

Lady Hawkins' School
Attendance Policy 2013 [Review in September 2017]

Aim

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

Objectives

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the School.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, carers and students
- To work with other agencies
- To recognise the diverse needs of our individual students, particularly when planning re-integration

Target

- The school attendance target is 96%

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.

DfE Guidance on leave during term time – June 2013

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to 'Family Holidays' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances, Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Headteacher in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised.

The DfE guidance about holidays in term time makes the following points:

- each request can only be judged on a case by case basis;
- even in exceptional circumstances it is expected that Headteachers will use their discretion sparingly;
- Headteachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits;
- as a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term.

Penalties for unauthorised absence

Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £60 for those who pay within 28 days and £120 for those who pay within 42 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 42 days may be prosecuted.

The 2013 amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice.

Parents must, from September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices.

Attendance at School:

Long term research shows that a 10% fall in attendance results in a fall in achievement of one grade or one level e.g.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to the loss of one grade and having half a day off each week
- 80% attendance is equivalent to the loss of two grades and having one day off each week

As well as lowering student grades in school, would an employer tolerate an employee taking half a day off every week?

Children Missing From Education [CME]. There are safeguarding risks to students not regularly attending school.

Definition of CME

" All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise [e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision] and have been out of any educational provision for a period of time [usually agreed as four weeks or more]"

If there are safeguarding concerns or this child is known to social services, a referral to MASH will be made straight away.

The 10 day reporting rule: if any student is absent for 10 consecutive school days and no reasonable explanation has been provided a referral should be made to MASH identifying them as a child missing from education. LHS will carry out checks from the first day of absence to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and /or their family. The 10 days rule will be seen as a maximum and it is likely that a referral will be made before the 10th day of absence.

Procedures for encouraging good attendance:

Senior Leadership Team:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school newsletter.
- Support HOY on issues of non-attendance and internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Report on attendance to governors.

Heads of Year:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events.
- Monitor Year Group attendance targets and record keeping.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support Form Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.
- Support with referrals to the Education Welfare Service via Attendance Officer/Inclusion Manager
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students and long-term absentees.
- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.
- Work with appropriate staff to create individual packages and re-integration plans.

Form Tutors:

- Be a good role model for students by actively promoting the school's attendance ethos both via discussion and practically.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation.
- Keep an accurate register. Students signing in after 9.00am should do so at the office.
- Complete absence reports as soon as possible and by end of day every day
- Return register to the Office promptly at the end of every registration.
- Inform HOY's and Attendance Officer when absence is causing concern.

Attendance Officer/Inclusion Manager:

- Oversee administration of the school Register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- Support the work of SLT, HOY's and Form tutors by:-
 - Providing regular attendance information.
 - Phoning students on 1st Day Contact List and monitoring attendance and punctuality alerting Form Tutors and HOY's when concerns arise.
 - Working with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance.
 - Meeting with EWO regularly to make and monitor referrals.
 - Keep staff informed of attendance issues via attendance monitoring spread sheet.

Parents

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school.
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time.
- Where it is not avoidable to take children out of school during term time, a holiday form must be completed and permission granted by the head teacher.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance telephone the school on the first morning child is absent.
- Support the school in its ethos relating to the direct link between attendance and achievement.

Students:

- Arrive at 8.45 am for registration every morning and 1.10pm for registration every afternoon.
- Students arriving after 9:00am should sign in at the school office.
- Be on time for lessons.
- Make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences.
- If late sign in at the Office.
- If need to leave early sign out at the Office.
- Tell Form Tutor or HOY if having any problems attending school.

Support Available:

- Target attendance intervention accessed through HOY referral.
- Attendance Reports.
- Attendance interviews and regular reviews.
- Meetings with HOY's, EWO and other agencies to provide support for children and their parents.
- Re-integration through student services for casual admissions and on return from long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- EWO involvement including possible home visits.

Rewards

- Certificates and letters home for individuals and form prizes for groups.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.
- Improved academic attainment

Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- Form Tutor detention.
- Subject Department detention.
- HOY detention.
- EWO involvement and referral.
- Parenting Contracts
 - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a pupil's truancy under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (with The Governing Body).
- Penalty Notices issued by the school.
 - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school issuing a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (by Headteachers and deputy and assistant heads authorised by them). Prosecution by the Education Welfare Service.

Stephen Crisp
Chair of Governors
June 2013