

Attendance Policy

2024/2025

PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-CENTRED

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Heworth Grange
School

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

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1. Introduction:

Heworth Grange School is committed to ensuring all students achieve their full academic potential while developing the personal and social skills they need to start their lives as young adults. Data shows that there is a direct link between excellent school attendance and high levels of progress and achievement. We will work relentlessly towards an aspirational goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every student's minimum expected target for attendance is 96%. This means having no more than 10 school days of absence in the academic year.

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements:

See the Trust Attendance Strategy September 2024

3. Expectations

The school will;

- Promote good attendance & investigate unexplained and/or excessive absence
- Ensure registers are taken daily for every period
- Work closely with parents/carers where a student's absence is a cause for concern
- Support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- Support students returning to school after prolonged absence
- Regularly review internal systems to ensure procedures are robust
- Analyse and examine attendance figures

Students will be expected to;

- Start everyday with an Attendance focus, either celebrating high attendance or investigating why students have missed school
- Attend every day, on time. This means **being on site by 8.35am**
- Be on time for every lesson
- Monitor their own attendance by recording this weekly
- Ensure all absence notes and appointments are shown to their Head of Year and where appropriate the Attendance Leader

Parents/Carers are expected to;

- Ensure their child attends school on days it is open as stated in the Education Act 1996. This is a legal responsibility.
- **Telephone school on each day of absence before 9am**, providing details of the reason for absence, and expected date of return.
- Ensure their child arrives on time for the start of the school day at 8:35am
- Ensure their child is dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn
- Avoid any absence from school for any reason other than genuine illness
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during the school day.
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time

Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4. Parent Communication/Home visits Student Absence

If your child is absent from school for any reason you **MUST let us know as soon as possible on the first day of absence, no later than 9am by calling 0191 421 2244**. You must provide details of the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

We will contact every student who is marked absent from school. This may be by telephone, text message, email, or a home visit for safeguarding purposes. We operate a 'check and challenge' approach for every absence to support pupil wellbeing. All actions taken and any necessary escalation will be in line with the child protection and safeguarding policy.

- If contact is not made with a parent/carer during day 1, 2 or 3 - Eyes on the student will be expected on day 3 in the form of a home visit.
- If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary. Depending on the reason for absence and the history of absence, if a student has not been seen for 5 consecutive days, a wellbeing check will be completed in the form of a home visit.
- If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary. If contact has been made between school and the parent/carer but the student still has not returned for 8 consecutive school days, another home visit wellbeing check will take place.
- If this visit is unsuccessful this may be escalated in a referral to the Police, to ensure the welfare of the student.

5. How we will communicate with you

We will text, email or ring you if your child is absent and you have not told us why. If we are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you by phone. An Attendance Officer may make a home visit if your child is regularly absent.

If your child's attendance drops below the school's attendance target of 96% it is likely that you will receive a letter from your child's Head of Year to say that they will be monitoring your child's attendance for a set period (usually 20 school days) and that any absences due to illness or injury will need to be evidenced.

If your child has a pre-existing medical condition that may affect their attendance at school, please contact your child's Head of Year to ensure that we can support you with this in any way possible.

6. Medical / Dental Appointments

We ask that all medical and dental appointments are made for out of school hours. If this is not possible, an appointment card/ parent's note must be shown to the school office before any student may leave the school premises. Where possible an appointment card or letter should be shown to the office in advance.

If it is an emergency appointment please contact the school on the day of the appointment to advise us of the time of the appointment and the arrangements for your child leaving the school premises.

**Please be aware that if we have not seen any evidence or received a phone call from a parent/carer regarding an appointment we will not allow a student to leave the premises.*

7. Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong

- External examinations – where proof of examination is shown
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes

8. Intervention strategies for improving attendance

95% and above – No intervention, keep it up!

Stage 1 (Usually 95% or below) - Letter sent home with registration certificate, this usually means your child will be monitored and any absence, without medical evidence, will be recorded as unauthorised. These letters are sent throughout the year.

Stage 2 (Usually 90% or below) – Parents will be invited to an Attendance Panel Meeting due to there being no improvements in attendance and now being classed as a persistent absentee. The Attendance Panel Meeting will have a member of the pastoral team, usually the Head of Year with the Attendance Leader and/or Director of Progress. This meeting will involve your child being under a 6-week review of their attendance. Students will be monitored in school by the Attendance Leader.

Stage 3 (Usually 85% or below) – If the previous intervention strategies have not improved your child's attendance, Fast Track to Prosecution may be initiated. This will involve a monitoring period for at least 12 weeks. Prosecution could include a fine of up to £2,500, a custodial sentence not exceeding 3 months, Community Service (for all parents with Parental responsibility).

**Please be aware that every child's attendance is looked at on an individual basis by the pastoral team. For example, if your child suffers from a medical condition that may affect their attendance the intervention/support strategies put in place would differ from those above.*

9. Persistent Absentees (PA)

Any student whose attendance is below 90% is classed as a PA. Having attendance this low is detrimental to a child's development and progress. Interventions will be put in place to support a child and their family to increase their attendance so that they are not missing valuable learning time.

10. Rewards

We celebrate and reward those students that have excellent attendance but also those students who show improvement. It is vital that students are celebrated for their achievements and improvements. Attendance points are presented weekly via way of ClassCharts. We also have form group attendance competitions on a weekly, termly basis. Every half term, pupils with excellent attendance are invited to attend a surprise reward activity.

