



Attendance Policy

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Harborne Academy Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Introduction

At Harborne Academy, we expect all students to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular school attendance and educational attainment are inextricably linked. We recognise that regular attendance at school is essential for good learning and continual progress and ensures that students get the best possible outcomes from their period in compulsory education. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

We expect all of our students to aspire to 100% attendance and appreciate the full support of parents and carers in encouraging this. The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level. The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Aims

- To maintain exceptionally high levels of attendance and punctuality across the Academy, significantly above local and national averages.
- To work with parents to ensure individual student attendance is as high as possible, supporting and challenging where needed.
- To regularly monitor attendance patterns so that the Academy can put appropriate interventions and support in place to support young people and their families.

Responsibilities

Academy Staff:

The Academy has in place a coherent system of monitoring student attendance. Form Tutors, Progress Leaders Assistant Head teachers, Ethos and Aspiration and the Attendance Officer plays a key role in this system.

Why is attendance so important and how is it linked to attainment?

Logically if students are not in school, they are not learning and thereby allowing their potential grades to suffer. What might seem insignificant as they lounge on the sofa on a day off school is that if they are not genuinely ill they should be in school and working their hardest towards achieving their best, no matter what year group they are in. The process of education is life long and we build on what we already know and therefore, if they skip school they are damaging their future. Each year there are 190 school days which leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical and dental appointments. Therefore the school is very unlikely to authorise absence for these reasons.

As mentioned earlier our **School Attendance Target is 95% or above**, therefore, if your son/daughter attends for at least 95% of one school year they will have had less than 10 days absence.

The expectations of the school are:

- School lessons start at 8:50 a.m. each day, students should be in the building before 8:45 a.m.
- The student is deemed late if they pass through the gate after this time.
- If a student arrives after this time with a genuine reason, they should bring a note from home to this effect, or parents must contact student reception by 9.30 a.m.
- Arrival after 8:50 a.m. will result in a same day after school detention with a senior member of staff unless it is for a valid reason backed up with a note or call from a parent.

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

First Day Absence

The Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence. If they are unable to talk to either parent/carer, then if possible, a message will be left. The Attendance Officer will record details of any action which will be filed in the students file and the register will be updated according to the reason for the absence.

Third Day Absence and Beyond

A visit will be carried out to the home address (es) to parent/carer to obtain the reasons as to why continued absence of their son/daughter. Also we would explain that the parent/carer is required to contact the school to explain the continued absences of their son/daughter on a daily basis.

Tenth Day Absence

A letter will be sent to the home address (es) to inform the parent/carer of our continued concerns. We will also inform the parents/carers in the letter that they will be on Spotlight and this could lead to parent/carer being fined.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the tutor to be aware of and bring attention to the Attendance Officer, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. The Assistant Head Teacher or Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern again through the spotlight programme. If this continues, the school will invite parent/carers to discuss causes and ways forward. At this point parent/carer will be advised any further absences where there is no Medical evidence will be unauthorised.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Local Education Authority to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the school may decide to issue in consultation with the Local Education Authority instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system. If attendance still proves to be an issue or the fine remains unpaid this also may lead to legal action

Parents/Carers

must:

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school.
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time e.g. book medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours whenever possible and avoid taking family holidays in term-time.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with your child's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance. Please telephone or email the school on the first morning that the child is absent and state the reason for the absence and when the child would be likely to return.

A Parent/ Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as 20 or more unauthorised absence sessions
- They allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation
- They fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after the registration is closed

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and whole class. Are you aware those children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent Absence students are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting meeting will be offered between parent/carer, student and school to try and help resolve any issues. All Persistent Absence cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Officer who, if necessary, have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including: parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine an ultimate fine of £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This includes ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the student, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement is used in this way. Both this agreement and the Attendance Policy will be published on the school web site with a clear link for all parents/carers.

Holidays in term time

As a school we have always discouraged parents/carers from taking holidays during term time.

However the Department for Education has recently published several amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

The amendments make clear that from September 2013 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We have taken advice from Local Education Authority and it is as follows;

What are ‘exceptional circumstances’?

It is for the Head teacher to decide on what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for a term-time holiday will be considered on an individual basis.

Examples of exceptional circumstances are:-

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill.
- There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the Head teacher may consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to cope with the situation.
- The holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place in the time requested.

When permission is likely to be refused?

- If your child has already had some absence in the current or preceding year.
- It is near or during exam times.
- It coincides with the start of the school year.
- The reason given is that the holiday is cheaper in term-time.
- The school believes that it may have a harmful effect on your child’s education.

Should a school not agree to grant leave and parents take their child on holiday regardless, then this will be counted as unauthorised absence — this is the same as **‘truancy’**.

The Attendance Officer may consider issuing a Penalty Fine of £60 for this period of unauthorised absence.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying(speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration. Leave in term time will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances.

Religious observance

According to the DFE guidelines all schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice

from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Also, under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible or making sure that their children of compulsory school age receives full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. Further details are available at the following link

Associated Policies

Information relating to absence due to suspected forced marriage, female genital mutilation, radicalisation or other safeguarding issues is covered in our safeguarding policy.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_4016117

Information on Attendance can be found on our school website

<http://www.harborneacademy.co.uk/parent/attendance-and-punctuality>

