



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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This policy will be reviewed annually and any amendments or changes made will be ratified by the Governing Body of the School

Setting the highest expectations

Hertswood Academy recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. We are committed to setting the highest expectations for attendance and punctuality. Attendance is an indicator of students' safety and well-being.

Parent/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

“Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.”

<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-attendance-and-absence>

The school is committed to providing a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. The Attendance Officer, senior and middle leaders, tutors and subject teachers consistently convey to students and their parent/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. According to DfE statistics, average secondary school attendance for 2016 is 95%. (<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-attendance-and-absence>) Hertswood Academy's target for each and every student is 96%.

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Hertswood Academy recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Parent/carers can find a copy of this policy on the school website, along with the start and finishing times of the day, our term dates and INSET days.

Persistent absence

Persistent absence is when a student's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions. Students whose attendance is below 90% miss out on learning and achieve significantly lower levels of attainment in comparison to their peers.

The school will rigorously pursue and implement those strategies that will increase the overall attendance percentage for the school, and reduce the number of students who fall into the Persistent Absentee category. It will meet and endeavour to surpass all DFE targets with regards to attendance and other applicable targets.

1. School Procedures

a. Registration

- Students should be in their form room ready for registration at **8:45am**.
- Students who arrive to school after 8.45am report to the Attendance Officer. They will be required to provide an explanation and given a late sticker in their planner and their time of arrival will be recorded.
- Students arriving to school after registration closes at 9.05am, without the required explanation or medical evidence, will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence for the morning period.
- Tutors and subject teachers will regularly remind students about their punctuality to all lessons if it is causing concern. They may keep a student in detention at break time or lunch time without notifying parent/carers. Parent/carers are normally notified as a courtesy if students are kept more than 15 minutes after school.
- Heads of Learning will meet students with a poor punctuality record and contact parent/carers. A Head of Learning may also send the record of attendance and punctuality when writing to a parent/carer about other disciplinary matters.

b. Punctuality

- **Lateness:** Any student not present when their name is called, who subsequently enters the classroom, will be marked as late. Any student not registered by 9.05am has to register with the Attendance Officer. Those without a genuine reason will be marked as 'Unauthorised Late' which counts as absent.
- **Arriving late during registration:** If there is no acceptable reason then he/she will serve a same day lunch detention. If the student fails to attend this detention - they will automatically be placed into a Directed Study Time session for one hour after school at the end of the week.
- **Arriving late after registration closes:** If a student arrives after the close of registration at 9.05am they will automatically be placed into a Directed Study Time session after school. Failing to attend this session will result in a more serious sanction, up to, and including, exclusion.

c. Absence

- **Reporting Absence:** Where a child is too unwell to attend school, parent/carers must contact the school's Attendance Officer by leaving a message on the attendance line by 8.45am. The answer phone is available 24 hours a day. The school requires parent/carers to call the school each consecutive day their child is absent.
- **Authorising Absence:** Authorising absence is at the discretion of the school. This will normally be granted for a legitimate reason such as: vomiting, diarrhoea, bereavement or religious observance.
- **Absences for students who have less than 90%:** Where a student's attendance is lower than 90%, parent/carers must provide medical evidence in order for absence to be authorised, such as; medical appointment cards, copies of any prescriptions etc, in order for the school to take this into consideration when authorising absences.
- **Prolonged absences:** Parent/carers must keep the school well informed in cases of lengthy absences. Parent/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note/explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision as to whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- **Medical/Dental Appointments:** Appointments should always be made outside of the school day. Where this cannot be avoided, the school will need to be provided with a copy of the appointment card/letter before the appointment takes place. The Academy should be informed before 8.30am if an appointment is going to make a student late, the absence will be unauthorised unless medical

evidence is provided. Please note; students will NOT be allowed off the school site if the school has not seen sufficient evidence (i.e. valid appointment card/letter) in advance. Students are expected to attend school before and after routine appointments and must ensure they sign in and out at reception.

