The High School
Leckhampton

Attendance Policy

Reviewing Member of Staff: Mrs Rebecca Vaughan
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1. Aims

At The High School Leckhampton we aim for excellent attendance from all pupils. All pupils should aim for 100% attendance whenever possible. A minimum of 97% attendance is expected by all pupils and parents are encouraged to support students reaching these goals. For minor illnesses, such as a sore throat, headache or mild cold, pupils are encouraged to still attend school, where they will be supported and encouraged to attend as many lessons as possible.

The 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance emphasises a 'Support First' ethos, and recognises that '*the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families... [It] is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.*'

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
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting and supporting punctuality to school and lessons

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. As per convention 28 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, all children should have access to education.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures

https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/parental-responsibility-measures 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
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

a) The Governing Body

The Governing Body 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

b) The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting that a Fixed-Penalty Notice (F.P.N.) is issued by referral to the L.A.

c) The Designated Senior Leader/Attendance Champion

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Ensuring calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues have been held with the HoH and tutors
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Advising the Headteacher whether a F.P.N. may be necessary

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Rebecca Vaughan and can be contacted via 01242 383351.

d) The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and the Attendance Champion
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The Attendance Officer will produce the following data weekly, monthly and termly:

- List of pupils with attendance below 95% from 1st September
- Attendance percentage for each Tutor Group/House/Whole School
- Attendance percentage since 1st September for each Tutor Group
- Attendance percentage for each House since 1st September
- Attendance for PP, PLAC, EAL and SEN pupils

e) Heads of House (HOH)

HoH have oversight of the attendance for the pupils in their house. HoH have responsibility to:

- Promote and encourage outstanding attendance within their house
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- Contact parents over student absences where appropriate
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer about concern pupils and ensure that the Attendance Officer is alerted to which pupils are on the concern list and HoH are informed immediately when they are absent
- Liaise with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) over visits to parents' houses whenever pupils have concerning attendance
- Organise and conduct meetings with parents whenever attendance becomes a concern
- Organise AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) alongside the Education Welfare Officer whenever necessary and ensure that paperwork from AIM meetings is accurate and promptly sent to parents

f) Form Tutors and Class Teachers

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance using the correct codes on BROMCOM on a daily basis and in each session (registration or lesson).

Form tutors will contact home if they start to see a pattern emerging with a child, or if a child is off for two consecutive days.

g) School Administrative Staff

School administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

h) Education Welfare Officer

The school employs a part time Education Welfare Officer (Mrs Rosalind Waters). The role of the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) is to:

- Liaise with the school's pastoral team and the attendance officer to ascertain which pupils have poor attendance and need further intervention.
- Visit pupils' houses when requested; when a pupil is absent from school or when attendance in a concern.
- Offer support to pupils and their families where attendance is a problem.
- Conduct meetings with parents whenever attendance is a concern and discuss strategies for improving attendance of their child in the future
- Attend AIM (Attendance Improvement Meetings) held by the school with parents and ensure that the legal position is made clear.
- Support the school in the creation of any necessary paperwork needed for prosecution for poor attendance

- Ensure the school is kept aware of any changes to legislation regarding school attendance

i) Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day and is on time to each lesson
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

j) Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time, everyday

4. Recording Attendance

a) Attendance Register

The school will keep an attendance register and ensure that all pupils are registered.

The school will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (registration) and once during the second session (pm registration). 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.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:00. The register for the second session will be taken at 14:15 and will be kept open until 14:35.

b) Unplanned Absence/Illness

If a pupil is too ill to come to school, parents should:

- **Phone or email the school reception before 8:30am on the day of the illness and leave a message with reception or leave a message on the automated answerphone**
- This procedure should be repeated on each day that the illness continues

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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

c) 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.

d) 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

Pupils who are persistently late will serve an appropriate sanction. Parents will be alerted to persistent lateness by the tutor or Heads of House.

e) Following up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, 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 seek additional professionals help such as calling the police
- 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

f) Reporting to Parents

The school will report attendance to parents in the interim report.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

a) 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 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 (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 elsewhere

b) Holidays in Term Time

Pupils are not permitted to take holidays in term time. The correlation between good attendance and good exam results is very strong and missing lessons will lead to significant underperformance in examinations. In exceptional circumstances, parents may complete a form and send it to the Headteacher, explaining why exceptional provision should be granted. Only in rare and pressing situations will a holiday be authorised.

