



HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Policy Area:	Safeguarding
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	<p>ISSR Part 3</p> <p>Education Act 1996</p> <p>Children Act 1989</p> <p>Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006</p> <p>Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003</p> <p>Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) 2013</p> <p>DfE: Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities 2016</p> <p>DfE: Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, January 2014</p> <p>School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019)</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)</p>
Key Contact Personnel in School	
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding)
Version:	2023.01
Date updated:	01 September 2023
Date of next review:	01 September 2024

This policy will be reviewed at least biannually, and/or following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Introduction

Heathfield School (“the School”) believes that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The School believes education to be a partnership between the family and the School. The School is committed to providing the highest quality of education for its pupils, and the School looks to parents to support this objective.

Regular school attendance correlates directly with success in academic work and provides opportunities for important communication between teachers and pupils. National research shows that when pupils of equal ‘ability’ are compared, those with attendance of over 95% perform one grade higher per subject than those with attendance of 85% or less. Each further 10% fall reduces this by another grade. Regular attendance also has a cumulative effect of establishing life-long positive traits — responsibility, determination, respect for rules of society - that are critical for developing career-readiness skills, success at university and in life.

The School expects all pupils on roll to attend every day when the School is in session, provided they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the School keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School’s Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and the Children Missing from Education Policy, particularly in reference to pupils persistently missing from education.

The following guidance is also relevant:

- School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (September 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

Aims

This policy aims to maximise the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that clear expectations of attendance and punctuality are set for pupils, teachers and parents;
- a robust system of registration, monitoring and enforcement of attendance is consistently maintained.

Procedures to Ensure all Pupils are Present

Parents are responsible for making sure their children come to and are delivered to the School safely. On arrival at the School, all pupils are registered and records are kept on the School's database system. If a pupil is not present, staff will attempt to contact the parents or guardians of the pupil to find out the reason for the absence.

Pupils are also registered before the start of the afternoon session to check that they are still in school. As well as these formal measures, staff are also expected to know their classes well enough to check if pupils are missing or unaccounted for. If they are concerned, they should contact the appropriate School staff.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(s) attend school regularly and arrive on time.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the School by 08:20 on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that their child is safe. Parents should email absences@heathfieldschool.net

Definitions

Authorised absence:

When a pupil is away from school, the School has received notification from a parent or guardian, and the school has granted permission for the absence.

Unauthorised absence:

When a pupil is away from school without the permission of the School.

The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised rests solely with the School. Therefore, an absence may be deemed unauthorised even if it has the support of a parent.

Registration and late Arrivals

Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement under Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The School monitors attendance using the management information system (Engage). Morning registration is taken by form tutors between 08:10 – 08:20. Afternoon registration is via electronic registration as the pupils go into lunch between 12:30 and 14:00. Pupils arriving after these times report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

NB. In addition to this, all boarders will have been registered at breakfast, prep, supper and bedtime.

The nature of boarding means that once a boarding pupil has returned to School they should remain in School for the duration that the School is in session and therefore absence should not occur other than if:

- A pupil has not arrived at the beginning of a term/half term following a school holiday period.

- A pupil has failed to return to school following an Optional Leave weekend.
- A pupil is missing.

If a pupil has failed to return from an official break in School (at the time prescribed by parents and/or the School) then parents should be immediately contacted in order to determine the reason why.

If parents cannot be contacted or parents believe their child is in School or a boarder is absent when they should be in School then the procedure set out in the Missing Child Policy will be followed.

The Role of the School Staff in recording and monitoring attendance

Form tutors will

- complete a register at the beginning of each morning. Teachers mark pupils as present, absent or late; a teacher can only mark as present a pupil that they have seen;
- notify Head of Year (“HoY”) of any known/planned absences (via the pupils’ email distribution list).

The School will

- endeavour to contact a parent or guardian at the earliest opportunity if an absence is unexpected. The HoY or Houseparents (“HSP”) are usually staff assigned to confirm whereabouts of an absent pupil;
- ensure a list of absent pupils is sent to the relevant staff: HoY, HSP, tutors and reception;
- ensure attendance and lateness records are up to date;
- ensure unauthorised absence is followed up, with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised (Code N will be changed to O);
- ensure the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes);
- ensure parents are informed every half term of their child’s attendance figure;
- the HoY will examine attendance figures at the end of the first half term and monthly thereafter and will identify all pupils whose attendance/ punctuality has dropped below 95%.

