

Haggerston School

Aspiration Creativity Character

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Specific COVID guidance is published with this document.

Approved by	Date:
Headteacher	September 2020
Full Review Due:	Review By:
March 2024	DHT Behaviour

Introduction

Haggerston School believes that students gain the greatest benefit from their education when they attend school on time, every day. Students should be at school unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Both national and the school's own data demonstrates that there is a positive link between high levels of school attendance and GCSE outcomes. Young people stand the best chance of achieving to the best of their ability at school if they are in school on time every day. This policy sets out how Haggerston School works with families and students to achieve this.

According to Attendance (2019, DfE publication), **the government expects schools to:**

- promote good attendance and reduce absence (see appendix 1), including persistent absence (see appendix 5)
- act early to address patterns of absence (see appendices 9 and 7)

Parents are to:

- perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

Pupils are to:

- be punctual to their lessons (appendix 6).

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. Ensuring that a child's whereabouts is known (if they are not in school on a school day) is also a fundamental part of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) guidance given that non attendance to school may indicate that a child is at risk of harm.

1 - Why is regular attendance at school so important?

Achievement/Learning/Wellbeing: Any absence affects the pattern of a student's learning and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. In addition, any absence disrupts teaching routines, and so may affect the learning of others in the same class as well as the individual child. 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. Being at school enables children to access much more of the richness of life and its many opportunities enabling economic well being later in life and also enabling students to keep themselves safe and well, able to deal with the many challenges that life will bring. Positive mental health being as important as physical well being as young people enter adulthood. Schooling enables children to enjoy, achieve and to broaden their minds with regards future opportunities. Schools are also frequently asked for attendance and lateness percentages when writing references for students who are applying for sixth form, college, apprenticeships or university which we have to report accurately.

Safeguarding: Students may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. (Non attendance to school can happen due to neglect as well as the more visible signs of abuse). Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter and will be followed up according to the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines. (See appendices 11 and 12)

The Law: Parents/carers 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 which may result in penalty notice warnings/ fines and or prosecution.

2 - Parental/carers procedures for absence

If a student is absent, parents/carers must either:

- Phone the school before 8:45am stating the **specific reason** for absence. **Unwell is not accepted as a reason for absence.** Leave a voicemail on this number 020 7739 7324 (option 1).
- A member of the pastoral team will ring you back if there is a query or a concern.
- Or, parents can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of the pastoral team/attendance officer staff to speak with them.

Parents/carers must ring in every day of the absence unless medical evidence has been provided with clear dates for the absence.

E-mails are not accepted.

If a student is absent and no contact has been made from home, **the school will:**

- send a text message home, informing home of the absence requesting that the parent/carer call the school to explain
- and or, will call home (a member of the pastoral team) to ensure information is received about the child's whereabouts

If there are further absences. The school will:

- Contact parents or carers requesting that they inform the school of the student's absence. If this does not happen the Assistant Head of Year will make contact by telephone on the first day of absence;
- Provide work to be completed at home if the absence is for an extended and agreed period of time. The pastoral team will request work from subject teachers, and this work can be collected from the school office or will be posted home (see appendices 3 and 9);
- If absences persist then further actions will be taken as outlined in the Attendance Process section
- Refer the matter to Synergy Education and Welfare service if attendance moves below 90%.

(See appendices 6 and 8)

If there is an exceptional reason for an absence (appendix 3), please notify the Headteacher, with two weeks notice, in writing. This does not mean the absence will be authorised (see appendix 2). It will be considered however with a formal response to the request. Headteachers cannot authorise holidays in term time.

Other information

Attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and Department for Education as requested.

References:

Other DfE document references:

KCSIE (DfE) September 2019
Attendance (DfE) July 2019
School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE) 2015
Guidance for the full opening of schools (DfE) 2/72020
Children Missing in Education (DfE) 5/9/2016

Appendix 1 - 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.

The school:

- expects students to attend school 100% of the time.
- monitors attendance on a weekly basis, and contacts the parents or carers of students whose attendance falls below 97%*. (Texts, letters home, phone calls home, in school meetings with parents are typical (although not exhaustive) interventions.
- meets with children one to one to discuss any concerns (most likely with a tutor or a member of the pastoral team for example)
- meets with parents when concerns arise
- uses student report cards to help individuals improve
- sends home a print-out of each student's attendance summary every term.
- celebrates good or improving attendance by rewarding individual and class achievements
- has a focus week each half term where whole school attendance and punctuality is promoted
- encourages student's reflections termly on their attendance and punctuality in the student's school planner
- works closely with Synergy Education and Welfare Services Ltd to promote good attendance and to challenge poor attendance.

