



Attendance Policy

Hylands School

	Date	Review frequency/comments
This issue	June 2020	Reviewed every 3 year (and any changes to the information occurring should be updated as soon as possible).
Reviewed By		
Ratified by Governing Body	June 2020	
Next review date	June 2023	



Principles

Hylands School was built to serve the community in which it is placed. Accordingly, we are a comprehensive, community school with a clearly defined catchment area and cater for pupils of all abilities.

Hylands School believes that every member of the school community has a right to an education free from intimidation and fear. Failure to act gives a silent but powerful message that bullying is appropriate and acceptable.

Introduction to Attendance at Hylands

At Hylands School we believe that our students should have the best experiences and opportunities that inspire their love of learning, that challenges them both academically and personally so that they can achieve their aspirational goals and become successful members of the local and global community. As our school vision this underpins everything we do and we believe that in order to achieve their full potential, students need to be in school every day.

Excellent attendance is the key to enabling our students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and ultimately go on to be successful. We promote school attendance by providing an engaging and stimulating environment for our students that encourages this love of school and learning. We hold the highest expectations of our students and encourage them to take personal responsibility for their learning and success both at Hylands and within the wider community. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and all internal and national data shows that students that regularly attend school are far more likely to achieve well at GCSE and at A level.

We value all members of our school community and their individual circumstances. We will work with families to identify reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and support them to resolve any difficulties they may be experiencing. It is expected that the whole school community and parents / carers will work together to achieve good attendance. Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

This attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation as it supports, and is supported by all other aspects of school life. It should be read in conjunction with the school safeguarding, Antbullying, Behaviour as SEN policies.

At Hylands we take a whole school approach to ensuring the good attendance of all of our students. Every member of our community including staff, students and parents/carers has a responsibility to promote good attendance, enabling students to fulfill their potential.



Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.30 am at the very latest. All pupils that arrive late must report to the school attendance office where the reason for lateness is recorded. Late pupils will be sent directly to their form or their first lesson.

Parents will be asked to:

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head in good time.



School responsibility

As a whole school responsibility, every member of staff irrespective of role has a responsibility to ensure the attendance of our student.

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence. Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.



- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

The attendance officer will:

- Assist in the delivery of pastoral welfare support to students
- Promote good attendance and effectively and proactively resolve all issues arising from attendance
- Ensure the school carries out its statutory obligations with regard to attendance including working alongside other professionals and agencies as appropriate.
- Establish the reason for non attendance, make assessments and agree a plan for facilitating a return to school using appropriate strategies within specified timescales
- Work with parents and carers to ensure the attendance of their children in line with school and government expectations
- To advise the school and parents/carers on strategies to promote the regular and punctual attendance of students and assist with the implementation of the strategies.
- To liaise with the local authority as appropriate and necessary.
- Ensure attendance and lateness records are up to date
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence by text/ phone call if no reason for absence has been provided.
- Ensure the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register

The form tutor will:

- Complete the register accurately everyday at 8.30 am for their form.
- Be vigilant and monitor attendance and punctuality of students in their Form.
- Carry out pastoral welfare checks for students who are regularly absent
- To discuss attendance issues/ concerns with the student.
- To inform the relevant members of staff if they have any attendance concerns i.e. the attendance officer or the students PSM/ Head of Year.
- Be the first port of call for students as well as their parents/ carers to discuss any queries or concerns they may have.

Teachers will:

- Plan and deliver exciting and engaging lessons.
- Set any missed work due to student absence as homework to ensure they have no gaps in their learning.
- Be vigilant and aware of any patterns in attendance as well as the potential causes for poor attendance e.g bullying.
- Liaise with the appropriate members of staff to discuss any concerns they may have.
- Deliver differentiated lessons that support the learning needs of all students
- Clearly communicate expectations regarding attendance.
- Support in the celebration of good attendance in line with the school rewards policy.
- Report internal truancy to the appropriate staff members.



Students will:

- Regularly attend school and all of their lessons on time, maintaining an attendance figure of 98%.
- Be in school by 8:25am to then arrive in their tutor base or lesson to register at 8.30am as part of morning registration and for Period 4 for the afternoon registration.
- Take responsibility for arriving to school on time by completing a same day 30-minute after school detention if they are late.

It is worth noting that a number of educational establishments and employers routinely request absence and punctuality reports for our students.

Dealing with poor attendance

Where a pupil has poor attendance below 96%, we carry out a system of support and intervention work which may include a punctuality and attendance report and conversations with the form tutor, followed by parental meetings conducted in person and/or by phone.

If attendance does not improve, pupils are referred to the Local Authority.

Following a period of absence, we liaise closely with the pupil and family, giving consideration to a suitable reintegration programme.

The exact route taken will be dependent on the level of parental cooperation given to the school, and whether the outcome results in an improvement in attendance.

Appropriate letter(s) will be sent out from the school if a pupil's attendance falls below the school's expectations and where concerns are raised regarding the frequency or nature of absence.

The first letter is sent when attendance drops below 95%. If attendance continues to be irregular a Legal Action Warning Letter is sent to parents. Where there is no significant improvement in attendance the school will refer to the Local Authority for a penalty to be issued which may then also lead to prosecution.

Leave of Absence during term time

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (as amended 2013), only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the Headteacher may decide to grant Leave of Absence which would be authorised using the relevant code appropriate for the absence.

Applications for a Leave of Absence must be made at least **four weeks in advance** using the Leave of Absence form available from the main reception or downloaded from our website. The request must be made by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides. If a Leave of Absence is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in line with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days). Parents/carers who choose not to pay the fine(s) within relevant timeframes could face legal action in the Magistrates Court.



Where a parent/carer claims there are exceptional circumstances, to request a Leave of Absence, a letter must be completed and sent to the Attendance Officer who will liaise with the Headteacher who is the only person who can authorise absence. Family circumstances will be considered together with academic progress and attendance procedures.

In the event of unauthorised leave or a term time holiday being taken, Hylands may request an Unauthorised Leave of Absence Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority in accordance with the Code of Conduct available on the Essex County Council website.

Celebrating good attendance

We believe that students should attend school because of the benefits it brings them with regard to both personal and academic development. We also believe that students with outstanding attendance should be recognised and celebrated. We do this by:

- Offering verbal praise on a daily basis
- Issuing weekly reward logs for 100% attendance in a given week
- Issuing the highest attending form in each year the tutor attendance trophy
- Sending formal recognition letters home to parents/ carers
- Issuing 100% badges for each term and cumulatively across the year
- Holding a yearly attendance trip

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student was

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.



Legal Sanctions

Penalty Notices:

- Penalty Notices will be considered when:
- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.
- A Penalty Notice gives each parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Prosecution:

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts:

(Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.



Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Head and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received. The Head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

Parents must advise the school by telephone, text or email by 8:30 am on the day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up with medical evidence should a child have visited a doctor/dentist etc. This can be in the form of an appointment letter/card or a copy of a prescription.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

- **Illness** Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Head to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- **Medical/Dental Appointments** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.
- **Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement. Excluded (No alternative provision made)



- Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for leave of absence should be directed to the head Teacher and will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates court.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Transfer between schools.
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age.
- In custody for more than four months.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the student.
- Death of a student



Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the School and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.