Record keeping

The School keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Timeline of School action

Poor punctuality

- If a pupil is unauthorised late for 3 registrations, the pupil will meet with the relevant HoY.
- If a pupil fails to improve, sanctions may be enforced, and a letter will be sent home.
- If improvement is still not shown, parents will be required to meet with the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) or Headmistress.

Authorised absence

- The HoY will identify all pupils whose attendance has dropped below 95% after the first half term, and monthly thereafter. They may contact the pupil’s parent or guardian if the reasons have not already been discussed.

- When a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the HoY will investigate in more detail. Parents will be invited into school to discuss the impact of the absences and solutions sought. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be made aware.
- If attendance is below 90% for 2 half terms in any academic year, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) or Headmistress will meet with the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be involved and a referral to the Bracknell Forest Children and Adult Partnership may be made.

Unauthorised absence

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

- In the first instance, the School will contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. Where there has been no communication, an email will be sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is deemed unauthorised.
- The tutor will identify all pupils who have more than 3 unauthorised absences in a half term and inform the relevant HoY. They will investigate in more detail and parents may be invited into School to discuss the absences. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware and the situation closely monitored.
- If there is no improvement in the following half term, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) or Headmistress will meet with the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be involved and a referral to the Bracknell Forest Children and Adult Partnership may be made.
- Any pupil who has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more is deemed to be a safeguarding risk. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be actively involved and a referral to the Bracknell Forest Children and Adult Partnership will be made.

If a pupil is absent from a lesson

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying reception. Reception will follow the appropriate procedure to locate her as set out in the Missing Child Policy.

Penalty Proceedings

Aside from an impact on attainment, poor attendance will have other long term repercussions, including:

- Recording attendance percentages on School full reports. Increasingly reports are requested as part of references. Thus, pupils with poor attendance could jeopardise long term prospects.
- In terms of writing references the School cannot in good faith make a positive comment about a pupil's reliability should they have poor attendance and punctuality.
- When a pupil has a record of poor punctuality or attendance without good reason, the School may preclude them from possessing positions of responsibility in the Sixth Form.
- In significant cases the School reserves the right to review a pupil's place at Heathfield, particularly during the transition from Year 11 to the Lower Sixth.
- If authorised attendance is below 90% for 2 half-terms in any academic year, a referral to the Bracknell Forest Children and Adult Partnership may be made.
- Any pupil who has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more is deemed to be a safeguarding risk. The Designated Safeguarding Lead

will be actively involved and a referral to the Bracknell Forest Children and Adult Partnership will be made.

Further action may be required to be taken under the Children Missing Education Policy which sets out additional statutory obligations of the School.

Requests for leave of absence

Parents are issued with an attendance leaflet to help explain the importance of attending school and the process they need to adhere to. A parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message does not in itself authorise an absence.

Absences will only be authorised if an explanation is received and agreed by the School.

Term dates are published in advance in order that parents can arrange holidays and family activities without disrupting their child's education. The School expects parents to respect these dates to ensure their child's full participation in the life of the school.

Parents are requested to note that pupils are required to attend a number of events that occur after the normal School day or on Saturdays. These compulsory events are advertised in advance and often fall on Closed Weekends:

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not normally be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons, Child's/family birthday
- Family holidays
- Travelling during term time

Boarders are particularly required to note that leaving early at the end of a School term in order to utilise cheaper/more convenient flights is not acceptable. Such absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Authorisation of absence: up to one day

Absence can be authorised by the relevant HoY or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) for:

- interviews
- careers courses etc. connected with a pupil's future,
- participation in representative games and activities.
- unavoidable doctors' and dentists' appointments. Whenever possible these should be arranged after the School day, at weekends or during the School holidays.

Sixth Formers are allowed to attend two university visits in the Summer term of the Lower Sixth during the working week. Pupils should fill out the required permission form, which is required to be signed by parents, the pupil's Form Tutor and the Assistant Head (Sixth Form).

Authorisation of absence: absence of more than one day

Only the Headmistress can authorise absence of more than one consecutive day.

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional family circumstances should be made in writing to the Headmistress.

Where there is doubt, the Headmistress, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. **The absence must be absolutely unavoidable.**

If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

Medical long-term absence

Parents are asked to use their discretion but the School retains the right to ask for medical evidence if a pupil is judged to have excessive illness.

When a pupil has an illness or injury that means a pupil will be away from school for over five days, the School will do all it can to send material home, so that the pupil can keep up with their school work. After five consecutive days' absence, a doctor's note must be provided.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repeated absence, the School reserves the right to contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the pupil to be given some tuition outside School.

