



# **Heritage Park School**

## **Attendance Policy and Procedures**

### **2024 – 2025**

**Revised by Sarah Davidson: July 2024**

**Reviewed by governors: July 2024**

**To be reviewed: July 2025**

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## Responsibility for maintaining policy

Safeguarding, Attendance Leads

## Review date

July - Annually

## Policy Statement

Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. While regular school attendance is predominantly the responsibility of parents and carers, schools play a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. This includes taking a positive and proactive role in the promotion of regular school attendance through strategies identified within the school's Attendance Policy that will engage families. It is important that Governors take a key role in promoting good attendance when approving this policy.

Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child is ready for school each morning and on time for every session. Parents/carers should notify you in advance of any planned term time absence, requesting permission for the absence to be authorised. Where the absence is due to an emergency, contact should be expected on the first day of absence, with daily contact until the child is well enough to return.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Heritage Park School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

Heritage Park School is committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

## Aims of the Policy

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures.
- The commitment to allocate resources to support the policy
- Addressing attendance and inclusion issues in the curriculum.
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year.

## The Law

### **The 1996 Education Act requires that:**

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

## Partnership

### What the school expects of our pupils

- That pupils attend regularly on time and are ready to learn.
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit.
- To report to the office should they arrive after registration time.
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school.

### What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day.
- To contact school on the first day their child is absent for any reason.
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible, and to obtain an Authorised Absence Pass from the school if unavoidable.
- To arrange holidays out of school time. Further guidance is offered under the section *Term time requests for Exceptional Leave* later in this policy.
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school.
- To provide a note, signed by the parent/carer, when the child returns to school explaining the reason for absence. This will be filed and may be produced if requested by the Local Authority.

### What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school

- A broad, balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards.
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance – this is completed on SIMS.
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained.
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified.
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed.
- Termly meetings with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Team, Senior Leadership, Governor and the Safeguarding and Attendance team.
- Routine data tracking and analysis by the Safeguarding and Attendance Team.
- Regular communication with parents/carers.

## Working together

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to rigorously monitor attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



### **Expect**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school



### **MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched



### **LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



### **FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues



### FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order



### ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## Procedures

### Daily procedure

If a child arrives in school:	If a student does not arrive in school:
Students arrive in school at 8:30am and are registered in class by the class teacher for the AM attendance mark.	If a student does not arrive in school the school office will contact parents/carers.
Students are registered again for the PM mark at 1pm by the class teacher.	<p>If a child does not arrive for afternoon attendance, class staff actively search for the student and seek support from the Pastoral Team and Key Stage staff.</p> <p>The Admin Attendance Officer checks the registers at 1:15pm each day and alerts any changes in attendance from the morning. They then alert the Attendance Team.</p> <p>If at any point staff think the child has absconded the missing person procedure needs to be followed and the Safeguarding Team need to be informed.</p> <p>If the student is ill or has exceptional circumstances for not attending this will be updated on the school registration system. Parents/carers are expected to contact the school office before the start of the school day.</p>
Attendance Officer, Office Admin and Deputy Principal know the attendance figure for the school by 9:15am each day.	If a student is refusing to attend the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers and offer advice/support/encouragement and arrange to visit the student.

	Social Care and Youth Justice professionals involved to be informed of any unauthorised absence by the DSL/DDSL.
If a student falls ill at school, school will contact parent/carer to make them aware that the student feels unwell and make a child centred plan, e.g. "shall we see how the student is in an hour and call you back/or can you come and collect your child from school".	If there is no answer to the initial phone call a text message will be sent requesting that parent/carers contact school/staff as soon as possible regarding why their child is not present.
	If there is no response to school message/phone calls the Attendance Officer will attempt to make further contact. If no contact is established school hopes to visit on the first day of non-attendance. A home visit will be completed within 3 absent days (see safe and well checks).

