



HODGE HILL GIRLS' SCHOOL

"Educating tomorrow's women today"

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Aims

At Hodge Hill Girls' School we view regular attendance as an essential part of a pupil's academic and social success. Learning and friendship opportunities are enhanced by sustained periods of unbroken attendance, and we rely on our partnership with parents and carers to ensure that this is achieved. Excellent attendance means that young people usually make excellent, consistent progress in their schoolwork. If a child is registered at school, parents and carers have a duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child attends regularly and is punctual.

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 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](#) 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:

- 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](#)

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 Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher 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 it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Deputy Headteacher

- Monitors attendance data
- Meets weekly with the attendance and welfare assistant to coordinate attendance strategies and ensure that practices are regularly reviewed
- Meets with parents of pupils who have persistent absence
- Reports to the governing body and the headteacher
- Ensures registers are kept to expected standards.

3.4 The Pastoral Managers

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Make contact with families whose children are absent from school on that day
- Work with pupils who have unauthorised absence or are persistently late
- Ensure all registers have been taken from am and pm registration and chase up where necessary.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the deputy headteacher and attendance and welfare assistant
- Contact parents and arrange meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues following FAST-track guidance
- Put in place attendance action plans with families and pupils to tackle attendance concerns and monitor
- Work with attendance welfare assistant to tackle persistent absence
- Place pupils 'On Attendance Report' and monitor where appropriate and keep records
- Initiate referral to SARM meetings following guidance from FAST-track to attendance

3.5 Attendance Assistant

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Download answerphone messages on absence and follow up
- Monitor the Late Book and work with pupils and inform Pastoral Managers of persistent lateness.
- Report concerns about attendance to Pastoral Managers and the Deputy Headteacher
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues following the FAST-track guidance
- Works with Pastoral Managers to tackle persistent absence/lateness
- Put in place attendance action plans with families and pupils to tackle and monitor attendance concerns
- Place pupils 'On Attendance Report' and monitor where appropriate and keep records
- Supports Pastoral Managers to ensure that all registers have been taken from am and pm registration and to chase up where necessary
- Share with pupils via form tutors' pupils' weekly attendance figures
- Advises the deputy headteacher when referrals to ELIT have been made

3.6 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, (either /,N or L only) and submitting this information to SIMS (electronic register) if SIMS is not working form tutors must request a paper copy from the attendance assistant, complete and send as a matter of first priority.

- Form tutors should mark registers electronically and accurately
- Promote outstanding attendance and punctuality within their tutor group
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality and act as role models.
- Ensure planned absences are communicated to Pastoral Managers
- Monitor attendance patterns and report any concerns to Pastoral Managers

3.7 Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for every lesson, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMS. Codes used by class teachers are either /,N,L only
- Should take accurate electronic registers for all their classes
- Where a pupil arrives late to lesson the class teacher should mark the pupil L and record the number of minutes late on SIMS
- Where pupils are marked present in their previous lessons and are not present in the lesson class teachers should inform Pastoral Managers as soon as possible

3.8 School admin office

- Reception staff are expected to sign in any pupils who have arrived after the registers are closed at 9.30am and inform the Pastoral Manager
- Reception staff will sign out any pupil once this has been approved by Pastoral Managers who will speak to the child to identify reasons
- Reception staff will only allow pupils to be collected by parents once checked and approved by Pastoral Managers

4. Recording attendance

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

Pupils should make their way to their form room from 8.25am on each school day. The register for the AM roll call will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 8.50am. As lunch is split between year groups PM roll call will be taken at 1.45pm and will be kept open until 1.50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should ring into school and leave a message on the answer phone with the pupil's name and the reason of absence and an expected date of return. If a pupil is absent without explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by the school to ascertain the reason for the absence.

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.

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 appointment card/appointment letter must be seen by the Attendance Welfare Assistant or Pastoral Manager in advance of the appointment.

Pupils who have been diagnosed with a serious medical illness will still be able to access reward activities for good and improving attendance

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

The school has a clear policy for lateness. Through the parent bulletin and other forums parents/carers are aware that the school has high expectations regarding punctuality. If a parent or carer knows that their child is going to be late i.e. because of a medical appointment, the school should be informed beforehand. A pupil who arrives after 8.35am but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

The official close of register is 9.30am; a pupil who arrives after this time and is unable to provide a satisfactory reason will be marked with the code 'U', which is an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.

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

A pupil who receives three L marks within a week will have to serve a half hour after school detention between 2.55pm- 3.20pm with the attendance welfare assistant, who will work with pupils to highlight the importance of punctuality and share the impact of lateness to learning. Pupils who are persistently late will serve a 30-minute detention on the same school day. Where persistent lateness continues this will be upscaled to a one-hour detention 2.55 pm to 3.55 pm with a Pastoral Manager.

