



Policy Document

Area: Attendance Policy

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Reviewed by	Amanda Sheppard
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Rationale

At Highfield School we recognise the clear link between consistent attendance and academic/personal achievement. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents, pupils, governors and all school staff. Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. As a school we expect the highest level of attendance from all students.

Attendance rates for special school are generally below those of mainstream schools because of the complex nature of some of our pupils' special needs. Unfortunately, some of our pupils are more prone to illness and hospitalisation.

We also recognise the importance of close home-school partnerships in supporting our pupils' optimum attendance.

Duties and responsibilities

Headteacher

To have overall responsibility for whole school attendance.

Behaviour, Welfare and Attendance (BWA) Lead

To liaise with Senior Leadership Team (SLT), teachers and administration staff.

To monitor the process for pupil absences

To identify persistent absences and set individual targets

To liaise with families, and where appropriate an Education Welfare Officer to develop intervention packages for pupils with persistent absences

Publish a mid-year and annual data reports

Teachers

To keep accurate attendance registers at the beginning of each morning (any amendments for the afternoon sessions will also be recorded)

To indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using the agreed coding system (see Appendix 1)

To identify pupils with poor or irregular attendance and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Parents

To ensure that their child attends school

To provide an explanation for any absences by phone or letter

Absences

The school accept absences for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances

The school will try to contact families where no information regarding the absence has been shared. This is to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of a child's attendance or punctuality we will contact the family to discuss the best way forward.

Authorised Term Time Absences

In exceptional circumstances, families may need to request permission for their child not to be in school during term time. These requests will be made directly to the Headteacher and permission will be given at their discretion following careful consideration of the child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern and the circumstances given.

Unauthorised Absences

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

Children at risk of missing out on education

In mitigating circumstances, for example pupils experiencing significant medical concerns, pupils may attend Highfield on a part time basis; this will be arranged through agreement with the Headteacher, involvement of key health professionals and reviewed regularly by the senior leadership team

Monitoring

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will formally monitor attendance data twice a year.

BWA Lead will monitor the attendance data each term and report any concerns to the SLT.

Unauthorised absences will be followed up to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and to signpost to additional multiagency support. This may result in a referral being made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and a penalty notice being issued.

Authorised term time absences will be monitored separately.

The protocol for pupils who fall into the lower percentage of attendance is as follows:

- Attendance monitoring from the school leadership team in conjunction with the EWO.
- Regular meetings and contact with parents/carers.
- Involvement of a multi-agency team.

If the above interventions are not successful and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the EWO and their service will become activity involved.

Appendix 1

Guide for Parents/Carers

When does my child need to be in school?

School opens for pupils at 08:45am. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time

Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This will be followed up with a letter requesting this information if we are unable to contact you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- *Illness*
- *Emergency dental/medical appointment*
- *Hospital medical appointments*
- *Day of religious observance*
- *Family bereavement*
- *Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances*

*Should the absence be because a medical appointment has been received then **school requires a copy of the appointment letter** for records and to mark the child as having a medical appointment.*

What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

Will school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will try to contact you, if we have not heard from you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

Can we take term time absence?

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to not be in school during term time, you should complete an application form, stating the reason why. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having considered: your child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern of your child and the circumstances given.

My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?

Contact the school speak to the PSA's to discuss any concerns or worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

Appendix 2

Process for monitoring Pupil Absence

Known Absence (Medical/Dental)

Copy of the appointment letter and covering letter explaining that your child has an appointment, including if your child will be absent from school for part of or the whole day.

Illness

On the first morning of the illness contact school **before 08:30** stating the reason for your child's absence and expected time away from school

Registration

If school are not made aware of the illness/absence then teachers will complete the register with an 'N' which is an Unauthorised Absence. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Key Stage Lead or Parent Support Advisor (PSA).

First day phone call home

A member of the school will call the family to ascertain the reason for the absence. For any family who have been unable to be contacted a letter should go home

Persistent Absences

The Key Stage Lead or PSA will contact the family to discuss the reasons for the absence, and an action plan will be put in place to support. This will be treated sensitively and may require the involvement of multi-agency professionals.

Appendix 3

School Registration Codes

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)	Approval Education Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	In for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session