



# Hull Collaborative Academy Trust

## Attendance policy

**Date issued: September 2019**

**Ratified by the Trust Board:**

**Review Date: February 2021**

Other related academy policies that support this Attendance Policy include SEND, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Looked After Children, Supporting Children with Medical Needs, Young Carers.

### **Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) Ethos**

HCAT's strapline is 'Children First'. This is central to the organisation's vision, ethos and culture and informs every decision we make. We are fully committed to ensuring pupils within the trust receive the highest quality education and acquire the necessary skills and characteristics to enable them to be happy and successful in life.

At HCAT we do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Introduction**

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

DFE (November 2016) state that:

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated- pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;  
and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

### **Why a focus on attendance is important?**

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, the Local Authority (LA) and the Department for education (DFE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents,

guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:  
**Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.  
**Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not yet received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note; that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost).
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

### **Aims of the policy**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

### **Objectives of the policy**

- Meet Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.
- The policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

### **School responsibilities**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.

- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

### **Parent responsibilities**

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day.
- To inform school on **every** day of absence.
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

### **The process of monitoring attendance**

The school's Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss with the Headteacher. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Verbal communication with parents outlining concerns

Stage 2: Initial letter to parents

Stage 3: Invitation to meeting in school

Stage 4: Formal proceedings to wards prosecution

### **Absences during term time**

The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

It is the policy of HCAT not to authorise any absence other illness or those with exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

**AS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.**

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to the maximum of £1000 plus costs.

- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

### **Lateness**

**Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

- Children must be in class at the beginning of the school day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.
- The school register will close 20 minutes after registration. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have closed. The pupil will be given a mark of 'U' on the register. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- **[Insert here where the children would normally enter the school]**. If your child is late they must enter the school through the main reception, where they will be entered into the late book.
- Lateness will be closely monitored.
- If the arrival at school

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised coded of 'M'. Prove of the appointment will be required prior to the appointment or on arrival at school.

Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer.

### **Sickness**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctors/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
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### **Alternative Provision**

Schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, they will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider to ascertain attendance information. This should be provided daily. All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up by the home school in a swift and timely manner.

The school will use the appropriate code (B) to indicate that the child is accessing alternative provision, thus demonstrating the school has confirmed that the education is supervised and appropriate measures are in place to safeguard children.

### **Religious observance**

HCAAT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, schools will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### **Promoting good attendance**

We celebrate good attendance throughout the year in various ways, this encourages commitment to learning. Further details are available in your school.

### **The Role of the Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that 'if a child of compulsory age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.'

The Education Welfare Service may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice, when requested by a Headteacher, can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- 20 sessions or more unauthorised absences by the pupil during a 12 week period.
- Other than in specific circumstances\*, the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15-day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.

*\*the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term if at least 10 sessions (5 days).*

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a penalty notice for a first offence
- Issue a penalty notice without warning

### **Holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are to be discouraged.

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence, including those for holidays, to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be an 'exceptional circumstance'.

'Exceptional circumstance' means that the parent must make the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm. All requests will be treated on an

individual case by case basis.

Parents/carers should make a request for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised. Parents/carers need to request a 'Holiday Form', which needs to be completed 4 weeks prior to the leave of absence date.

Parents/carers are reminded that leave of absence taken from school without permission may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty fine, issued by the Local Authority.

It must be noted that there is no obligation on the part of the school or teachers to provide schoolwork to be completed by children whilst away on holiday.

The circumstances of each case should be taken into account, 'blanket approval' policies are not acceptable.

When considering a request for leave of absence we will take into account:

- The amount of time requested
- The pupil's general absence/attendance records
- Previous requests made for holiday absence and whether these are occurring annually/frequently.
- Proximity of public exams, e.g. SATs
- Pupil's educational needs and their ability to catch up
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- When the request was made

All requests will be responded to with a written response confirming the length of time requested and how the request will be coded, e.g. whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Where attendance has or is likely to fall below 90%, if the holiday is taken, all requests for holiday absence will unauthorised, except in exceptional circumstances for example, where the previous absence has been due to prolonged medical/hospital needs. The Headteacher will use their discretion in this matter.

If, following a period of 10 days authorised absence, the child fails to return to school for a further 10 days, the school will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service leading to the possibly of removing the child from the school register.

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

#### **Position Statement- national definition of children who are not receiving a suitable education:**

"A compulsory school age child who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home" (revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education January 2009).

Hull City Council Children Missing from Education protocol is designed to support professionals across CYPS, partners and stakeholders in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are missing in education. Its aim is to identify the practical steps to be taken by professionals to locate and track children and young people missing from education.

If any pupil is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days, the school will notify the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Service. The school will include details of the actions taken to ascertain reason for their absence from school.

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service, when appropriate.

**Please refer to Hull City Council's CME protocols.**

### **Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation**

Children who go missing or are persistently absent from school may be an indicator of exploitation, especially if other key factors are also present.

Some other potential signs of criminal or sexual exploitation are:

- missing from home and /or being found out-of-area;
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- suspicion of physical or sexual assault / unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results / performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

At HCAT we monitor absenteeism daily to ascertain pupil's whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. We will work endlessly with all statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, including parents/carer to protect any child at risk or at possibly risk of this form of abuse.

If a class teacher or tutor is concerned about a child who is regularly absent and also presents with any of the signs listed above, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, as per the school's Child Protection policy.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust. It also holds the Trust Leaders to account for the implementation of this policy.

Local Governing Bodies are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for individual schools on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher (or nominated senior leader) to account for the implementation of this policy within their individual school.



**HOLIDAY/LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST APPLICATION FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

**Name of pupil:** .....

**Home address:** .....

.....  
.....

**I would like to request permission for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:**

..... **to** .....

**Date of last attendance at school:** .....

**Date of return to school:** .....

**Reason for absence from school:**

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.....  
.....  
.....

**Please consider the above request for my child to receive an authorised absence from school during the times and reasons mentioned.  
I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised.**

**Name of parent/carer:** .....

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS NOTICE.**

**PARENTS/CARERS ARE REMINDED THAT LEAVE OF ABSENCE TAKEN FROM SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION MAY RESULT IN THE ISSUING OF FIXED PENALTY FINE BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.**