



HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Approved by:

LGB

Author:

**Chloe Barton
Assistant Headteacher**

***subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines**

1. Introduction

The Governors and staff of Herschel Grammar School are committed to providing a full and effective education for all our students to ensure they achieve their potential in all that they do. We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide and from regular and punctual school attendance. To these ends, we will do all we can to ensure that all students attend regularly and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. We therefore expect a high level of attendance and punctuality from all of our students in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. This can be achieved by not missing school due to minor ailments, avoiding medical appointments during the school day, and not taking family holidays during term time.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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. Promoting good attendance

At Herschel, we will encourage good attendance by:

- Accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session and within 10-15 minutes of the start of the session
- We will endeavour to follow-up absence within one day; a first day absence telephone call will be made or text sent in the morning as soon as possible if a student is absent without authorisation; if there is no contact via the telephone numbers provided a letter/email will be sent home requesting authorisation.
- Undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times; attendance reports to be used on a daily basis to check students who have registered but who have not attended all five lessons; weekly follow up of the year group attendance issues using percentage reports/unauthorised student absence figures.
- Collecting data for student reports and sending parents/carers attendance figures and contacting parents when attendance is of concern and below 95%

- Collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group and making this available to governors and parents on request.
- Working closely with the pastoral team to monitor students of concern and put appropriate interventions in place to improve their attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

4. Request for Leave of Absence

Under education law, parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents are expected to arrange their family holidays during those times. Parents who request leave for their son or daughter during term time must do so in advance by completing and returning a 'Leave of Absence Request' form. This can be found as an appendix to this policy. Requests for leave of absence for family holidays, in line with government guidelines, will normally not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence should be requested at least one month in advance. Any short notice requests for leave of absence involving travel abroad must be accompanied proof of the purchase date of travel documents, before an appropriate decision can be made. The parent will be advised of the school's decision in writing.

If the leave of absence request is denied and the student is absent during the requested period, we will request Slough Borough Council to issue a penalty notice. The fixed penalty notice is issued on a 'per parent per student' basis and will be £60 if paid within 28 days and to £120 if paid within 42 days. Two penalty notices can be issued within one school year. Prolonged periods of reported illness within two weeks of a school holiday will automatically require medical evidence. If attendance or punctuality is a concern, parents will be contacted and further action may be taken. If parents wish to make an appeal against a decision, they should write to the Headteacher explaining their concern.

5. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- We will endeavour to contact the parent on the first day of absence by telephone call or text; if contact cannot be made another call on day two and then if by day 3 no contact has been made all numbers called and email sent.
- A further phone call be made and a further letter/email sent to the parent/carer or a home visit may be made if there has been no response and the unauthorised absence has exceeded three school days
- If the non-attendance continues beyond nine days or if the student fails to attend for three complete weeks in any six-week period, a further attempt will be made to telephone the parent/carer and another letter/email sent and a home visit made
- If the student or parent/carer fails to respond a Fixed Penalty notice will be issued and the matter will be discussed further with the Headteacher with a view to a formal referral

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police, LA safeguarding team
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- The school attendance team will work closely with the DSL to support children absent or missing from school, including those absent on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods.

5.1 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through their school reports (2/3 times a year). Concerning attendance will be followed up more regularly by the Head of Learning and Attendance Officer.

6. Children Missing Education

- Children who are not attending school and are not being provided with suitable alternative educational provision will be referred to the local authority as Children Missing Education.
- A representative from the school will attend regular multi-agency reviews, to monitor the student's progress and work towards re-integration into the mainstream school setting.
- The school will notify the local authority prior to removing students from the school roll.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Learning, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Absence for Days of Religious Observance

Students at Herschel Grammar School come from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The School will authorise absence for days of religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Only absence on the day of religious observance itself will be authorised and parents should request any absence in advance and in writing. Where necessary the school will seek advice from representatives of the faith community to establish whether it has set the day apart for religious observance

9. Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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
Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

Leading attendance across the school
Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
Having an oversight of data analysis
Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Chloe Barton and can be contacted via cba@herschel.slough.sch.uk

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data
Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
Advising the headteacher/assistant headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

- Monitor registers daily;
- Make first-day phone calls to parents of students with unexplained absence;
- Mark each student's register with the appropriate code and forward information as necessary;
- Send appropriate letters to parents according to the agreed protocol;

Engage with parents and carers and remind them of the requirements set out in the Attendance Policy

Heads of Learning will:

- Support the Assistant Headteacher in giving attendance a high priority;
- Ensure that attendance procedures are followed across their years;
- Ensure regular liaison with the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Support Coordinator to ensure procedures are being followed for students with continued low attendance;
- Ensure that students on long term sickness absence are able to access the curriculum and are supported on their return.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors will:

- Complete all registers accurately and in a timely fashion;
- Ensure that students return any absence queries as soon as practical;
- Look for absence patterns on a regular basis and alert Heads of Learning if necessary.
- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
This includes parents of sixth form pupils.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time every day

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Assistant headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

In exceptional circumstances the school may grant a single leave of absence (of up to 10 school days) once during secondary education (Year 7 – 13).

Such leave of absence is discretionary and is not a right, and permission for leave of absence during term time will only be granted under **exceptional circumstances**.

Permission will not usually be given if attendance is already below 95%.

A holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

This form must be returned to the pupil's Head of Learning as soon as possible, with as much notice as the exceptional circumstance allows.

Name of Pupil:		Tutor Group:	
Absence from:		To:	

Reason for absence:

Signed: (Parent/Guardian)	Date:

For office use only	Head of Learning approval	
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Letter of explanation: