

Hope House School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Signed by:   Debbie Black Headteacher                   Date: September 2024 |
|   C. Raducanescu   | Education Director  |  Date:   |    September 2024   |
|   Natalie Moore |   Regional Head Teacher/SENCO  | Date:   |   September 2024  |

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# 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
* Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
* Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made) (and [2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/regulation/2/made), [2011](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made), [2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made), [2016](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html) amendments)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made)
* This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Senior Management Team

The senior management team is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the lead teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school.
* Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting through their KPI’s.
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
* Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
* Reports concerns attendance to the Home Manager, Social Worker and Education Director/Regional Head Teacher.
* Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.

3.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes on Arbor MIS.

3.4 School staff

School staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on Arbor MIS.

# 4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register on Arbor MIS and record 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 afternoon 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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 9.00 am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am, the register for the second session will be taken at 1.40pm and will be kept open until 2.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 may ask the pupil’s parent/carer 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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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.

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 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
* After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
* If there are ongoing punctuality issues then this will be addressed via the Multi-Disciplinary Team, daily with the home manager and social worker informed.

4.5 Following up absence.

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by sending an attendance letter to a arrange a meeting with the home manager and social worker.
* Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
* Identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The pupil’s attendance will be recorded in end of term reports to parents/carers & social workers.

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# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the lead teacher’s discretion.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ are events or problems which you did not expect, and which stop you being able to perform to the best of your abilities in your studies. For example, bereavement, unexpected personal or family problems or illness might be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

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 (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/carers’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
* Study leaves

5.2 Reducing persistent absence.

To reduce persistent absence, the headteacher will arrange meetings with the home manager/social worker and attendance letters will be issued stating that the pupil’s attendance will be closely monitored.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carer must pay £80 within 21 days or the fine rises to £160 if not paid within 21 days. From the academic year 2024/2025 each parent/carer will only get up to two fines per child in a 3-year period. If the second fine is issued within the 3 years, it will be £160. 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 pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

# 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

* Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
* Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
* Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
* Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets.

# 7. Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily & half termly basis.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil’s absence goes above 6 unauthorised (3 days)/ or drops below 85% the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil’s absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer and it triggers 10 unauthorised absences, we will have the option to submit a penalty notice referral to the local authority. The authority will then send a letter to the parent/carer that their child will be monitored for 15 school days and if they are any further unauthorised days within this period a penalty notice fine can be issued to the parent/carer.

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The school collects and stores attendance data for the following purposes:

* Track the attendance of individual pupils.
* Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
* Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

# 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated by the Education Director/Regional Head Teacher.

# 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.

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| **Register Code** | **Description** |
| / | Present AM  |
| \ | Present PM  |
| L | Late (before registers closed) marked as present  |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| C | Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances |
| 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 |
| E | Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made |
| I | Illness (NOT appointments) |
| M | Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments |
| R | Authorised absence due to religious observance |
| S | Authorised absence due to study leave |
| T | Authorised absence due to traveller absence |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| B | Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration) |
| P | Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity |
| V | Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip |
| W | Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| G | Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday |
| N | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided |
| O | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description |
| U | Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed |
| D | Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance |
| X | Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children  |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances  |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances  |
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements |
| 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 |