



Pupil Attendance and Leave of Absence Policy

Created by Adam Brewster: February 2020

Reviewed by Adam Brewster & Helena Richmond February 2022

Nominated Governor: Debbie Shaw

Signed:

Date:

Review date: February 2023

Heltwate School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe that pupils should attend regularly to avoid disruption and maximize their educational achievement.

The school is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel safe, feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

The school will emphasise the importance of attendance to pupils in a variety of ways through PSHE and assemblies and reward good attendance.

The school will establish an effective system of communication with parents/carers to support good attendance and to provide appropriate information and advice through the school website and newsletters.

Pupil attendance will be regularly monitored. School staff will work with pupils, parents/carers and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a student's attendance.

The school will recognise the effort pupils make in achieving good attendance

Registers will be kept in accordance with government regulations.

Where parents/carers have anxiety about attendance in school, the school will work with parents in a supportive and understanding way.

If parents/carer are considering Elective Home Education (EHE) school will meet with them to explain the connotations / impact to enable them to make an informed choice

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent and deal with truancy and CME(Children Missing Education) issues

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer and to report back to the Governing Body;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;

- monitor termly progress towards these targets;
- have responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- have responsibility for ensuring this policy is made available to parents;
- have responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the school Attendance Officer by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- set the attendance targets for the year;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, Pupil Premium and Looked after Children;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- have meetings with Local Authority Attendance Officers as necessary.
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- report to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award termly certificates to pupils when they have achieved attendance above our target of 94%
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage pupils to achieve 100% attendance;
- work closely with the link governor and school Attendance Officer;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Role of the School Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer will:

- implement the policy with the Headteacher;
- monitor individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keep the Headteacher informed of attendance figures and trends;
- Hold meetings as necessary with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and follow Local Authority procedures.
- compile attendance data for the Headteacher, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officers;
- ensure registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date;
- keep registers open until 9.15am each morning. Pupils arriving after this period will be marked as late unless there is a specific reason e.g. transport issues
- contact parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.15a.m;
- send a Class Dojo text message or phone call if no contact is made requesting reason for absence;
- liaise with the Headteacher and contact parents where there are concerns about their child's attendance through series of letters and/or meetings
- contact the School Welfare Manager if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
- monitor class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the Headteacher or school Attendance Officer of any concerns about attendance or leave of absence
- emphasise the importance of good attendance;
- praise pupils who improve their attendance
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations and as part of the annual review process with parents

Role of the Nominated Governor (committee)

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Headteacher and the school Attendance Officer
- ensure this policy is up to date;
- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body every term;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Role of Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- ensuring their children are ready for the school transport each morning (where relevant)
- informing the school on the first day of absence by 9.15 am;
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.
- Avoid making appointments during school hours
- Make every effort to ensure there is no term time absence

Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- knowing the value of good attendance.

Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedures will take place:

- A letter will go to parents advising them of the school's concern and that their child's attendance will be monitored for improvement.

- If concerns continue, a letter will go out to invite parents to attend an informal meeting with the Attendance Officer and/or where appropriate Pupil Welfare Manager, Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher to explain their child's repeated absence and to see what support can be given if there are underlying reasons for the absences.
- If there is still no improvement parents will be invited to a formal School Attendance Meeting with a local Authority Attendance Officer present.
- Failure by parents to attend this meeting without contact will result in further action e.g. Fixed Penalty Notice Procedures

Dealing with Lateness

The school Attendance Officer will monitor lateness and inform:

- the Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will inform:

- the parent/carer;
- the police as appropriate

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
 - a programme of monitoring and support involving parents/carers
- Heltwate's Emergency Procedures will be put into place if a pupil leaves the school premises without permission – depending on age, circumstances and number of staff searching – police will be contacted if the pupil is not found.

Absence

Heltwate School will consider applications for leave of absence during term time.

In exceptional circumstances the school may agree to authorise leave.

Parents/carers must complete a Leave of Absence request form at least **four weeks** in advance where possible for the attention of the Headteacher. A decision to authorise will be taken after consideration of the following factors:

- circumstances of the request/purpose of leave
- pupil's particular needs
- the amount of time/leave requested
- age of the pupil
- the pupil's attendance record for the current and previous year
- no other leave of absence has been taken during the current school year

If the request is authorised, those dates must be adhered to. If the pupil is absent immediately prior or immediately following the authorised dates, the additional absences will be recorded as unauthorised which will lead to the ENTIRE period of absence being unauthorised.

Failure to comply with the above or where a request is denied may result in a fixed penalty notice fine being issued.

Examples of discretionary exceptional circumstances of leave of absence for pupils which will be considered:

Relating to close family or significant other person for

- Funeral / Bereavement
- Family emergency
- Compassionate leave

This list of examples is non-exhaustive and all exceptional circumstances are at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Local Authority CME procedures should be followed (Children Missing Education) where pupils fail to take up a school place or who have at least 20 continuous school days of unauthorised absence.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the pupil's education. Every effort must be made to return pupils to school the same day if it is a local routine appointment or it will go down as an unauthorised absence.

Reception Intake Induction Period

Pupils who are offered a place in the September following their fourth birthday will be introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable to assist in their transition to full time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children in September in advance.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the school prospectus
- the school website
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and school events
- communications with home such as letters and newsletters
- reports such as termly Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- incentives for attendance including termly certificates for attendance over 94% and termly rewards for 100%

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

Linked Policies

- Positive Management of Behaviour and Discipline

- Safeguarding
- Home School Agreement

Attendance Policy Addendum (Covid-19)

- Heltwate School will follow the Peterborough LEA COVID 19 attendance updates as and when they are released
- Pupils who have COVID 19 symptoms will be marked as X02 code on the register (not counted in attendance figures)
- Pupils who have confirmed positive with COVID 19 are marked as I02 (counted as authorised illness code)
- Attendance rewards to be reviewed to acknowledge the unavoidable COVID 19 absence