

# Harlington Upper School



## Attendance Policy

Policy No: HUS003

Document Control		
Edition	Issued	Changes from previous
2	October 2014	Replaces the Attendance Policy
3	December 2016	Routine update to policy
4	April 2017	Internal review - update to policy, including amendments to attendance procedures, target attendance figure.
5	May 2017	Internal Review - Updated due to change from house to year structure, and changes to school day.

Policies/Documents referred to in this Policy	Postholders/Persons Named in this Policy
Drugs Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Looked After Children (LAC) Dealing with Racist Incidents Policy Anti-bullying Policy Behaviour Policy Medical and Health Needs Policy	

Review Frequency: Every 2 Years

Next Reviewed: April 2019

# Harlington Upper School

## Attendance Policy

### Rationale

With a strong belief that good attendance leads to positive learning outcomes, the school works closely with the Access and Inclusion Service to ensure high levels of attendance. When on-going ill-health makes good attendance difficult we work to support the student and parent by engaging outside agencies or seeking creative ways of helping the student to remain engaged with learning.

### Aims

The school aims to establish, through its Student Welfare system and personal relationships, an environment in which students may develop academically and socially to their fullest extent.

This document is intended to assist all within the Harlington Community to have a consistent approach to matters of attendance. It is the responsibility of all staff and Parents and Guardians to take action to deal with attendance issues, drawing upon the support of colleagues when this is deemed necessary.

### Responsibilities

Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To oversee and approve the policy.</li></ul>
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To ensure that all staff support the policy</li><li>To advise on serious attendance issues.</li></ul>
Deputy Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To ensure attendance policy is rigorously applied, taking individual circumstances into account .</li><li>To advise Heads of Year on attendance concerns.</li><li>To review policy and to publish excerpts to parents and students.</li><li>To brief all staff on changes in policy.</li><li>To monitor attendance and punctuality.</li></ul>
Heads of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To oversee the attendance of their year group.</li><li>To support tutors in following up attendance concerns.</li><li>To monitor attendance and follow up unacceptable levels of absence.</li><li>To coordinate agency and medical needs support where necessary when students have ongoing health concerns.</li></ul>
Subject Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To support members of department in upholding the policy.</li><li>To ensure relevant information is displayed within department.</li></ul>

All Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>• To carry out the role of form tutor and through this support the policy.</li> </ul>
School Attendance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To carry out regular attendance spot checks and send warning letters where applicable.</li> <li>• To meet with the EWO on a regular basis.</li> <li>• To work with form tutors to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>• To work with Heads of Year in support of attendance issues.</li> </ul>
Form Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take an accurate record of attendance for their form two times per day.</li> <li>• To liaise with students and parents to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the school in its implementation of the school attendance policy.</li> </ul>

## ATTENDANCE

The school has very high attendance expectations, Specific measures have been put in place to encourage good attendance and to follow up cases of poor attendance or possible truancy.

The target attendance figure for all students is 96%. Parents of any student whose attendance falls below an acceptable level will be contacted either by letter or telephone. This will normally be when 4 sessions (2 days) absence has been accrued. Parents are asked to phone the school on the first day of absence, and every day of absence thereafter.

**Parents should always follow up student absence with a letter, detailing the date(s) and reason for absence..**

Regular spot check phone calls are made by the student support team to check on reasons for absence even though a parent may already have telephoned the school to verify the absence. Such monitoring phone calls are made to prevent and detect unauthorised absence.

### Attendance Procedures

Unless there are extenuating circumstances such as bereavement, inpatient hospital treatment, or significant injury, the following procedures will be put in place:

- When a student has missed 4 sessions (2 days) a letter will be sent advising parents of our concerns.
- If there are a further 4 sessions of absence parents will receive a letter requesting medical evidence for all future absences. Without this the absence will not be authorised (please see below regarding fines for unauthorised absence)
- In order to support families to make the necessary changes, ongoing attendance concerns will require parents and their child(ren) to meet with the Head of Year, Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher and Governors in a series of escalating meetings until improvement has been secured.
- The school will refer persistent absentees (below 90%) to the local authority Access and Inclusion Service who will seek to support but can and will take legal action if there is insufficient improvement.
- If a child has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period parents will be served a with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 (each parent and each child). This includes unauthorised holidays in term time.

