Heritage Academy

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.'

(Quraan 103:1-3)

Written/ updated: September 2025	Next Review: September 2027 (or sooner if required)
Person Responsible	Headteacher
Reviewed by:	Proprietor Body

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Behaviour Policy Data Protection Policy

Contents

1. Introduction

The law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The admission register must contain the personal details of every student in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation and guidance, which set out the legal powers, duties and direction that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

- School census guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

2. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- to provide an environment in which students feel valued and welcome;

- to ensure every student will know that their presence in school is important and we will work in close partnership with parents/carers to ensure the best possible attendance;

- to achieve the highest attendance and the highest punctuality for all students;

- to ensure students are safe and protected at all times.

- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- acting early to address patterns of absence.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a student is prevented for any reason from attending school, or is late, parents/carers should notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence by telephone. Parents/carers will be contacted by phone or text message if no call is received.

A student's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. Parents/carers will be promptly informed over any concerns regarding attendance and given the opportunity to discuss these matters with the Headteacher.

The school will take every opportunity to remind students of the importance of sustaining their attendance at the highest possible level. Only by sustaining optimum attendance can we ensure they receive the best possible education. All staff will encourage this through a range of positive strategies, including awards and certificates.

Attendance will be monitored on a regular basis using individual, class and whole school records. Any students identified as having a pattern of attendance that is giving cause for concern will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, usually in the first instance from the Attendance Officer or the Headteacher. Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff and should be treated as a priority by all.

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly with guidance from both the DfE and the Local Authority.

3. Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

We also expect students to be punctual to school and all lessons. Students must:

- arrive to school punctually before 8am;
- enter the school by the assigned entrance;
- all lateness will be recorded, and dealt with by the attendance officer;
- get to all lessons on time.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

The Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance states attendance is the responsibility of all (see chapter 8).

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Roles and Responsibilities of headteacher/designated senior leader responsible attendance:

Note: the headteacher is the designated senior leader

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention/monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils

and parents through all available channels

Roles & responsibilities of parents/carers:

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that students attend school regularly & punctually.

- Students should be properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- If a student is prevented for any reason from attending school, parents/carers should notify the school before 8:15am on each day of absence by telephone confirming the reason for the absence.

- Parents/carers must seek permission if students are to take time off during term time -generally, permission will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

- Parents must provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting the Headteacher who can be contacted by phoning the school.

Roles & responsibilities of students

- Students must attend school punctually.

- Students must attend every timetabled session, on time.

- If students are to leave school during the day, they must be collected by the parents/carers or an authorised person and must sign out. Where this is not possible, parents/carers must inform the school prior to the student leaving.

Classroom teachers/ Form Tutors

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 08:05 for morning registration and 13:40 for afternoon registration.

- Staff must encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.

Attendance Officer

The attendance officer will:

- monitor attendance data and look for any patterns of absenteeism, notify the Headteacher and contact parents/carers;

- refer to the Headteacher any student whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern;

- refer to the Headteacher any students who have been missing and have not informed the school about their absence;

- record all data onto the school system and provide regular reports as required on a students' attendance;

- place students on attendance & punctuality report where appropriate;

- celebrate success, e.g. give out certificates and awards for good attendance/ punctuality.

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

- Any suspicious patterns of absenteeism should be reported to the Headteacher, so parents/carers can be contacted, i.e. same day each week, present a.m., absent p.m. etc.

- The attendance officer is Mr Akhtar and can be contacted via 0121 440 2222/ info@heritage-academy.co.uk.

5. Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

- The school day starts at 8am and ends at 3.35pm.

- Registers must be completed in the first 5 minutes for morning and afternoon registration; afternoon registration will be taken at the beginning of period 5. Students arriving after lessons start will be marked as late.

- Staff must inform Senior Leaders of any students they suspect of truanting.

- Staff must remind their form about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

- Staff must complete the register on time (08:05 for morning registration and 13:40 for afternoon registration), collect any absence notes and give them to the attendance officer.

Routine for Morning Registration

Form tutors should collect any form of communications from reception at the start of the school day and deliver these messages as required.

Procedure for completion of registers

Registers are legal documents and must be maintained with scrupulous accuracy. The following guidelines should be observed by staff completing registers:

- Registers should be completed accurately.

- Lates, should be marked with a 'L'.

- An unexplained absence should be marked with a 'N'.

