HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Approved by:	**LGB**
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*subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines

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.

Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day
- Avoid missing school due to minor ailments where ever possible
- Through our effective pastoral system, inform the Attendance Officer or Heads of Year about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly

We expect that all parents/carers/guardians will:

- Encourage their son/daughter to attend school every day and on time
- Ensure that they contact the school as soon as possible i.e. on the first day of absence before 8.30 am whenever their child is unable to attend school
- Ensure that their children arrive in school appropriately dressed and fully prepared for the school day
- Provide the school with up to date home, work, mobile and emergency telephone numbers
- Avoid making medical appointments in the school day where ever possible.
- Not arrange family holidays to take place during the school term
- Inform the school in confidence about any problem which might affect their son/daughter's attendance

Parents/carers/guardians can expect that the school will:

- Record their son/daughter's attendance regularly (every session), accurately and efficiently via electronic registration.
- Within the first day of absence make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason
- Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent
- Have access to current attendance data via the Class Charts online platform
- Instigate appropriate enquiries before removing the child from the school roll.

1. 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.

A school can only remove a child's name from the school roll in particular circumstances, as set out in Regulation 9 of Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off-rolling.

In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. This does not apply when the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the school's most senior class.

2. Promoting good attendance

Pupils are expected to arrive on site by 8.20am in order to be at their form room by 8:25am. Registration and tutor time is 8.25am to 8.50am. Pupils arriving after 8.30am are marked late. Afternoon registration is taken by the class teacher in lesson 5. Pupils arriving after 2.00pm to lesson 5 will be marked late.
AM and PM registers will be open for 20 minutes, after which the pupil will be marked absent. The school day ends at 2.55pm.

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 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

3. 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 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 and before making any travel arrangements. 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.

All schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. The fixed penalty notice is issued on a 'per parent per student' basis and will be £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days. Two penalty notices can be issued within a three-year period. If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent are be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

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.

4. Following up unexplained absence

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

- Endeavour to contact the parent on the first day of absence by telephone call or Parentmail. If contact cannot be made, this will trigger another call and Parentmail on day two of the absence. On day 3 of absence if no contact has been made all numbers will be

called, Parentmail sent and HOY notified. The HOY will message the child directly on Teams.

- If the unauthorised absence exceeds three school days and there is still no response, a home visit may be made (if the child lives in the Borough of Slough).
- After 5 consecutive days of absence where the student /parent/carer fails to respond, the school will ask SBC for a Fixed Penalty notice to be issued.
- For non-attendance which 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 contact the parent/ carer.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police, LA safeguarding team or other relevant agencies.
- The parent/carer will be called on each day that the absence continues to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. The matter will be discussed further with the Headteacher and / or DSL. The school will consider involving partner agencies.
- 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. 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 Year and Attendance Officer. A parent can also see their child's attendance through Class Charts.

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 Year, 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. Attendance action plans will be put in place where needed and monitored.
- 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 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 and/or authorising the assistant headteacher to be able to do so

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for;

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Assistant Headteacher, 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 partner agencies 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

The school's Attendance Officer is Unnti Gondalia and can be contacted via ugo@herschel.slough.sch.uk

Heads of Year 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 Year if necessary.
- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

10. Lateness

Lateness is monitored by the Attendance Officer and Heads of Year as subject teachers/tutors are required to record lateness in their registers

Sanctions

- The school has an escalation procedure in place to tackle persistent punctuality concerns.
- Detentions, punctuality reports, contact with parents are examples of how punctuality concerns are addressed.

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:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Medical Needs policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusions policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance
(Published 29/02/24 and in place from 19/08/2024)

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attending the school		
/	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
Attending a place other than the school		
B	Attending any other approved 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
K	Attending education provision *arranged by the local authority*	Attending courses at college or home tutoring arranged by the LA
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 (C1 – C2 variations)	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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
Absent – unable to attend school because of an unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	The pupils is unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements

Y (Y1 – Y7 variations)	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
Administrative Codes		
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

APPENDIX 2:

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Under education law, parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Parent/Carers who wish to request leave during term time for their child must do so in advance by completing this Leave of Absence Request form. Leave of absence should normally be requested **at least two weeks** in advance.

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parent/carers to book their family holidays during those times. Requests for leave of absence for family holidays, in line with government guidelines, will normally not be authorised.

Any short notice request for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by proof of the purchase date of travel documents before an appropriate decision can be made.

The parent/carer will be advised of the decision in writing. The Headteacher's decision is final. If the Leave of Absence Request is denied, and the student is absent during the requested period, the parent/carer may be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.

In exceptional circumstances, the school may grant a single leave of absence.
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%.

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

Name of Pupil:		Tutor Group:	
Absence from:		To:	
Date of student's return to school:		Number of school days involved:	

Parent/Carer Name:	
Signed: (Parent/Guardian)	Date:

Reason for absence: *Please include an explanation as to why this absence has to be taken in term time*

For school use only					
Request received		Approved	Yes/No	Decision sent:	