## **Leave of Absence/Term Time Holidays**

- Parent bulletins will regularly contain reminders to parents of our expectations regarding attendance and our policy of regular spot checks and letters.
- Leave of absence during term time will not usually be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. Applications for absence during term time should typically be made from the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Such applications must be made at least six weeks prior to the proposed absence, on the school's application for absence form, available on our website or the student support office. Leave of absence during term times will only be authorised if there are extenuating circumstances (such as a parent in the armed forces with restricted leave or after a family tragedy when the family need time together). When considering such a request the Head of Year will consider the student's usual level of attendance. If an absence is not authorised, but the parents still take the child on holiday, this will be coded as 'G' (unauthorised family holiday) and support from the Access and Inclusion Service will be requested. This will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Sixth Form attendance is also closely monitored. Pre-agreed home study arrangements will be coded appropriately.

## **Electronic Registration**

All students are expected to attend morning and afternoon registration sessions where a computerised register is taken. All schools use the registration codes set out by the Department for Education. Any student who is marked absent, where there has not been prior notification of the absence or a telephone call to advise of illness, will receive a text message to parents requesting a reason for absence. It is essential that any student arriving late for school signs in at the Student Support office before proceeding to lessons as they will otherwise be coded as absent and parents will be contacted. In addition, the majority of lesson registers are computerised. This allows a member of staff to detect whether or not a student is missing their lesson who should be expected to be there. The student support office is alerted to any missing students and if they are not located, parents will be contacted.

## **Lateness**

School registers will close at 8.50am in the morning and 2.00pm in the afternoon. Students who sign in to school after this time will be issued with an absent mark for that session.

## **Appointments During School Hours**

We do ask parents to avoid taking students out of school for medical appointments, however, when this is unavoidable, the student must sign out (or sign in if arriving late after an appointment) at the Student Support office. They must provide written evidence of the appointment. If a series of regular appointments are necessary (eg for dental work) then we ask parents to try to make these during school holidays or after normal school hours.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

In cases of unauthorised absence (including internal truancy) the Head of Year will arrange for the student to make up the time and work missed in accordance with the school behaviour policy. This will involve a series of after school detentions or in more serious cases attendance on a non-school day, such as a staff training day. In such circumstances, agreement of parents will be sought and the student will be expected to attend school in uniform, to make up the time and work missed.

## **Persistent Absence**

Persistent Absence (PA) is a term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to denote absence of more than 10% for an individual student, whether authorised or unauthorised. There are clear links between poor attendance and poor attainment. Any child whose attendance falls to unacceptable levels will be referred to the Access and Inclusion Service.

## **Attendance Returns**

The Deputy Head will take responsibility for regular attendance returns to the Local Authority and the DfE. Form Tutors will be asked to code as many absences as possible using letters received from parents. For the purposes of attendance returns, wherever possible letters from parents, rather than telephone calls should be used, as telephone confirmation is not proof of the child's whereabouts or reason for absence.

If the school has not received contact from home regarding any absence, parents will be written to by the School's Attendance Officer to confirm the reason for absence.

## **Child Missing Education (CME) Procedure**

A CME school referral form should be used when a child 'disappears' eg when parents move without providing a forwarding address; when it is suspected that the family have gone on an extended holiday without school agreement; when a child does not return two weeks after the expected return date of a family holiday. If the school has safeguarding concerns, social services should be contacted without delay and if the school suspects that a crime may have been committed the Police should be contacted. The Access and Inclusion Service should also be contacted in such a situation. They will take referrals from a variety of outside agencies for any student who has been out of school for more than four weeks. Such children are recorded on the DfE S2S (school to school) website and may be removed from school roll in accordance with the guidance in the Central Bedfordshire Children Missing Education Procedures (January 2016), section 25.