Study leave

Pupils will be granted study leave during public exams. During this time, pupils will be expected to sign in and out at reception. Pupils are only allowed to take study leave that has been agreed with the School and their parents.

Boarders

Term dates are published over a year in advance in order that flights can be booked without disrupting a pupil's education. The School therefore expects all pupils to arrive punctually on the first day of term, and not to leave School before the last day of term.

All pupils who board are cared for by House staff, who are responsible for the pupils during term-time, including ensuring that they are safely occupied outside normal school hours.

The School expects pupils to 'sign out' when they leave the School and 'sign in' on return. This is to ensure that the School always knows the whereabouts of the pupils during term time when they are under the School's care. Boarders also sign in for supper and are checked in at bedtime to ensure all pupils are accounted for.

The School expects the pupils to live with their parents or their guardian when they are away from School during exets and half terms (see Educational Guardian Policy). Permission must be sought from the pupil's Housemistress if a pupil is invited to stay with another family. The House staff will liaise with both families. Permission forms and Optional Leave Weekend forms are gathered to ensure that the School has a clear picture of who is taking responsibility for a pupil when they are away from School.

If a pupil is taken ill during an Optional Leave Weekend and will not be returning on time parents or guardians must inform the School. The School will always telephone the home if the pupil is more than three hours late in returning from an Optional Leave Weekend.

Sixth Form attendance privileges

Sixth Form pupils are expected to attend the full school day. However, as befits their increasing responsibility and independence, they may be granted a number of unique privileges. These privileges are given at the discretion of the School and will be removed should there be any academic or pastoral concerns.

Written permission must be provided by home and agreed by the Assistant Head (Sixth Form).

Any pupil leaving site **must** sign out with their House staff and at reception (if during School hours). On their return pupils must also sign in. Failure to do this will be treated according to the Pupil Code of Conduct Policy.

After School

Any Day Pupil remaining in School after 16:00 must remember to sign out using the Sign In portal and collect any devices from the on duty Boarding House staff.

All Co-Curricular clubs must take a register of attendees and pupils are registered at their prep sessions.

Register codes

Codes used for internal activities include:

- K – used in the event of School not being open to pupils
- P – approved sporting/music/drama activity – where a pupil leaves the School to represent the school in an activity
- S – study leave
- V – educational visit or trip – for any School arranged off site trip
- W – work experience

All other codes:

- / - Present (AM)
- \ - Present (PM)
- B - Educated off site
- C - Other authorised circumstances
- D - Undefined
- E - Excluded
- F - Extended family holiday (agreed)
- G - Undefined
- H - Annual family holiday (agreed)
- I - Illness
- J - Interview
- L - Late (before registration closed)
- M - Medical / Dental
- N - No reason yet provided for absence

- O - Unauthorised circumstances
- P - Approved sporting activity
- R - Religious observance
- S - Study Leave
- T - Traveller absence
- U - Late (after registers closed)
- V - Educational visit
- X - Non-compulsory school age absence
- - - All should attend / no mark recorded

Off Roll

When a pupil leaves the School before the end of the final day of term in the Upper Sixth, the following action will be taken by the School:

- Determine with the pupil/parents the next school which will be attended.
- Make contact with the next school to determine that the pupil is intending to start there and that there is an agreed/official start date.
- Transfer all relevant information to the next school (including any safeguarding records).

Should the next school not yet be determined the School will:

- Ask parents to inform Heathfield when a new school has been chosen/allocated.
- If there is a significant period of time between a pupil leaving Heathfield and the next School being determined (10 school days) then the DSL will inform the both Bracknell Forest Child and Adult Partnership and the Local Authority in which the pupil resides.

The School informs the Local Authority when any pupil leaves (or joins) the School at non-standard transition times. Further details are set out in the Children Missing Education Policy.

Related Policies

- Children Missing Education Policy
- Educational Guardianship Policy
- Educational and Co-curricular Trips and Visits Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- RIDDOR Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

ATTENDANCE



Why is it so important to attend School every day?

- Pupils with good attendance, generally achieve higher grades and enjoy learning at school more. Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible chances in life
- Learning is a progressive activity; each day, lessons build upon those of the previous days learning
- It gives children the opportunity to:
 - Make lots of friends and feel included
 - Boosts social skills, confidence, and self esteem
 - Develop skills and learn new things
 - Work towards achieving their full potential
 - Improve their career prospects

What can parents do to help?

