

Attendance Procedure

Highworth Warneford School



Approved by: Andy Steele

Date: September 2022

Last reviewed on: September 2022

Next review due by: January 2024

Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. School procedures	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	8
7. Attendance monitoring	9
8. Monitoring arrangements	10
9. Links with other policies	10
Appendix 1: Attendance codes.....	11
Appendix 2: Attendance action plan.....	12

.....

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The link Trustee for attendance is Mr S Rhodes who can be contacted at srhodes@warnefordschool.org

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Regularly analysing attendance data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and putting effective strategies in place to support them
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authority and other partners to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mark Nye (Deputy Head) who can be contacted via 01793 762426 or mnye@warnefordschool.org

3.4 The pastoral leaders (Heads of House / Pastoral Support Workers)

The pastoral leaders are responsible for:

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Implementing the attendance action plan for students where attendance falls below expectation
- Building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding the barriers to attendance, working with families to remove them
- When persistent absence is a symptom of wider issues, engaging external agencies and early help processes to provide extra support where needed

3.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Receiving calls and emails about absences and recording it on the school system
- Monitoring attendance data and producing reports for analysis
- Reporting concerns about attendance to Heads of House (HOH) and designated senior leaders
- Working with the SLT, Pastoral Leaders and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Clare Lindley who can be contacted via 01793 762426 or clindley@warnefordschool.org

7.5 Form tutors

The form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording AM attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Officer
- Working with children and parents to identify attendance issues at the earliest opportunity
- Working with HOH to promote the benefits of high attendance

7.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording PM attendance of students that they are timetabled to teach during Period 4, using the correct codes, submitting this information to the Attendance Officer

7.7 Parents / Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time (8.45am)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

7.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every school every day
- Attend registration at 8.50am
- Arrive at lessons on time, prepared to learn

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.20pm (period 4).

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08.40am or as soon as practically possible. This should be done by telephone on 01793 762426 or via email at datateam@warnefordschool.org

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school or Education Welfare Officer may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents must notify the attendance officer at datateam@warnefordschool.org before the intended appointment, where this is not possible the parent should telephone the school on 01793 762426 informing us of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed at 9.10am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code 'L'
- After the register has closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code 'U'
- Students who arrive after 08.50am, but before 9.10am must report to their tutor. After 9.10am a student must sign in at the front office

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss receiving vital information from their tutor. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Punctuality is monitored by the attendance officer and the pastoral leaders. If a pupil is regularly late, this will be challenged by the school.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

The school will pursue any absences that the school has not been notified about, in order 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. If a parent doesn't inform the school for the reason of their child's absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 2 weeks. Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may involve an educational welfare officer or conduct a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer
- If a student is absent for 5 consecutive days and the school has been unable to contact parent/carers, school will start to complete the children missing in education checklist
- Persistently absent students are tracked and monitored carefully through the school's pastoral system and are subject to an Action Plan (See Appendix 2). The plan may include a referral to

the Education Welfare Officer. All Persistent Absence students are also automatically made known to the EWO.

4.6 Reporting to parents and carers

Parents / Carers may monitor attendance, via the Class Charts webpage or app.

Parents / Carers will also be formally notified of attendance through the following means of communication:

- Student tracker reports
- Letters, phone calls and meetings

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school does not offer a specific definition of 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated directly to the Headteacher, who may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Compassionate grounds
- Study leave
- Family bereavement/funeral
- Wedding/Civil partnership of a family member
- Prison visits
- Student not in school as part of an agreed part-time timetable
- Exclusions

Reasons for **unauthorised absence** could include:

- Family holiday/trips that have not been agreed by the school
- A student is absent from school and the parent/carer has not communicated the reason for this to the school
- Day off for a birthday/ social occasion
- Looking after a sibling/child in the absence of a parent

- A student is absent from school without the parent's knowledge or consent
- Following an agreement with the Education Welfare Officer, absence without the provision of medical evidence
- Arriving after the registers have closed at 9.10am
- A student is absent from school with the knowledge of the parent/carer but has not been agreed by the school
- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily

5.2 Legal sanctions

Parents or guardians of students of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise under the provisions of the education act 1996. If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Highworth Warneford School promotes the benefits of good attendance and recognizes that good attendance should be celebrated and rewarded. Strategies include:

- Attendance displays
- Assemblies to promote attendance
- Parental communications via regular newsletters
- Students are awarded merits if average attendance above 95% when tracker reports are produced
- Whole school attendance raffle

Parents can also support their child's regular attendance at school by:

- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Contacting the Education Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice
- Retaining open and honest communication with school. Children can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and

the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse

7. Attendance monitoring

Highworth Warneford School uses Sol Attendance to monitor and analyse attendance on a fortnightly basis. This tool allows the attendance officer to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with attendance. Reports are produced for pastoral leaders and the designated senior lead. The school attendance action plan (Appendix 2) is implemented for students where attendance falls below 95%. Support offered to families will be child centered and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Highworth Warneford School also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children. The pastoral team works closely with the SENDCo, EWO and other external agencies to remove any additional barriers in attending school.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data, fortnightly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the designated senior leader and the pastoral leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Where attendance falls below expectation, request that pupils and families engage with the school attendance action plan (Appendix 2). This will involve meetings with the parents of pupils who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services, removing the barriers to attendance at that earliest opportunity

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Action Plan

HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All students will understand the importance and impact of attaining above 95% attendance.

Attending school is the joint responsibility of students, parents, teachers, tutors, support staff and senior leaders.

Attendance will be monitored. Attendance that falls below minimum expectations will be met with intervention.

STAGE 1 – 95% to 100%

Tutors take accurate registers every morning. Any lateness or absence is coded appropriately.

Tutors will monitor attendance, speak to individual students and contact parents if necessary.

Tutor time is used to promote good attendance.

STAGE 2 – 90% to <95%

Attendance Officers send information letter to parents.

Attendance Officer to discuss any individual concerns with HOH.

HOH / Tutor to speak with students / parents from disadvantaged cohort. Move any appropriate cases onto stage 3.

STAGE 3 – <90% (Persistent Absence)

Letter of concern sent to parents.

Parents invited to Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with HOH.

Target for improved attendance and timeframe is set (no more than 6 school weeks).

Support to remove barriers coming to school and from outside agencies if appropriate.

Meeting notes and agreed targets / interventions documented and copy sent to parents

After 6 weeks: Attendance Improvement Review Meeting (AIR) with HOH

If targets are met, student receives 3 HOH merits and attendance continues to be monitored for further 6 weeks.

If targets are not met, case moves to stage 4.

HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

STAGE 4 – <90% and targets not met in Stage 3

Formal letter to parents, stating that medical evidence will be required to authorise any further absence.

Parents are invited to Senior Attendance Review meeting (SAIR) with SLT / EWO.

Attendance targets are reviewed and set for defined timeframe (no more than 6 school weeks).

Meeting notes and agreed targets / interventions documented and copy sent to parents.

If targets have not been met, evidence is collated and school will proceed with prosecution.