## Procedure to improve attendance

Stage	Action
<b>Voluntary</b>	
1	Attendance letter sent to students below 90% Initial concerns around attendance raised. Staff class to liaise with the family to ascertain reasons for absence and discuss barriers in attending school. Intervention from the Safeguarding Team and the Pastoral Team where appropriate.
2	Attendance letter 2 sent to students where no improvements has been made in attendance This letter will be sent at the discretion of the Attendance Officer. Home visit(s) from the Educational Welfare Officer. The Safeguarding Team will make referrals to the appropriate agency where appropriate.
3	Meeting in school/home with a member of the Safeguarding and Attendance Team and parent/carer during the meeting. Ways forward to improve attendance will be discussed and agreed and an attendance contract signed by all attendees.
<b>Formal</b>	
4	Formal support. Voluntary formal enforcement. This meeting will require parents/carers and the student to meet with the Safeguarding and Attendance Team and a Local Authority representative for Attendance and Inclusion.  <i>Chapter 6: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</a></i>

	Dependant on outcomes of the meeting, further support avenues will be explored or a penalty warning notice served.
<b>Enforcement</b>	
5	Review meeting to take place with the Safeguarding and Attendance Team and the Attendance and Inclusion officer. Legal prosecution instigated where appropriate. Improvement in attendance – continue to monitor.

Our process to support good attendance is to have an attendance response centred around ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’. This is our approach to support students and families that are struggling to maintain regular attendance.

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)  
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

## Safe and Well checks

- Safe and well checks are completed to ensure the safety of pupils in accordance with government policy - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and Attendance Guidance (2024). When a student is not present at school and there has been no response from the parent/carer, safe and well checks will be completed within 3 days of non-attendance. However, the school will aim to visit on the first day of absence.
- Safe and well checks will be completed if there has been contact with parents/carers, but the child has not been seen for 2 days due to refusal/circumstances. The Attendance/Engagement Officer will offer support and advice.
- If the student is unwell for a period of 5 days, the school Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers to see if any further support can be offered or work needs to be provided to be completed at home. Staff may complete safe and well checks after 5 days except in circumstances where serious illness is present, or the student has been seen by other professionals.
- If no one is at home when a safe and well check is being completed a note/message will be relayed to parents/carers that school have attempted to visit. If there are professionals who are involved with the family, they will be made aware that the student has not arrived or been seen. If there are any concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a student, then a referral will be made to the safeguarding hub/ police. Staff will continue to visit the home address until contact is established.

## Attendance linked to medical incidents

Medical/ Dental appointments: These are attendance at G.P. surgeries, dental and hospital appointments. If the child is present for registration, they receive a present mark, and a comment should be added to show the time the child leaves school to attend the appointment.

We encourage parents/carers to make routine appointments out of school times where possible. Parents/carers are encouraged to bring children into school, either before the appointment or after it, or preferable before and after.

If a child is having an operation, they get an M code, then they get an I code for the recovery period advised by the medical professionals.

Following an incident of illness/medical concern school will work with parents and carers on creating an Individual Health Care Plan and/or reduced timetable where appropriate to enable the student to access education.

If there is any doubt about the authenticity of illness, schools can record as unauthorised. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absences due to illness. Doctors' notes must not be requested for children.

When the level of absence attributed to illness reaches a level of concern the Local Authority believes it is reasonable for the school to ask the parent/carer for further information and, in some cases evidence of illness. If the parent is reporting that absence from school was because of illness then the Attendance and Inclusion Officer will request the parent gives consent for the Local Authority to contact the General Practitioner, via the GP protocol if the section 19 duty is met (Appendix 1).

## Registration

Registers are a legal document; care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

- Registration takes place each morning between 8:30am and 9am.
- Registration takes place each afternoon between 13:00pm and 13:10pm.
- In the morning, Students are collected from the school reception by staff and escorted into their classroom for registration
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) in the register for each student present and an absent mark (N) for any student that is absent. Any notes received will be placed on the registration system for checking by the Safeguarding and Attendance team and office staff. All notes will be recorded on the registration system and remain within the students file and be made available to the Local Authority where appropriate.

## Responding to lateness

- Students arriving in the classroom after 9:00am will be deemed to be late.
- The register will be updated by office staff and their name and reason for lateness will be recorded on the school registration system.
- At 9.00am and 13.15 the student is deemed to be late/absent. Any student arriving in school after these times will be marked U. In case of emergency the register shows the student is on the premises, but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance. In exceptional circumstances if a student arrives after the register has closed, the Attendance and Safeguarding Team will review the register and a L code may be applied.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school and invited into a meeting if their child is persistently late. (Appendix 2)

## Children Missing from Education

All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the Local Authority in line with the relevant guidance within agreed timescales.

DSL/DDSL is the nominated member of school staff to liaise with the Local Authority's Children Missing from Education Team. Students who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures (Appendix 3)

## **Elective Home Education**

Elective Home Education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire instead of sending them to school full-time. For further information and the procedure see Appendix 4.

