



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

This Document incorporates:

- Hartmore School's Attendance Policy
- A statement of intent for all staff, pupils, directors, parents and carers.
- A reminder to us all of what the school is trying to achieve
- A working document with important information about attendance
- The philosophical and theoretical framework for attendance
- Guidelines for staff
- Support for new teachers, parents and carers to the school and NQT's
- A common approach to attendance

2. Rationale

The aim of Hartmore School's Attendance Policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is committed to encouraging, recognising and valuing good attendance.

Hartmore School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all education staff to ensure that pupils are attending school, as they should be. We endeavour to work with families and our registered homes to make sure that any problems or circumstances that may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

Outstanding attendance can only be achieved by successfully addressing a number of essential and interrelated factors:

- Outstanding teaching and learning.
- Good discipline and effective working relationships.
- High expectations of pupils in terms of work and behaviour.
- Pupils feelings of physically and emotionally safety and security.
- High levels of positive recognition, praise and encouragement for good attendance.
- The support of parents and carers to recognise the importance of good attendance and encourage and support their child to ensure they achieve this

3. Purpose

To encourage all staff to:

- Give consideration to the different factors that contribute towards high attendance.
- Establish safe and well-organised learning environments.
- Maintain high expectations of pupils both in terms of work and behaviour.
- Maintain discipline and develop effective relationships to support our pupils.
- Plan, prepare and deliver interesting lessons.
- Offer high levels of praise and encouragement for good attendance.

4. Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) To his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) To any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age:

- (a) When he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
 - (b) Otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.
- Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day, which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June):

- (a) If he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) If he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) If that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age

Hartmore School is committed to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Directors

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, Directors will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow education staff, pupils, parents and carers to implement the policy effectively
- Nominate or identify a member of the Directors to take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to pupils, staff parents and carers,
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets and agree these with the Headteacher.
- Take time at director's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for pupils who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and targets set for the future.

School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement

- Coordinate with the directors to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- Nominate an individual to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to do this. The person nominated in this school to oversee and monitor attendance is Ange Stranger (School Secretary).
- Report to the Directors on attendance each term.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings

Teaching & Education staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and other education staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance

Parents & Carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we ask that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations
- Follow the school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- Encourage a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- Avoid taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we ask that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, carers and the school timetable

- Speak to their teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home that may impact on their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the pupil's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

6. Categories of Absence & Procedure for Reporting Absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences. Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a pupil's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a pupil is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. (Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers).

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need contact the school on each day of absence. When the child returns to school parents or carers should send a note or an e-mail explaining the absence (for school records).

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Medical, Dental & Other Health Appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

It is accepted that the special needs of some pupils for psychological therapies may unavoidably impact on School Attendance. However, in the long run such intervention should not only positively effect their lives generally, but also their ability to make the most of their educational opportunities. Cooperation with parents/carers to minimise any detrimental effect on learning progress is essential.

Authorised Absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

Many of the pupils at Hartmore School are in the care of a local authority and as such have to attend regular LAC reviews and other meetings.

On occasion, appropriate psychological therapies can only be accessed during the school day.

Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence.

Family Holidays & Extended Leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance of the leave being taken. (In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration).

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. If permission is not granted, but the pupil is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised.

The Headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. His decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

Religious Observance

Hartmore School recognises that there may be times where pupils of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents and carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Study Leave

The school believes the best place for our pupil to study is in school so the period of time leading up to final examinations where pupils are commonly granted authorised absence to 'revise at home' will not happen, except in exceptional circumstances.

Late Arrival

Registration happens before the first lesson starts and again straight after lunch before the afternoon lessons begin. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as late. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils who are late come to the office first to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that everyone on site can be accounted for in the case of an emergency.

7. School Action

Following-Up Absences

Class registers are passed to the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the lead teacher, attendance officer, form teacher or other delegated member of staff will contact the parent/carer to discuss possible reasons and if there is anything the school can do to support the pupils swift return to school. Teachers will follow up with parents/carers for written explanation for unexplained absence (this is required no matter what the reason or length of the absence).

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a pupil has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 consecutive school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and the school have been unable to contact the parents/carers, the Headteacher will notify the placing authority and agree appropriate action.

If pupils are discovered to be truanting, parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and what support the school can offer to ensure their swift return to school.

This policy is supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Bullying, Behaviour and Teaching and Learning.

8. Policy Review

This Policy was last reviewed in October 2020. Next review is due in September 2022.