- **Emergency Appointments:** On the rare occasion a student may need an emergency appointment parent/carers should inform the school as soon as possible and provide medical evidence when the student returns to school. If the student is already at school and an appointment has been made on the same day, the parent/carer must collect the student from reception, where a green medical evidence slip will be provided for the parent/carer to get stamped by the GP/Orthodontist/Dentist/Hospital and return to the school when the student returns.

d. Holidays and leave of absence

- **Term Time Holidays:** Holidays during term time are not authorised. Parent/carers requiring to take their child out of school during term time, **for any reason** other than illness or medical appointment, must complete a Leave of Absence request, in advance, for consideration by the Head Teacher. Only requests that the Head Teacher deems as exceptional circumstances will be authorised, backed up by relevant supporting evidence. Parent/carers who take their child out of school during term time where the absence **has not been** authorised, may receive a FPN (Fixed Penalty Notice) from the Local Authority. (Details of the Penalty Notices are outlined in section e)
- **Leave of absence:** Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, a letter outlining the reasons must be submitted as soon as they are known, for consideration by the Headteacher. Documentary evidence may be required to support an application. If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Improvement Officer will be notified. Letters received retrospectively will not be considered. In considering the request, we will also look at various factors, such as the timing of the request, proximity to exams and other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

e. Penalty Notices

- **Penalty Notices:** If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day=1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested, or requested and denied, the Headteacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent/carer for each child. Parent/carers can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the fine. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.

2. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent/carer informs the school in writing that the student is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the student
- A student has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student
- Death of a student

Hertswood Academy will follow Hertfordshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

3. Promoting Good Attendance

The school believes that promoting good attendance frequently is essential. There is at least one termly formal assembly for each year group, which promotes good attendance and demonstrates the effects on attainment and life changes. Attendance may be discussed with families at Parents Evening. The Attendance Officer may meet with parent/carers on Parents Evening for year groups 7–11 to discuss their child's current attendance. Reminders about attendance are featured in the school newsletter. Parent/carers will be updated on a termly basis about their child's most current attendance figure when receiving assessment reports. Parent/carers can view daily-updated attendance figures on Go4Schools at any time.

Rewards

Students are rewarded termly for meeting the school's target of 96% and those students who achieve 100% attendance over the course of the term are given a certificate. Each week that a student achieves 100% attendance and punctuality, they are rewarded with Vivos and entered into a half-termly prize draw. Termly and yearly reward trips are open to students who achieve 96% attendance.

Welcome back

Where a student has missed a significant amount of school through an unavoidable authorised absence they will be made to feel welcome. The Head of Learning will monitor that the student is helped to meet the expectation to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Hertswood Academy believes that improved school attendance can be achieved through the shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parent/carers, students and the wider school community.

Senior Leaders/Pastoral Staff/Form Tutors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parent/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parent/carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

Hertswood Academy requests that Parent/carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note/medical evidence where required.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Ensure that their child leaves home on good time to arrive punctually at school.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Support the school in applying sanctions to deter poor punctuality.
- Not keep their child away from school to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Headteacher in advance of booking the holiday.

5. Using Attendance Data

All students' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every week, the Head of Learning will provide all form tutors with attendance data for the previous week for each student within their year group. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top

Students' attendance will be tracked systematically by staff staged intervention will be actioned, with appropriate support, once attendance drops below agreed thresholds. It is important to note that stages on the intervention ladder can be skipped where it is judged that a more rapid and robust intervention is necessary.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Hertswood Academy will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. (General Data Protection Regulations - GDPR from May 2018)

6. Support Systems

Hertswood Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Hertswood Academy also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students, looked after children and young carers.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parent/carers and students
- Referrals to support agencies
- Student support officers
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centered and planned in discussion and agreement with both parent/carers and students.

7. Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Hertswood Academy will notify the Hertfordshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance.

The Education Welfare Service or school may invite parent/carers to attend a Parent/Carers Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent/carer (which can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support) to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A student has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time, and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parent/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Intervention Flow Chart

School will notify parent of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend.
- Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.
- Ensure your child attends school regularly.

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Assistant Headteacher will invite you to attend a meeting and may issue a warning of a Penalty Notice.

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between you and the School aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.

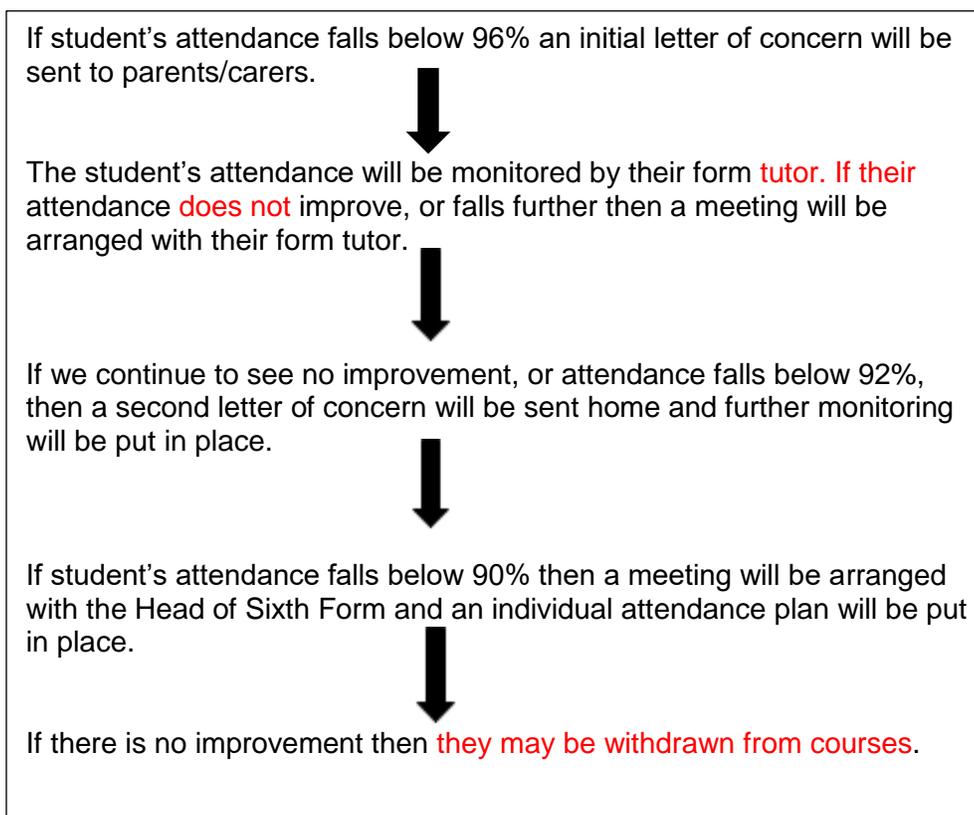
Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent/carer, per child this must be paid in full within 21 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120 per parent/carer, per child. If you fail to pay the Penalty by the twenty-eighth day, the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.

If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Post-16 Attendance Policy

Whilst the same monitoring procedures are used for Post-16, this will be monitored by the Sixth Form team. A summary of a student's attendance and punctuality will be sent to parent/carers every half term. Students with 100% attendance and no lates will be rewarded with vivo points.



- If a student's attendance falls below 90% they will not be allowed to participate in work placements, Access programmes, summer schools or other enrichment activities.
- Year 13 students whose attendance in year 12 was below 85% will be placed on probation to monitor their attendance. If their attendance falls below 96% in the first term, they may be withdrawn from courses.
- If a student's attendance falls below 85% and where interventions haven't been effective, we may request the student to pay for their exams prior to entering them.