Attendance incentives and rewards include:

- A whole school inter-form attendance league
- Individual attendance rewards in weekly assemblies
- Attendance Fridays – Sweet/Chocolate rewards
- Bonus Class Charts positive points for attendance
- Weekly attendance tracked
- Half termly Attendance Certificates
- 100% Club Prize Draw
- Half termly attendance reward activities
- Excellent attendance is also a criteria to be invited to the Year 11 Prom and end of year attendance reward trip

We also recognise the support from families to ensure that their children are attending well at school, on time and are ready to learn every day. Therefore, throughout the school year we hold family competitions to acknowledge and reward excellent/improved attendance.

11. The Role of our Attendance Officers

Our Attendance Officers are there to ensure students are achieving their potential through attending school regularly and gaining the support required. Our team are highly skilled and have an understanding of both school interventions and external service interventions that will support young people and their families. Hopefully by working alongside parents to support their child we will ensure the best possible outcomes for each child.

12. Punctuality

We expect all students to have excellent punctuality.

The gates to year group areas will open at 8:30am and ALL students are expected to be in their form group yard by 8:35am to start line up for morning standing assembly at 8:40am.

If a student arrives after 8:40am, they must enter through Student Reception Late Gate.

What are the benefits of being on time?

- It gets your day off to a good start and puts you in a positive frame of mind, so that you can make the most of your learning opportunities.
- Form time is very important. Lots of information about the school day is given out first thing in a morning and you may miss key information if you are late.
- It sets positive patterns for the future. You can't expect to keep a job if you're always coming in late;
- It leads to better achievement because you attend for the entirety of each lesson.
- It helps you develop a sense of responsibility for yourself and towards others and is a sign of good character;
- It is respectful to your teacher and to your peers and builds good habits for later in life when your employer pays you to be on time.

What are the benefits of being on time?

If your child is going to be late for school, where possible **contact the school office on 0191 421 2244** and advise us of the reason for your child's lateness. If there is a justifiable reason for their lateness the office will make a note of it and will ensure that your child is not given a 'late detention'. If your child has a medical appointment that will cause them to be late, please let us know in advance by either calling the office or sending your child in with a note/appointment card so that we can mark it on our registers. For emergency appointments a phone call in the morning is much appreciated.

If your child is late they **must** sign in Student Reception Late Gate.

Student Reception Late Gate is supervised by a member from the Senior Leadership Team from 8:40am-9:15am every morning. If your child is later than 9:15am they will be required to enter through the main reception and sign in.

At Late Gate, students complete a form to explain the reason for their lateness and ways to prevent being late again. These reasons are shared with parents/carers.

The Heads of Year and Attendance Officers closely monitor punctuality and parents/carers of any students who are late on a regular basis will be contacted and asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the effects of their child's poor punctuality and work with parents/carers to try and improve it by putting appropriate interventions in place.

***IMPORTANT**

After the registers close at 9:15am any student that arrives after this time (without a legitimate reason) will be given a 'U' code on the registers. This is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Please be aware that the school can apply to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice for any student that receives 10 or more 'U' codes for lateness. This may result in parents/carers receiving a fine of up to £160 per parent/per child.

13. Consequences for being late

If your child is late to school, it will go down as a negative on ClassCharts and marked on SIMS registration documents. If a student receives 3 negative expectations logs in a week (Monday to Friday), they will receive a 1-hour detention (14:45-15:45).

14. Breakfast Club

To support your child with their morning routine, we offer a breakfast club from 8:00-8:30am. Students can spend time with their friends or can **talk to the pastoral team or SLT** at breakfast club while **enjoying free cereal, fruit and juice**. The EEF research demonstrates that attending breakfast club 'effectively prepares pupils for learning. Breakfast club schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.' We believe that our breakfast club provides a positive start to the day and wraparound support for our pupils.

15. Contacts

School Absence Line: 0191 421 22 44

Miss C Gibson – Deputy Headteacher
Miss S Rennie – Assistant Headteacher - Behaviour & Attendance
Attendance Team: Mrs L Anderson – Attendance Leader
Miss A Hetherington Attendance Assistant
Miss D Longhurst – Attendance Officer
Mrs M Harland – Attendance Officer
Mrs D Abrahamson – Attendance and Safeguarding Officer

Heads of Year:

Mrs S Rostron – Head of Year 7
Mr L Gates – Head of Year 8
Mr J Maynard – Head of Year 9
Miss R Chippindale – Head of Year 10
Mrs S Brooks – Head of Year 11
Mrs L Heslop – Assistant Head of Year

For further information please refer to Trust Attendance Strategy September 2024

16. Attendance Codes

Each school day is split into two sessions, morning (AM), afternoon (PM).

/ & \ = / is used in the morning and \ is used in the afternoon. Both these marks mean that your child was present and on time.

B = Attending any other approved educational activity

C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

C1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

D = Dual registered at another school

E = Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

G = Holiday not granted by the school. The G mark is used if a parent takes their child out of school during term time.

We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment) *Please do not assume your child has an authorised absence just because you telephoned to inform us. If your child's attendance is low and you have received an attendance letter, we may require further information and may be logged as unauthorised.*

J = Interview e.g. college interview

J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

K = Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

L = Late to school before registers close

M = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N = Reason for absence not yet established *(it is important you inform us of your child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence otherwise this code will change to O)*

O = Absent in other or unknown circumstances. The O code is used when we have not received any reason for your child's absence. These O marks shows that we have been unable to get hold of you and that you have not told us why your child was off school. O is also recorded where school feel there is not a good enough reason for your child to be absent. This is an unauthorised absence reported in the child's attendance certificate.

P = Approved sporting activity

Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

R = Religious Observance i.e. EID

S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes

U = Arrived in school after registration closed (9:15)

V = School trip or another educational visit

W = Work Experience

X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Z = Prospective pupil not on admission register

= Planned whole school closure

17. Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays

Who may be fined?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example: a 5 day holiday would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

Second Offence

(within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools **after 19th August 2024**.