## **Local Authority support**

The school's Safeguarding and Attendance Team/Pastoral Team may make a referral to the Local Authority to help support with barriers to attending education.

Local Authority will liaise with school regarding families/children they are working with where attendance is a concern.

The Local Authority will close cases where there is non-engagement. If parents refuse to engage or stop engaging this evidence can be used in legal proceedings. Local Authority will provide evidence of their involvement, support and interventions as part of legal evidence.

## **Children in Public Care**

The LAC co-ordinator liaises with the Local Authority's Children Looked After team. CLE pupils will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

## **Awards and Rewards**

- Attendance assemblies are held to celebrate individual student's attendance, class attendance and whole school attendance.
- Improved attendance is recognised and rewarded.
- Termly certificates will be awarded to pupils with 100% attendance.
- Class to class competitions within key stages for the highest attendance.
- Half termly raffle to students per key stage. A raffle ticket is placed in a jar for each full week of attendance.
- Rewards for most improved attendance over the half term per key stage.

## **Partnership with parents/carers**

It is vital that parents/carers are involved in promoting good attendance and punctuality

- Regular attendance information is given to parents/carers e.g., by newsletter, individual letter and regular phone calls.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact school to discuss any issues impacting on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Any concerns or problems raised by parents/carers will be responded to quickly and sensitively by the school.

- Parents/carers are invited into school to share the success of their child.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Governors

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Principal.
- Andy Wynne is the governor responsible for Safeguarding and Kevin Corke is the Chair of Governors.
- Attend School Attendance meetings as necessary.

### Principal

- Maintain an admissions register.
- Maintain an attendance register with marks recorded for each student at least twice a day (morning and afternoon minimum).
- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school.
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.
- Works with the Deputy Principal to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary
- Works with external agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the school.
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of Children Looked After by the Local Authority.

### Deputy Principal

- Maintains an overview of attendance and manages the day-to-day implementation of attendance plans and strategies.
- Liaises with the Principal to produce and evaluate attendance statistics.
- Works with external agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the school.
- Liaises with the other officers of the Local Authority to implement attendance strategies.
- Termly Meetings with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Officer, Governor and Safeguarding and Attendance Team.

### Class teachers

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes and return to the school office (if manual registers are used) promptly following registration, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Attach any notes received to the register for the attention of office staff.
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a Pupil.
- Promote and take responsibility for good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school.
- Class teachers and support staff to maintain continued contact with students that have been absent (see - Daily procedure if a student does not arrive in school).

### Safeguarding and Attendance Officer

- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Monitor and action daily attendance through data analysis.
- To be the main point of contact to parents and carers in relation to school absences.
- Provide support to parents/carers to help improve the attendance of students.

- Complete home visits to parents/carers when a student is absent.
- Work in partnership with the Safeguarding Team to help promote the wellbeing of students and families.
- Partnership working with all agencies involved with promoting the safety and wellbeing of our students.
- Liaises with the other officers of the Local Authority to implement attendance strategies
- Liaises with the Local Authority around legal proceedings and attending SAPS meetings in school.
- Providing and maintaining emotionally safe spaces for pupils in school.
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a weekly basis.
- Provide reports from SIMS to governors, Principal, Deputy Principal and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested.
- Liaises with the Deputy Principal to produce and evaluate attendance statistics.
- Provide relevant information to Local Authority officers, contacting families regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Attend attendance reviews in school.
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education.
- Notify the Local Authority of any student who is:
  - ✦ Missing from Education (CME)
  - ✦ At risk of permanent exclusion
  - ✦ Requiring 6<sup>th</sup> day provision - following a permanent exclusion
  - ✦ On an unauthorised term time leave that will last 5 day or more
  - ✦ Persistently absent from school
  - ✦ Persistently late for school

### **Engagement Officer**

- Liaise with the Safeguarding and Attendance Officer.
- Complete home visits to parents/carers when a student is absent.
- Work in partnership with the safeguarding team to help promote the wellbeing of pupils and families.
- Providing and maintaining emotionally safe spaces for students in school.
- Implement attendance interventions to support students to improve their attendance in school.

### **Attendance Office Admin**

- Monitoring registers and reporting to the Safeguarding and Attendance Team.
- Establishing contact with parents/carers when a student does not attend.
- Supporting the Safeguarding and Attendance Team in attendance administration.

## **Authorising Absence**

- Only the Principal may authorise absence.
- When a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the Principal will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The student is too ill to attend school (Appendix 7).
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The student is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent/carer belongs.

