the Local Authority Children's Social Care, without delay.***

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service, when appropriate.

Pupils with a Social Worker

We understand that good attendance at our academy also provides an additional safeguard for vulnerable pupils. Absence for pupils with a social worker, however, has been historically higher, with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker persistently absent compared to less than 10% of those who had never been in need. Social workers and Virtual School Heads have certain duties set out by the Government with regards to the attendance of pupils with a social worker.

To facilitate effective working, we will inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from the school or if we have concerns regarding a child's absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have clear line of sight for the attendance of pupils with a Social Worker and will take swift action where attendance of any such pupil, is a concern.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

The school will ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made for pupils with additional needs (defined as those with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'). This may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is provided, as well as providing auxiliary aids and equipment, or tailored services. The school recognises that some pupils with additional needs may need support to attend regularly and that, for some pupils, they may have more absence due to their disability, for example due to attending medical appointments. The school will ensure that pupils are not penalised for absence related to their additional needs and will support access support from external agencies where appropriate.

Young carers

The school recognises that pupils who are Young Carers may have caring responsibilities that impact on their punctuality and/or attendance. Where this is the case, the school will work with the pupil and family to encourage them to access appropriate support, including direct support from Young Carers and any other support the pupil and family may need; the school will also provide support in school where appropriate.

Bullying/Harassment

Our schools do not condone bullying or harassment by pupils, members of staff or parents. If any form of this behaviour occurs, it will be dealt with as a very serious matter. No one should feel they cannot attend school for fear of being bullied or harassed.

Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation

Children who go missing or are persistently absent from school may be an indicator of exploitation, especially if other key factors are also present.

Some other potential signs of criminal or sexual exploitation are:

- missing from home and /or being found out-of-area;
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- suspicion of physical or sexual assault / unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results / performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

At HCAT we monitor absenteeism daily to ascertain pupil's whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. We will work endlessly with all statutory and non-statutory agencies, including parents/carer to protect any child at risk or at possibly risk of this form of abuse. If a class teacher or tutor is concerned about a child who is regularly absent and presents with any of the signs listed above, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, as per the school's Child Protection policy.

Decision to Home Educate

Parents must inform the school in writing that they intend to educate their child at home. Once the letter of notification, written by the parent/carer, to home educate has been received, the school will immediately notify the Local Authority (LA) Education Welfare Service and the child's name will be removed from the school's register once authorisation has been granted. The pupil's place at the school will remain 'open' for 10 ten working days whilst the LA verifies with parents that they have made an informed choice about educating their child at home. We will never seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, we will follow the relevant legislation and have regard to the statutory guidance. If a pupil has a poor attendance record, the school will seek to address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.

Reviewing and monitoring

The Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust. It also holds the Trust Leaders to account for the implementation of this policy. Trustees also hold the Headteacher (or nominated senior leader) to account for the implementation of this policy within their individual school.

Attendance codes, description and meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils *Not attending in circumstances relating to Covid 19	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforce closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Present
Authorised
Unauthorised
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

Table of changes

Date	Change or inclusion
September 2022	<p>The following sections have added or changed following the publication of the DfE <i>Working together to improve school attendance: Sept 2022</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for following up absences • Promoting good attendance • Part-time timetables • Decision to Home Educate.
September 2023	<p>The following sections have added or changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are absent from school • Pupils with a social worker • Special Educational Needs & Disability • Young Carers