

## Attendance Policy

Updated: September 2017

## Introduction

Haggerston School believes that for students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend every day. The School aims to provide an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. Students should be at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important that parents/carers make sure that students attend regularly and this Policy sets out how the school works with families to achieve this.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the DFE. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their child attends. All school staff are committed to working with parents, carers and students as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising student attainment.

It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters agenda, to ensure that young people are actively involved in:

- Being Healthy
- Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

## Why is regular attendance at school so important?

**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any absence disrupts teaching routines, and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable – students who miss large amounts of school do not achieve as well as those who attend regularly. Poor attendance habits follow through from secondary school into employment. Schools are frequently asked for attendance and lateness percentages when writing references for students who are applying for sixth form, college, apprenticeships or university. Ensuring a student's regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** Students may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each student encompasses:

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

### **This is how Haggerston School promotes regular attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we, the school:

- Expect students to attend school 100% of the time.
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis, and contact the parents or carers of students whose attendance falls below 96%. The details of this process are on page 6 of this policy
- Prepare a print-out of each student's attendance summary every term
- Celebrate good or improving attendance by rewarding individual and class achievements
- Have a focused week each term where as a whole school we look at attendance and punctuality
- Promote good attendance, and its positive effects in the student's school planner
- Work closely with Synergy Education and Welfare Services Ltd to promote good attendance, and challenge poor attendance.
- Send home those students who require immediate medical attention of have being vomiting

Parents and Carers can help their child to achieve a good attendance rate by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with the school
- Being positive about school
- Provide any required medication

### **What are the different types of absence?**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably by telephone on the day of absence and using the absence section in the student planner.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school. The only reason for this absence will be if a student has an illness that is contagious or where the student has been medically advised not to attend school. . In all other circumstances a student should attend school. Authorised absences do not include medical/dental appointments which should be arranged outside of school hours. However, absences will only be authorised for the first 5 days of illness and after that medical evidence will be required. Without this the absences will be classified as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping students away from school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a registration mark
- Shopping, looking after siblings or birthdays

- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

This type of absence can lead to Synergy Education and Welfare Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings in collaboration with Hackney Learning Trust.

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

### **Exceptional Leave**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents to help by not organising holidays during term time. Remember that any savings that may be made by doing this are offset by the cost to a student's education. Haggerston School does not authorise any holidays during term time, but may grant exceptional leave for situations such as family bereavement.

1. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.
2. Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
3. The HLT Attendance Service can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence, and the school may refer these incidences to the HLT Attendance Officer who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to the parents/carers.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and the school needs parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through the school's pastoral system and this is also combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

### **Procedures for absence**

If a student is absent parents must:

- Phone the school before 9am stating the reason for absence
- Write a note in the absence section of the planner with an explanation of the absence, to the Form Tutor on their first day of return – parents must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, parents can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.

If a student is absent the school will:

- Contact parents or carers via 'Truancy Call' requesting that they inform the school of the student's absence. If this does not happen the Assistant Head of School will make contact by telephone on the first day of absence;
- On the student's return their Form Tutor will discuss the reasons for absence and report back to the School Attendance Officer;
- Provide work to be completed at home if it is for an extended period of time. The form tutor will request work from subject teachers, and this work can be collected from the school office or will be posted home;
- If absences persist then further actions will be taken as outlined in the Attendance Process section;
- Refer the matter to the LHT Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

### **The Hackney Learning Trust Attendance Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Synergy Education Welfare Officer. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, then they can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 section 444 states the following:

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or students may wish to contact the Hackney Learning Trust Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 020 8820 7000 Ext: 7207.

### **Lateness to School**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they will miss work and will not spend the time required with their Form Tutor getting vital information. They will also miss their assemblies which are a vital aspect of a student's personal and social development. Students arriving late after 9am also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage absence.

How the school manages lateness:

The school day starts promptly at 8.40am with line up and we expect all students to be in school at that time. Students will receive two corrections for being late before 9am and a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.00am the registers will be closed. Any students arriving after this time will receive two corrections for being late after 9am.

If a student has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with either the Assistant Head of Year or the Head of Year. However, parents or carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

**Attendance process and taking action as appropriate.**

Information about our attendance process and how we take action can be found below:

Attendance (%)	School actions	Educational Welfare Officer actions
<b>Below 96%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter sent home to parent/carer informing them their child is below the expectant level of the school</li> <li>-Assistant Head of Year to speak with student</li> </ul>	-Monitoring
<b>Below 94%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On report to Assistant Head of Year</li> <li>- Action plan completed with Assistant Head of Year and student (copy sent to parent/carer)</li> </ul>	-Attendance warning letter from Educational Welfare Officer
<b>Below 92%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On report to Head of year</li> <li>- Letter sent home to parent/carers for non-improvement of attendance</li> </ul>	-Meeting with parent/carer as a pre-warning for court
<b>Below 90%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On report to a member of Senior Leadership team or other designated middle leader (Persistent Absentee report)</li> <li>- Letter sent home to parent/carers stating statutory action</li> </ul>	-Statutory court action

**What happens if my child is excluded from school?**

Whenever students are excluded from school parents or carers are notified immediately by telephone. This is followed up by a letter that explains the reason for the exclusion and gives the date that the child is expected to return to school. The letter also provides details of the date and time of the return from exclusion meeting to which it is expected one or more parents will attend. The purpose of these meetings is to assist the reintegration of the student and promote the improvement of their behaviour.

For the first five days of any exclusion the school will provide work for the student which should be completed and returned to school for marking. During this first five days parents of excluded children must ensure that their child is not present in a public place without reasonable justification. A failure to comply with this requirement is an offence which may result in the Synergy Education and Welfare Service Ltd issuing a fixed penalty notice.

Where a student receives a fixed period exclusion of 6 days or longer the school has a duty to arrange suitable full time educational provision. These options will be discussed and agreed between the parent and the school before the end of the first five days of any exclusion.