**students with ongoing medical conditions are reviewed differently assuming the school has the relevant medical evidence*

Parents and Carers can help their child to achieve an excellent attendance percentage by:

- ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- helping with homework
- having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- providing a healthy breakfast
- reporting any academic or social or medical concerns promptly
- ensuring open & honest communication with the school
- being positive about school
- ensuring meetings requested by the school are attended
- providing medication that can be left at reception for student's to take in the day (this should include the child's name, permitted frequency and purpose of the medication provided).

Appendix 2 - What are the different types of absence?

The school day is divided into two sessions: morning and afternoon registration. Each session missed has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. There is clear governmental guidance on what can/cannot be authorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably by telephone on the day of absence and by 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.

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. In the case of repeated bouts of illness, medical evidence may be requested for every such absence.

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
- ongoing/excessive illness not supported by medical evidence
- day trips/holidays in term time

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.

Appendix 3 - Infectious diseases

It is important the school is made aware immediately of any child with an infectious disease.

Infectious diseases include measles, mumps, chicken pox, coronavirus etc (this list is not exhaustive). A parent/carer should let the school know if their child is absent due to an infectious disease. Excepting COVID-19, please submit medical evidence for the absence to be authorised. With regards the length of the absence, please follow the most up to date public health guidance/consult with your GP relevant to the specific disease.

COVID - 19 specific information is in the addendum published with this document.

Appendix 4 - 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.

If exceptional leave is agreed with the Headteacher (this must be requested formally in writing), work may be provided to ensure a student does not fall behind. This must be returned to the relevant teaching staff for marking by the student. (Work may also be provided where they are extenuating circumstances such as absence due to medical reasons).

Appendix 5 - 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 cooperation to remedy this.

The school monitors all absences 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. 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.

Appendix 6 - Lateness to School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day, they miss part of lesson 1. This means that your child is missing valuable learning time. There is no early morning tutor time at Haggerston School. Children line up at 8.38am and vital information for the day is given by Heads of Year at 8:40am. It is therefore essential that all students are on site by 8:30am. The student gate shuts at 8.40am and children are late from this time onwards. Three corrections are awarded for lateness and this means this results in a 1 hr detention after school.

Registers close at 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. Being late to school can result in fines. Please ensure your child is always on time.

Appendix 7 - Synergy Education Welfare Officer

Children's attendance to school is reviewed on a weekly basis by Heads of Year and daily by Assistant Heads of Year. All persistent absentee students are reviewed regularly with our Synergy Education Welfare Officer. In school meetings may be requested by them and they may call you or visit your house should there be concerns about your child's attendance. Their involvement in your child's attendance is a very serious matter and higher level actions such as fines/being taken to court may follow if there is not a swift improvement once they are involved.

Appendix 8 - 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 OPT 7: Attendance.

Most matters are resolvable with good home-school communication so do please talk with your child's Head of Year in the first instance if you have a concern.

Appendix 9 - School attendance procedures.

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

Attendance (%)	School actions	Educational Welfare Officer actions
97 to 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Assistant Head of Year/Tutor to speak with student- Report card to tutor	-Monitoring
96% and below	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Advisory text message home	-Monitoring
96 to 94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Concerns letter home	-Monitoring
95 to 92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Assistant Head of Year to phone home- Assistant Head of Year to speak with student- Report to the Assistant Head of Year- Parents to meet in school with pastoral team	-Monitoring
94 to 92 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Parent meeting in school with the pastoral team- Persistent absentee letter sent home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Monitoring- In school meeting with HoY
Below 92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Parent meeting in school (Education Welfare Officer and or HoY)- Student on attendance and punctuality report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- In school parent meeting with HoY- Home visits- Penalty Notice warning letter- Fixed penalty notice- Court warning letter re statutory action- Court action

NB. The pastoral teams may refer any child with attendance/punctuality concerns to Synergy Education and Welfare Service at any point before the 92% threshold is reached. The thresholds/stages above are bypassed in the case of an immediate welfare concern or for holiday taken in term time or for absences with no information/inconsistent information provided about the child.

Appendix 10 - 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.

Appendix 11 - Children missing in education (Sept 2016 guidance)

Joint endeavours will be made with the Local Authority or other multi agency partners as appropriate to locate children who are absent from school for longer than 20 consecutive days. Referrals are then made to the Local Authority as appropriate. Children are only removed from roll once the school has handed over the case after all reasonable attempts to locate the child have been exhausted.

Appendix 12 - Children taught at Alternative Provision

The attendance of these children is tracked and monitored in conjunction with our alternative provision partners and concerns addressed as appropriate.

Appendix 13 - Complaints

Complaints about fixed penalty notices should follow the whole school complaints procedure.

Complaints about attendance protocols should be discussed with the child's Head of Year in the first instance who will liaise with the Senior Lead teacher for attendance if required.