Punctuality is monitored daily. Parents/carers of those pupils who have been persistently late on three or more occasions will be contacted and may be asked to meet with their child's Pastoral Manager or the attendance welfare assistant to discuss the matter further. The law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

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,
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

The attendance assistant will download any messages about pupil absence from the school answer phone from 8.35am. The attendance assistant will speak to parents from 8.35am to 9.50am about pupil absence and make contact with parents of pupils with N codes. This information will then be passed to the Pastoral Managers who will follow up on any pupils/parents that the Attendance assistant has not been able to contact.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The attendance of all pupils is strictly monitored following the procedures detailed in this policy. Parents receive their child's attendance record on their child's academic progress report which is given termly. Pupils will be told of their attendance figures with any late marks weekly via their form tutor. Where attendance becomes a concern, parents will be informed by a phone call initially. If there are no improvements, informal meetings will be arranged between the Pastoral Manager, parent/carers and the pupil to identify barriers to attendance and the setting of targets for improvement. Furthermore, where the school is concerned about the number of unauthorised absences it will inform parents by letter, that the Head Teacher will no longer authorise any absence unless supported by medical evidence.

The school keeps a detailed list of all Persistent Absentees and actions that have been taken to support them with Attendance issues. This is regularly updated. In addition, if any pupil reaches 10 or more unauthorised absences the school will follow LA procedures for FAST-track to Attendance.

4.7 Safeguarding

It is essential that the school knows the whereabouts of all pupils during school times. Parents/carers should advise the school by 8.15am each day at the latest of absence, the reason and an expected date of return. A message can be left on the school answer phone. If a pupil is absent without explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by the school to ascertain the reason for the absence.

Children Missing from Education

The school must notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 5 days or more.

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 headteacher's discretion.

The decision to authorise absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion based on the assessment of the situation. Circumstances vary in each situation so there are no absolute rules on this subject. In all situations, evidence will be required, where it is deemed appropriate. The safety of our pupils is paramount, and we will investigate each situation and outside agencies may be informed.

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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'persistently absent' is 10% of the number of possible sessions. Pupils whose attendance fall below 90% would be classed as a Persistently Absent pupil. Therefore, if a pupil who misses 19 or more days over an academic year will be classed as Persistently Absent. The school keeps a detailed list of all Persistent Absentees and the actions that have been taken to support them with attendance issues. Please note 1 session absence is equal to half a day.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or 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 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

The Pastoral Managers and the attendance welfare assistant work closely with pupils and parents in encouraging, motivating and improving attendance. Where families need support, the Pastoral Managers will work closely with the pupils and parents/carers to put together a manageable action plan that identifies the needs of the family and the support needed.

Supporting, promoting and celebrating excellent attendance is integral to the school vision, values and ethos. Both excellent and improving attendance is celebrated and recognized through a variety of ways for example;

- Certificates for excellent or improving attendance during termly awards assemblies
- The giving of an attendance cup to the form class with the best attendance in the year group
- Awarding points to pupils with excellent or improving attendance. Points can be used towards the termly rewards activity
- Form tutors providing pupils with a weekly attendance update and any periods of absence are discussed
- The school also uses the weekly parent bulleting to celebrate excellent and improving attendance
- All matters regarding attendance are shared at termly governors' meetings
- Regular pastoral meetings take place to discuss matters including attendance
- Staff briefing is also used to disseminate strategies to improve attendance

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance assistant at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily 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).

Parent/carer are expected to call the school each day if their child is ill or absent. If a pupil's absence goes above [2] days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

School follows the 'FAST track to attendance' If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Educational Legal Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

The attendance of pupils is recorded electronically on SIMS. Attendance data is shared with pupils weekly through the form tutor. It is shared with parents/carers three times a year in the termly school report. The weekly parent bulletin highlights the importance of good attendance and the attendance of the best tutor group in each year. The following is used to monitor attendance

	Action	By Who
100%-96%	Monitor pupil attendance, any concerns with Pastoral Managers	Form Tutors
95%-90%	Pastoral Managers will meet with pupils to complete 3 houses form to identify reasons for absence. If there are no improvement Pastoral Managers will meet with parents/carers informally to identify intervention or support and agree action steps/plan and monitor attendance. This information will be shared with attendance welfare assistant progress. Where there is no improvement in attendance and reaching 90% threshold PM and Attendance assistant will meet to discuss further steps	Pastoral Managers/Attendance Assistant
90%-85%	Attendance Assistant to meet family, monitor pupil attendance and start formal process of 'FAST track to Attendance referral to ELIT team	Attendance Assistant/ Deputy Headteacher
Below 85%	Actions appropriate to the nature of the concern and involve meetings with parents/carers or contact with relevant external agencies.	Deputy Headteacher

School collects and stores attendance data, and it is used for internal purposes. For example:

- 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, and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- FAST track to Attendance guidance as set out by BCC
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
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	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
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