

School Access Policy

THE HUB SCHOOL



Transforming Lives

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. W. Green", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

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See also Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances policy

1. Aims

Attendance at school is very important for our students' future. There is a clear link between attendance and attainment. Students who have higher levels of attendance achieve better, and even a few days absence can impact on a student's progress. It is therefore the aim of The Hub School and Specialist Services to ensure that all students attend every day. Achieving high levels of school attendance requires a committed partnership between parents/carers, students, teachers, support staff, governors, the Local Authority (LA) support services and other agencies working constructively and supportively with young people and their families. It is essential to have in place effective systems to:

- monitor attendance;
- identify areas of concern early;
- implement effective strategies to address the concerns.

This policy is applicable to all educational provision provided through The Hub School and Specialist Services; including pupils on commissioned placements and pupils who have been permanently excluded and are receiving 1-1 tuition at The Hub.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Hub School and Specialist Services has the following legal responsibilities in relation to attendance:

- To keep accurate registers;
- To keep a copy of both original entries and any subsequent changes;
- To keep attendance records for three years.

2.1 The Hub Governing Board

The Hub Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school fulfils its legal requirement to keep accurate attendance registers;
- Working with the school to develop, monitor and review the Attendance policy and practices.

2.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Developing, monitoring and reviewing the Attendance policy and practice;
- Ensuring school attendance is high profile across the school and in the local community;
- Working with the senior leadership team and Education Welfare Service to set whole-school Attendance targets and monitor progress towards these;
- Reporting to the Governing Board on Attendance policy and practice and progress towards targets;

- The line-management of senior members of staff, ensuring they implement the Attendance Policy effectively.

2.3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT is responsible for:

- Developing, monitoring and reviewing the Attendance policy and practice;
- Ensuring school attendance is high profile across the school and in the local community;
- Working with the Headteacher to set whole-school Attendance targets and monitoring progress towards these;
- Meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and Attendance Officer regularly to;
 - analyse whole-school Attendance
 - review progress towards targets
 - review intervention strategies
 - discuss welfare issues relating to attendance
- Agreeing and completing referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and signing off penalty notice referrals.

2.4 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring the register is completed correctly within the first 15 minutes of the lesson start time, using the correct marks;
- Ensuring that students who arrive after the register is marked, are recorded as late;
- Following first day of absence procedures for pupils attending The Hub;
- Inputting student attendance marks on SIMS;
- Informing parents via letter that their child's attendance is below 95%

In the event of registers being incomplete or containing errors, the appropriate member of SLT will address the situation with the relevant member of staff, providing support if necessary. The situation will be monitored. If registers continue to be inaccurate the matter will be referred to the Headteacher who will consider whether to commence proceeding under the Staff Discipline Policy.

2.5 Parents/Carers

All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an education "suitable to their age, ability aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

The Hub School and Specialist Services expects parents/carers to:

- Ensure attendance and punctuality is a priority;
- Provide prompt and valid reasons in the event of absence by contacting the school promptly. It is expected this will be done no later than 30 minutes after the start of the lesson;
- Ensure, where possible, medical appointments are made outside school hours. To enable the Attendance Officer to mark the register accurately, parents and carers may be asked to provide evidence of medical appointments;
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interest of their child. This may include informing the school about significant changes or influences which may impact on learning and school attendance and attending any meetings regarding their child's attendance.

2.6 The Local Authority

The LA is responsible for:

- Providing education suitable to the student's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special education needs;
- Identifying, developing and establishing good practice in respect of student welfare;
- Enabling all LA services with responsibility for children to work effectively in the best interests of the child;
- Fulfilling its statutory duty through the Education Welfare Service whose prime responsibility is to promote the regular and punctual attendance of all students.

2.7 The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The EWS works in partnership with schools, parents/carers and children to achieve the best levels of school attendance and punctuality for all students. In addition, the service and schools work closely with other agencies in order to promote and improve school attendance and address welfare issues.

The EWS is responsible for:

- Conducting home visits where there are attendance concerns;
- Regular monitoring of student attendance;
- Working closely with Hub staff to challenge poor school attendance;
- Completing their statutory duty to ensure parents make sure their children attend school regularly, by either prosecution or penalty notice;

2.8 Commissioned Places

Some students will be registered on the HUB attendance roll, however, also be on a commissioned placement. It is expected that any students who are on the HUB roll, in addition to parents and carers, will adhere to this and other policies that are in place. Similarly, it is expected that staff members employed at the commissioned venues will adhere to this and any other policies in place.

The individual identified as being the Attendance Officer at each provision will be required to contact The Hub Attendance Officer twice daily to report any absences. The Attendance Officer at each provision will also be responsible for contacting parents to establish reasons for absence, should parents fail to notify them of any absences.

2.9 Transport

If a pupil displays challenging behaviours during the time they are transported to and from the Hub, parents will receive a verbal warning. Should this behaviour continue, a further two written warnings will be issued. In the event that this behaviour does not improve, the pupil may be banned from transport. Consequently, parents may be asked to arrange their own transport to ensure their child attends The Hub or their commissioned placement.

3. Absence

A student is absent from school when not physically present. Absences are categorised as 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Authorised Absence:

- Only the school can authorise absence, **not** the parents/carers;
- Parents/carers should contact the school in person by telephone, note or letter to provide an explanation for student absence;
- The DFE expects schools to operate 'common sense' judgements when authorising absence.

Examples of when absence may be authorised:

- Illness
- Medical appointments
- Job/college interviews
- Family bereavement
- Days of particular religious observance
- Long term illness which will also require medical evidence
- The student has a LA licence to take part in a public performance for which the school has supported absence from school.

These absences are shown by an appropriate symbol inserted by the Attendance Officer on receipt of a valid authorisation.

Unauthorised Absence:

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- The student is staying at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (DFE guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional cases);
- The student is absent for unexceptional circumstances, for example, shopping trips or the student's birthday;
- The student is away from school on a family holiday that has not been negotiated and agreed by the school.

4. Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA officers, Headteachers and police to issue or refer for Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. Penalty notices are used as a tool to improve attendance.

Any student who accrues 10 unauthorised absences within a 13 week period may be referred for a Penalty Warning Letter. The liable parent will receive a formal warning letter from the LA of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued and given 15 school days to improve the attendance.

If the student has another unauthorised absence within that 15 day period, the Attendance Officer will alert County Hall and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Parents/carers then have 21 days to pay a £60 Fine (per parent/carer).

Should a parent/carer choose to take their child on holiday during term time resulting in the student being absent for 10 or more sessions, The Hub will make a referral for a penalty notice. This may result in a penalty notice being issued. Parents/carers will have 21 days to pay a £60 fine (per parent/carer). For more information, please see the absence from school for exceptional circumstances policy.