- The school at which the student is registered is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority unless the parents/carers have chosen to send their child to a school which is not within walking distance.
- The student is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- The student has a Local Authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence.
- Leave of absence is granted by the Principal under exceptional circumstances.

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered.
- The student is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home.
- The student is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday.
- The student is absent on exceptional term time leave for longer than agreed by the Principal.
- The student is absent on holiday without agreement under the exceptional leave guidance.
- The student is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut.

## Requests for term time exceptional leave

Parents/carers wishing to take a student out of school for a holiday is discouraged. Any leave during term time can only be authorised by the Principal under *exceptional circumstances*. If parents/carers wish to apply for term time leave under exceptional circumstances a request form must be completed by the parent/carer, clearly stating what the exceptional circumstances are, and given to the Principal for consideration no less than 20 days prior to the requested leave begins. The school will inform parent/carers in writing, within 10 days, whether the leave has been authorised (it should be made clear why a decision has been made and the criteria used should be re-iterated). (Appendix 5)

## Penalty Notice

If an unauthorised holiday is taken consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice (Appendix 6). At the Principal's request the Local Authority will issue the Penalty Notice and inform the school of the outcome.

It is essential that both the Local Authority and the school be consistent so that there can be no allegations of bias or favouritism. If it is seen that the policy is not being applied consistently the Local Authority will not be able to apply a Penalty Notice.

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued by the Local Authority.
- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to the Parent/carer, this can include those without parental responsibility but who have day to day care of the child.
- Headteachers cannot authorise holidays in term time anymore through the absence code H.
- Headteachers must consider the term time leave request, and if they believe there are exceptional circumstances these must be considered through the absence code C.
- Headteachers must request a Penalty Notice fine if the absence is unauthorised.
- There is no right of appeal for parents who receive a Penalty Notice fine, Headteachers can reconsider evidence provided and withdraw the fine if errors have been made.

There is an expectation of schools when a child meets the threshold of 10 unauthorised absences in 10 weeks to issue a penalty warning notice.

The Local Authority remains the decision maker on whether attendance legal processes will be followed. Schools are expected to present evidence of attendance response being followed in line with ALP checklist in a chronological format to their linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker.

### 3 in 3 Years rule for Penalty Notices

- **Offence 1**  
Penalty Notice fines will be £160 paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. With each parent/carer receiving a separate fine for each child.
- **Offence 2** (within a 3-year rolling period)  
Penalty Notice Fines will be £160 paid within 28 days, no reduction.
- **Offence 3** (or further) within a 3-year rolling period  
No Penalty Notice issued - consideration to prosecute through Magistrates Court.

## Reduced Timetables

All children of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet the child's individual needs. We will endeavour to gain parental agreement and have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time (this may be impacted on if the school has safety concerns).

In agreeing to a reduced timetable, the school are agreeing to the student being absent and therefore must record the absence as authorised, using the code C. Even if work is sent home with the child to complete, the school must authorise the absence. The cohort of children accessing a reduced timetable will be known as wave four students within school.

Students in receipt of free school meals continue to be entitled to a free lunch before leaving school, on arrival at school, or whilst attending the school.

They must be reviewed every 2 weeks.

Reduced timetables should be in place for no more than 8 weeks. Where a child or young person continues to receive a reduced offer after 8 weeks the school will look for support from the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Team and SEN to identify if the school can meet the needs of the pupil or if further support or provision is needed. (Appendix 8)

## Appendices

All hyperlinked documents prefixed with 'Sheffield Attendance' can be found in the Sheffield Attendance section on the policies page of the Heritage Park Website.

Appendix	Guidance
1	<b>DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs</b> <a href="#">Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
2	<b>Punctuality</b> <a href="#">Sheffield Attendance/Punctuality</a>
3	<b>DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance</b> <a href="#">Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
4	<b>Elective Home Education</b> <a href="#">Elective home education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> <a href="#">Sheffield Attendance/changes to Elective Home Education</a>
5	<b>Requests for term time exceptional leave</b> <a href="#">Sheffield Attendance/Term time leave policy August 24</a>
6	<b>Penalty notices</b> Pg 56 of Working together to improve school attendance. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</a>
7	<b>Illness</b> <a href="#">Sheffield Attendance/Illness</a>
8	<b>Reduced Timetable Guidance</b> <a href="#">Sheffield Attendance/Changes to Part Time Timetables</a>