5.3 Absence for Extra Curricular Activities

The High School Leckhampton will encourage pupils' participation in Extra Curricular activities. Pupils will sometimes need time away from school to participate in their chosen field. Examples might include:

- Playing sport for the school, a national or county side
- Performing in a drama production or TV/film role
- Instrumental performance for an orchestra
- A dance or music exam

Parents must always contact the Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance to request any time off from school for special events. In all situations, professional discretion will be taken and close liaison with the pupil and parents will inform the school's decision. Where an absence is beneficial to the pupil's success in his/her chosen field and unlikely to significantly harm the pupil's education, then special permission will be granted to have time away from school. Pupils will always be instructed to catch up with school work.

d) Long Term Absence

Where a pupil has long term absence due to an independent professionally diagnosed medical condition, the school will work closely with parents and all relevant outside agencies (GP, consultant, counsellor etc.) to ensure a programme is in place to provide appropriate educational provision (within the limits of the school's funding and staffing).

Referrals to Early Help may be sought after to support the family to improve attendance.

e) Reducing persistent absence

The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will monitor attendance on a weekly basis. If any downward trend or rapid deterioration in attendance occurs, they will contact parents to arrange a supportive meeting looking to improve attendance.

The school will request a visit from the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) to the parents' house following a half-term of conversations with parents when attendance drops below 90%, as the DfE identifies this as being persistently absent.

The school will do their best to help families remove barriers to attendance and to offer support in conjunction with wider services.

f) Legal Sanctions

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, we will work with partners, including the Local Authority, to formalise and intensify the support.

As part of the attendance measures introduced in statutory guidance (August 2024), if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks, the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a 'Notice to Improve' notification sent via email on behalf of the school and issued by the Local Authority (LA). Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon).

Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence (where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place),
- arriving late after the register has closed,
- or a combination of these with holidays taken during term time

These 10 weeks can span different terms, academic years, and even different educational settings, such as transitions to secondary school or in-year school changes. For instance, if a child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in July (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, a parent/carer may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences'. Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a Penalty Notice may then be requested by the school and issued by the LA to each parent/carer responsible for the child.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

The penalty amount has increased to £160 (from September 2024) and reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence. If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, **both** adults may be fined **per child**, and therefore, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.

Nationally, Headteachers are:

- not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and
- are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making their decision.

The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.

The statutory guidance also states that all schools must consider issuing Penalty Notices if the criteria is met. This is a national statutory process that will be followed by all English state funded schools.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Rewards

Rewards are regularly used to encourage good attendance. The following are some of the strategies used by the school:

- The promotion of good attendance in assemblies, the tutor programme and Personal Development
- Reward breakfasts
- House assemblies will be used to celebrate excellent attendance
- Displays

7. Attendance Monitoring

a) Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level daily
- 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 Body.

b) 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

c) Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other school 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

d) 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:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or if the DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by the Headteacher.

9. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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Rights Respecting School Statement

The contents of this policy have been reviewed taking into account The High School Leckhampton's responsibilities as a Rights Respecting School. In particular, our commitment to the following articles of the Convention of The Rights of The Child:

Article 28: (Right to Education): *The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.*

Article 29: (Goals of Education): *Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to love peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.*

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Attending the school		
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
K	Attending education provision	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority

AUTHORISED Absence		
Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Part-time Table	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time table
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
ABSENT – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes		
Q	Lack of access	Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Lack of transport	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Widespread disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to traffic
Y3	Partial site closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Whole site closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	In criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Public Health guidance/law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<u>Administrative</u> Codes		
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Request for leave of absence during term time

PLEASE REMEMBER: Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less well prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under-achievement, which together we must seek to avoid.

Please read carefully the information overleaf before completing this form.

Child's name:		Tutor Group:		Child's Date of Birth:	
From:	(date)	To:	Returning to school (date)		

Reason for absence*:
Include destination.
Continue on another sheet if necessary.

Name of Parent** 1		Name of Parent 2	
Address of Parent 1		Address of Parent 2	
e-mail		e-mail	
Accompanying child during leave of absence	Yes No	Accompanying child during leave of absence	Yes No
Signed		Signed	
Relationship to child		Relationship to child	
Date		Date	

This form must be completed and returned to school no less than 2 weeks before planned absence

✂ .....

Dear (full name)	**Dear (full Name)**
Re (Child's name):	Current Attendance **%**

Further to your recent request for leave of absence between

From: To: Returning to school (date):

☐ **Leave of absence authorised.** Please ensure that your child returns to school promptly following your absence as failure to do so can result in their removal from school roll.

☐ **Leave of absence refused.** Any absence from school between the above dates will be marked as unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice of up to £160 (Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996)

☐ **Other**

Signed ……. (Headteacher) Date ……

**The reasons given above will be used to establish if your motives for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, so please include as much detail as possible (including your destination).*

The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form (please continue with additional information on a separate sheet if required)

***Parents – Parent means: all birth parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.*

Information for parents/carers

- 'Improving attendance is everyone's business', and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
- Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
- As of September 2024, the penalty amount has increased to £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1st September 2024) the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.
- Parents/carers do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
- If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.