- Absence codes provided should be inserted onto authorised absences once adequate explanations have been received.

Heritage Academy will use national absence and attendance codes that will enable us to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations as noted in the latest DfE guidance. Absence codes are attached as an appendix to this policy.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Procedure for following up student absences

- For any student who is absent and no reason for absence has been received, the attendance officer will attempt to make contact each morning of absence and continue to do so each day of absence.

- If no response is received from any of the student's emergency contacts, the student must be referred to the Headteacher who will contact parents/carers by telephone or by sending out a letter requesting explanation for the absence.

- If parents/carers cannot be contacted by phone a standard letter will be sent out after 3 days.

- In all cases where children do not attend school, or if unauthorised leave in term time is suspected (parents have not made a request or a request has been denied, for example) the Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/1325/children_missing_education will be followed for safeguarding purposes, we will jointly be making reasonable enquiries to try to locate the student. We will refer any student whose whereabouts are unknown promptly, and no later than five days from the first day of absence, to the Children Missing Education Team at cme@birmingham.gov.uk

- Those students who fail to attend school regularly, or who are continuously absent for five days and their reason for absence is unknown, a Local Authority Children Missing Education Service (CME) referral will be made.

6. Authorised absence

Absence may be authorised for:

- illness - of the student but not another family member. Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

- leave of absence - granted by the school for exceptional family circumstances;

- unavoidable medical/ dental appointments - wherever possible, these appointments should be made outside school hour. Parents must notify the school in advance of the appointment;

- approved educational activities - sporting activities, work experience, educational visits etc. The parent must also apply for such absences as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

7. Unauthorised absences

Absences will not be authorised for:

- shopping trips;

- looking after family members;

- non- approved holidays;

- going to the airport to collect family/ friends;

- parentally condoned absence or truancy.

Only the Head teacher can authorise absence.

8. Procedure for students who arrive late to school

- Students who arrive after the school gate has closed at 8:00am in the morning should register at reception and will be marked as late.

- Students who arrive at school 30 minutes after the registration period will be marked absent and parents/carers will be required to explain the absence.

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded whereas poor attendance and punctuality will have sanctions. Students who are late will receive a detention.

Unauthorised absences may be receive a fine. Poor attendance will lead to the involvement of the local authority or social services and may result in the school using parent contracts and ultimately removal from roll at our school.

9. Promoting Attendance

- Teachers will encourage good attendance during registration period.

- Students will be offered a varied, flexible and enriched curriculum matched to individual needs.

- Attendance data will be collected regularly with a view to identifying patterns of absence, setting targets and reviewing progress.

- We will work with the Local Authority CME as required.

- Excellent and improved attendance will be recognised and rewarded with termly certificates/well done cards for 100% attendance or improved attendance.

Truancy

The Headteacher will always contact parents/carers immediately if a student is found to be truanting.

10. Extended Leave

The law states that families do not normally have the right to take children out of school during term time.

Our policy for extended leave is that it will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. For example, such as visiting grandparents/carers, a parent or siblings during serious/ terminal illness. Medical information may be requested where it is felt necessary. For other family members who do not fall into these categories, leave will not be granted.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview

- Study leave

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

- Exceptional circumstances

- A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

In all circumstances, parents/carers must write to the Headteacher **prior** to travel and before purchasing any tickets. Emails can be sent to info@heritage-academy.co.uk where they have had to travel suddenly in an emergency.

11. Penalty notices

The Headteacher of a school (or someone authorised by him), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (5 days of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

12. Attendance Monitoring

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil and year group level.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and

- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families.

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators and designated safeguarding leads)

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including

keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

  o Discuss attendance and engagement at school

  o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

  o Explain the help that is available

  o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

  o Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Points to Note:

- For all absences, students are expected to catch up work missed. See our Remote Education Policy. Catching up may also require attendance to lessons outside school time and parent/ carer support will be expected.

- Should students who do not return to school after any period authorised may be removed from school roll, unless the student is unwell on return, for which a medical note from a GP will be required. If there have been airline cancellations/ errors which cause a delay for return, official documentation may be required, e.g. a letter from the airline.

- Where school is not informed of any extended leave undertaken, students may be removed from school roll and the Local Authority CME informed. No requests for appeal will be considered.

- A copy of tickets is required with all leave requests.

13. Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption

Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)

Unauthorised Absence

G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed

Administrative Codes (not counted)

Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)