- Show your child why you think school is important
- Avoid keeping your child off school if they are worried or have a problem, come, and talk to the Pastoral care team (HOY, House staff, AHPB, DHPB, Surgery)
- Make sure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time – they will establish a good routine which will carry them through their life
- If your child starts missing school, work with the school and we will help to improve your child's attendance. We do not have all the answers, but together we are closer to a solution
- If your child is ill or must miss school for any other reason, please contact the school immediately – **email absences@heathfieldschool.net by 8.20am.**
- The school will not approve shopping trips, family holidays, birthday treats during school hours
- Only keep your child at home for a genuine illness
- Avoid taking holidays during school time, so they do not miss valuable learning time

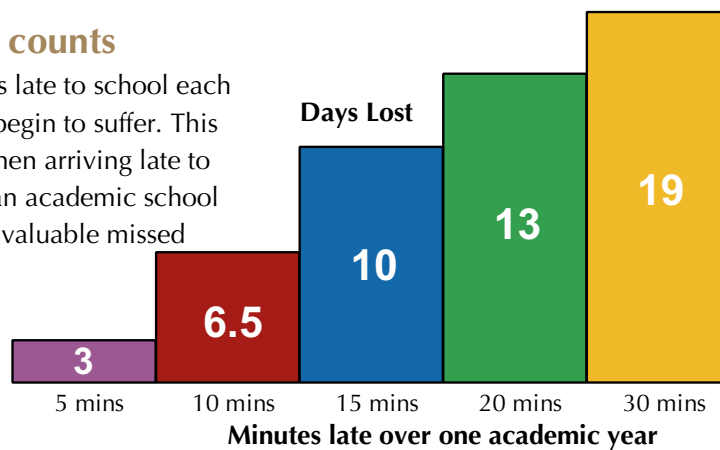
NOTICE: Attendance notice is an email issued to parents or carers who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly (90%). A percentage below 90% is considered a 'persistent absence' by the local authority. If your child accrues five school days absence or more in a twelve-week rolling period, parents could be contacted by social care services. This includes taking holidays in term time without the school's permission.

IT IS THE LAW!

- A child registered at a school can legally miss school only in limited circumstances. These are:
 - When your child is too ill to attend
 - When the school have authorised the absence beforehand
- If your child is missing without good reason, schools and local authorities have a number of legal powers they can use
- Authorised Absences include:
 - Genuine illness resulting with seeing a doctor
 - Religious observances
 - Family bereavement
- Unauthorised absences include:
 - Holidays
 - Birthday celebrations
 - Oversleeping
 - Shopping

Every minute counts

If your child arrives late to school each day, learning will begin to suffer. This graph illustrates when arriving late to school daily over an academic school year, will increase valuable missed learning time.



absences@heathfieldschool.net

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headmistress's discretion. This will only be granted if there are exceptional circumstances e.g. wedding of a parent, funeral of a close relative, National sporting activity. The DfE states "if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances."

Please note, absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during the period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Attendance During 1 Academic year	Over the academic school year the equivalent missed ...			
	Days	Sessions	Weeks	Lessons
95%	9 days	18 Sessions	1 Week & 4 days	50 Lessons
90%	19 days	38 Sessions	3 Weeks & 4 days	100 Lessons
85%	28 days	58 Sessions	5 Weeks & 3 days	150 Lessons
80%	39 days	72 Sessions	7 Weeks & 3 days	200 Lessons
75%	46 days	96 Sessions	9 Weeks & 1 day	250 Lessons
70%	57 days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons

An application for leave of absence must be made in advance via an email to headmistress@heathfieldschool.net

Medical appointments during the school day are permitted - the relevant HOY should be notified via the distribution list e.g. austenf4@heathfieldschool.net

**Be Here! On
Time, All Day,
Every Day,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS!**

When should my child return to School?

No need to stay off School

Conjunctivitis
Glandular Fever
Tonsillitis
Head Lice
Headache
Cold
Injury to a limb where pupils can move e.g. arm injury

Chicken Pox: When all spots have crusted over

Continuous periods of Diarrhoea & Vomiting: 48hr after last episode

Flu/Covid: 3-5days until feeling better

Wherever possible we encourage pupils to come into School, even if they try to cope. We have a 24/7 Surgery so should there be any deterioration they will be cared for until they can be collected. Our surgery is also here to offer advice as needed.