



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Version: March 2019

Status	Non-Statutory
Responsible Management Committee (MC)	Wellbeing
Date last approved by MC	
Responsible Person	Head of Centre
To Review Date	March 2020
Last Amended Date	March 2019

### Rationale

Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service will provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each pupil is valued and supported. We strive to achieve regular attendance through building positive relationships with pupils and by ensuring a broad and rich curriculum offering that engages pupils to take part in the learning opportunities and experiences that we offer. Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. HPRS believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to our community. Poor attendance can lead to gaps in knowledge and cause pupils to fall behind their peers. HPRS will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

HPRS recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a pupil's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents 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, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help HPRS to identify any additional support that may be required.

HPRS recognise that some pupils at a PRU are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. We will work with families to support all our pupils to attend and take advantage of the opportunities that we can offer, so that they can leave us ready to move onto the next stage of their education.

### Why Regular Attendance is Important

- **Learning attainment:** Regular absence seriously affects your child's learning, progress and future opportunities. It is difficult to catch up work and develop confidence to attempt new work when lessons are frequently missed.
- **Safeguarding:** When your child is at school you know they are in a safe environment and not at risk.
- **Social cohesion:** Regular absence affects your child's relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships.
- **Promoting regular attendance:** Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents, pupils and all members of the HPRS.

## Roles and Responsibilities

HPRS believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, management committee, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the

### Management Committee will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Management Committee Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named member of the Management Committee to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

### The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage pupils to attend and achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Management Committee
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions using the standard required should legal proceedings be instigated
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual pupil achievements

- Invite you and your child to an attendance meeting to identify if we can offer support in any way
- Refer to the Education Welfare Consultant if we have on-going concerns about a pupil's attendance
- Refer pupils with unauthorised absence to Herefordshire Local Authority for consideration of legal sanctions
- Request medical evidence for pupils who have a high level of absence due to illness.

### **We request that parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil 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 each day by 9.15 am if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Avoid unnecessary absences
- Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours. Where appointments are in school hours, pupils should only be absent for the duration of the appointment.
- 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 become 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
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Not take their child out of school for holidays. Term time leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Any requests for leave should be made in writing to the Head of Centre at least 6 weeks in advance.

## **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'AUTHORISED' or 'UNAUTHORISED'.

Examples of situations when an absence would not be authorised include:

- A child refusing to get out of bed
- Inclement weather (unless in extreme cases when're travelling would be dangerous)
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupil who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping trips, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This list provides some examples and is by no means exhaustive.

## Absence will be categorised as follows:

### **Illness** (Code I on the register)

Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Centre to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments** (Code M on the register)

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must only be absent for the duration of the appointment. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances** (Code C on the register)

This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)** (Code E on the register)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Unauthorised Absence** (Code O on the register)

Where there is not considered to be a justified reason for being absent from school or the absence has not been explained.

## Legal Sanctions Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

### **Penalty Notices will be considered when:**

- A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives each parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 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. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Hereford City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

### **Prosecution**

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

## **Children Missing Education (CME)**

‘Children missing education’ are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission, will be passed to the Local Authority as possible ‘children missing education’ cases.

## Lateness

Late arrival at school affects your child's learning and the learning of other pupils as it interrupts the lesson flow and pupil focus. Pupils missing the start of the day miss contact with their personal tutor/mentor and registration time when they hear important news for the day or week.

Pupils with a pattern of repeated late arrival may be required to work in an individual study situation until the next full lesson begins. This is to ensure other pupils' learning is not disrupted.

If a pupil has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with a representative of HPRS to resolve the problem. Parents/carers can approach HPRS at any time if having difficulties getting a pupil to school on time.

The Centre may consider a referral to the Education Welfare Consultant for continued late arrival.

Pupils will be recorded as late in the register if they do not arrive at their agreed start time. Any pupil arriving more than 30 minutes after their agreed start time will be recorded as late after registration closes. This is considered an unauthorised absence for the session.

## Medical & Dental Appointments and Illness

Where possible, medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school time.

If it is necessary for a pupil to be out of school for a medical or dental appointment they should only be absent from school for the duration of the appointment, attending school prior to the appointment and returning directly after the appointment.

If a pupil is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea in relation to a virus they should not return to school for **48** hours after their symptoms disappear. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other pupils and adults at the Centre.

If a pupil is frequently absent due to illness HPRS may request medical evidence and/or permission to contact a GP for confirmation that they are too ill to attend school.

If a pupil attends school and feels unwell during the school day the school will contact you to arrange collection.

## Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect pupil's schooling and learning progress as much as any other absence. Parents/carers are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.**

The decision to authorise absence for holidays rests entirely with HPRS and, in exceptional circumstances only. The application for holiday leave must be made in writing 6 weeks in advance of the planned leave.

Parents/carers can be issued with a fine for taking a pupil on holiday during term time without consent from HPRS. Such leave will be classified as 'unauthorised' and will be referred to Herefordshire Local Authority who will issue a fixed Penalty Notice or may consider other legal sanctions. The Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child if paid before 28 days. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996 section 444(1(a)).

## Parents and Carers: FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

### What should I do if my child is reluctant to attend school?

There may be many reasons why a child is reluctant to attend school, both issues related to school but also issues which are not related to school in any way. Contact us as soon as possible if your child is reluctant to attend school. We will suggest a meeting with you and your son/daughter to discuss strategies which can be put into place to support his/her attendance at school.

### If my child refuses to attend school, can I be held responsible?

Yes. As the child's parent, you are expected to ensure that they receive an education. If your child does not attend school, you could face court action resulting in a possible fine and or even imprisonment. Please contact us if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

### Do I need to send in a letter about my child's absence?

If you have rung or otherwise contacted the school, then we would not require a note as well.

### My child seems ill but I don't think it is severe enough for him/her to take the day off. What should I do?

Feeling under the weather – colds, headaches, stomach pains, etc. – affects us all but not to the point that we need to miss school or work. A list of NHS guidelines around absences due to illness is included at the end of this section.

### My child claims s/he is ill but I don't think it is genuine. What should I do?

Sometimes your child may want to avoid school. This may indicate there are wider issues that need addressing. Send your child to school and contact your child's mentor or Head of Centre about the situation.

### My child has a medical appointment during school time. What should I do?

Please try to avoid doctor or dentist appointments during the school day. Appointments are usually available after school hours as surgeries are open until at least 5 p.m. If your child must attend an appointment during school time, please ensure s/he attends school for part of the day at least, leaving early or arriving late (with a note).

### My child's report shows a number of unauthorised absences. What does this mean?

These are absences we do not consider reasonable and for which the school has not given leave. They include such things as parents keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences not properly explained.

### Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, HPRS and external support services can give you advice and support if you need help to improve your child's school attendance, although you should be aware that this is ultimately the legal responsibility of the parent/carer.

It is very important that you speak with us at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of your child at school.

**Absence at HPRS is dealt with immediately to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils**

## NHS guidelines on absence due to illness

### Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

### Cold sores

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

### Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

### Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

### Ear infection

If your child has an ear infection and a fever or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their fever goes away.

### Fever

If your child has a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes away.

### Hand, foot and mouth disease

If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

### Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

### Impetigo

If your child has impetigo, they'll need antibiotic treatment from the GP. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share towels, cups and so on with other children at school.

### Ringworm

If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see the GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

### Scarlet fever

If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from the GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

### Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have slapped cheek syndrome because once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. If you suspect your child has slapped cheek syndrome, take them to the GP and let their school know if they're diagnosed with it.

### Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a fever, they should stay at home until it goes away.

### Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

### Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school for 2 days after their symptoms have gone.