

Local Procedure Title	Attendance
Site	North Hill House School
Local Procedure date	February 2020
Local Procedure review date	February 2021
Local Procedure Author(s)	Head Teacher
Local Procedure Ratification	Checked and Approved by: Operations Manager

1. Aims

North Hill House School believes that regular attendance at school is vital to young people achieving their full potential academically, socially and personally.

We understand that individual students may have had a disrupted education prior to joining North Hill House and that they may require a phased transition into school to be successful. We also appreciate that some young people with Autism suffer from anxiety that may affect their school attendance. However, our aim is that all our students will ultimately attend school on a full-time, regular basis in order to take full advantage of the opportunities that are open to them. Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence (attendance of less than 90% of timetabled sessions).
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

2. Legislation and Guidance

Our attendance procedure meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This procedure also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School Procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school day starts at 08.40.

The register for the first session will be taken between 08.40 and 09.00 and will be kept open until 09.20. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.20 and will be kept open until 13.30.

A small cohort of students, such as those on transition programmes, may have an agreed individual start time that is later than the usual start time of the morning and afternoon sessions.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents / Carers should contact the school by phone by 08.30 and either notify a member of the administrative staff or leave a message on the school answerphone.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents / carers should notify the school in advance of medical or dental appointments by email or letter. A copy of the appointment card / email may be requested by the school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (09.20 in the morning and 13.30 in the afternoon) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, unless the student's lateness is due to circumstances beyond their control such as taxi or transport issues, in which case they will be marked as late but present. Where transport issues repeatedly result in lateness, we will notify the parent / carer and the relevant Local Authority transport team.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If the school has not been notified of the reason for absence by 09.20, we will attempt to contact parents/ carers by phone. If the child has a child protection plan, we will also notify the child's social worker of the absence.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance will be reported to parents /carers in the written termly report that is issued at 3 points in the year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is authorised entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

A parental request must be made in writing prior to the date of the proposed term time absence and be agreed in writing by the head teacher. The head teacher will specify the number of days that the absence is authorised – any child not returned to school on the expected date will be considered a 'Child Missing from Education' and will be referred to their Local Authority as a safeguarding concern.

4.2 Valid reasons for authorised absence

These may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Leave of absence approved by the school.

4.3 Unauthorised absences

These include:

- Term time leave without prior approval
- Refusal to attend school that is not considered to result from medical needs or anxiety linked to Special Educational Needs
- Leave for student birthdays

North Hill House School will target unauthorised absence by:

- Contacting parents / carers / meeting with them to follow up the reasons for absence
- Monitoring attendance patterns
- Working with young people, parents and carers to address the reasons for the absence
- Instigating attendance plans where necessary
- Notifying the Local Authority where there are attendance concerns
- Contacting Childrens' Social Care where there are safeguarding concerns

4.4 Study Leave

Study leave may be granted to students in Y11 who are revising for exams. We will not usually grant study leave until the start of June. Provision will be available to students who wish to revise in school.

4.5 Persistent absence

Where there are concerns about a student's attendance that are not resolved through our attendance procedures, the Local Authority will be notified and an emergency annual review will be called.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is rewarded through end of term attendance certificates and Vivo points for students who achieve full attendance. Certificates are also awarded to students who have made the greatest improvement to their attendance.

Where there are concerns about attendance, the student's tutor plays a critical role in working in partnership with parents/ carers to identify possible causes for non-attendance and to implement agreed strategies to improve the child's attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

Our Student Support HLTAs monitor pupil absence on a daily basis. Parents /Carers are expected to call the school before 08.30 if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). If a pupil's absence extends beyond 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents/carers, a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will notify the Local Authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term by Local Authorities and reported at annual

reviews. Our attendance is recorded within our governance reports.

We use a secure online management information system to record and store attendance data. Senior leaders regularly track and analyse attendance data of individuals and cohorts and identify concerns and trends. We utilise the data to inform the need for interventions and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Governance

The Operations Manager and Operations Director are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on, at least, a termly basis. They hold the head teacher to account for the implementation of this procedure.

7.2 The head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring this procedure is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governance. The head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

7.3 The HLTA Student Support

The HLTA Student Support:

- Checks registers twice daily and liaises with parents /carers and tutors regarding absence and lateness
- Records attendance data provided by Alternative Providers
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Tutors and teachers

Tutors and teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis on the school information management system, using the correct codes. They are also responsible for liaising with students and parents/ carers regarding attendance. Tutors and teachers are responsible for informing the HLTA Student Support of any student who is not present for registration without a known reason.

7.5 Administrative staff

Administrative staff take calls from parents concerning absence and convey messages regarding attendance to the tutor, HLTA student support or the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate..

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually by the head teacher and is approved by the Operations Manager / Director.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our safeguarding policy.

Local Procedure Review History:

Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Summary of revisions