

Harlington Upper School

Attendance Policy

Policy written: August 2005

Date approved:

Revised: April 2009

Rationale

With a strong belief that good attendance leads to positive learning outcomes, the school works closely with the Education Welfare Service to ensure high levels of attendance. When on-going ill-health makes good attendance difficult we work to support the student and parent by engaging outside agencies or seeking creative ways of helping the student to remain engaged with learning.

Aims

The school aims to establish through its pastoral system and personal relationships, an environment in which students may develop academically and socially to their fullest extent.

This document is intended to assist all within the Harlington Community to have a consistent approach to matters of attendance. It is the responsibility of **all** staff to take action (either positive or negative) to deal with attendance issues, drawing upon the support of colleagues when this is deemed necessary.

Other related policies:

Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Learning Support Policy
Racial Incidents Policy
Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy & Looked After Children
Social Inclusion Policy – Pastoral Support Plan
Anti-bullying Policy

Staff Responsibilities

Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To oversee and approve the policyTo convene a pastoral committee
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To ensure that all staff support the policyTo advise on serious attendance issues
Deputy Head (Pastoral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To advise House Leaders on attendance concernsTo review policy and to publish excerpts to parents and in school homework plannerTo brief all staff on changes in policyTo monitor attendance and punctuality
Head teacher Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To brief House Teams on policy changes
House Leaders & Key Stage Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To oversee the attendance of their house group/year group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support tutors in following up attendance concerns • To monitor attendance and follow up unacceptable levels of absence
Subject Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support members of department in upholding the policy • To ensure relevant information is displayed within department
All Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor attendance and punctuality • To carry out the role of form tutor and through this support the policy
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To carry out regular attendance spot checks and send warning letters where applicable. • To meet with the EWO on a regular basis • To work with form tutors to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality

ATTENDANCE

The school has very high attendance expectations since almost every school year whilst at upper school is an examination year. Specific measures have been put in place to encourage good attendance and to follow up cases of poor attendance or possible truancy.

Parents of any student whose attendance falls below an acceptable level (90%) will be contacted either by letter or telephone. Parents are asked to phone the school on the first day of any absence. Regular spot check phone calls are made by the student support team to check on reasons for absence even though a parent may already have telephoned the school to verify the absence. Such monitoring phone calls are made to prevent and detect unauthorised absence. The target attendance figure for all students is a minimum of 95% and contact is usually made once the overall attendance level falls below 90%.

- Family bulletins will regularly contain reminders to parents of our expectations regarding attendance and our policy of regular spot checks and letters.
- Family holidays during term time are not likely to be authorised. Application must be made at least six weeks prior to the proposed holiday which will only be allowed if there are extenuating circumstances (such as a parent in the armed forces with restricted leave or after a family tragedy when the family need time together). Only the school can authorise absence (code 'H') and failure to request permission prior to the holiday is likely to lead to the absence being coded as unauthorised holiday ('G'). When considering such a request the House Leader will consider the student's usual level of attendance. If a holiday is not authorised, but the parents still take the child on holiday, this will be coded as 'G' (unauthorised family holiday) and support from the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be requested. They will issue a warning letter to the parent(s) stating that any future G coded holidays will result in a Penalty Notice being issued. The Education Welfare Service provides a leaflet for issue to parents when holiday is requested.
- In exceptional circumstances, the school may permit an extended family holiday. Again, this must be requested in advance and would be allowed for example when a relative living in a distant country is seriously ill. In such cases, provided the Headteacher has agreed in advance, the absence will be coded as 'F' – extended family holiday (agreed).

- When attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent advising parents of our concerns (see appendix for monitoring schedule and exemplar letters.)
- If attendance continues to be of concern, parents will be contacted again and may be asked to attend a meeting in school.
- Continued poor attendance will necessitate the involvement of the school's Education Welfare Officer who meets with the Pastoral Manager and team once per cycle.
- The Education Welfare Officer will advise the Pastoral Manager on the most appropriate course of action – this may include a meeting in school, a specific target for improvement, or a visit by the EWO to the family home.
- If no improvement is evident, a Penalty Notice warning letter will be requested from EWS. (see appendix for 'Education Welfare Service Request for Penalty Notice').
- If there is still no improvement or co-operation from the parent(s) to seek to improve, then a Penalty Notice will be issued or consideration given to possible prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 – this is applied to every child in the family and to each parent.

Electronic Registration

All students are expected to attend morning and afternoon registration sessions where a computerised register is taken. Any student who is marked absent, where there has not been prior notification of the absence or a telephone call to advise of illness will receive a text message to parents requesting a reason for absence. It is essential that any student arriving late for school signs in at the student support office before proceeding to lessons as they will otherwise be coded as absent and parents will be contacted. In addition, the majority of lesson registers are computerised. This allows a member of staff to detect whether or not a student is missing their lesson who should be expected to be there. The student support office is alerted to any missing students and if they are not located, parents will be contacted.

Appointments During School Hours

We do ask parents to avoid taking students out of school for medical appointments, however, when this is unavoidable, the student must sign out (or in if arriving late after an appointment) at student support. They must provide written evidence of the appointment. If a series of regular appointments are necessary (e.g. for dental work) then we ask parents to try to make these during school holidays or after normal school hours. Students signing in late after a medical appointment will receive a present mark if they arrive before mid-day for morning appointment and before 2.45 for afternoon appointments.

Unauthorised Absence

In cases of unauthorised absence (including internal truancy) the Pastoral Manager will arrange for the student to make up the time and work missed. This will involve a series of after school detentions or in more serious cases attendance on a non-school day, such as a staff training day. In such circumstances, agreement of parents will be sought and the student will be expected to attend school in uniform, to make up the time and work missed. When time has been made up, the register code can be changed to an authorised mark (as agreed with the EWS).

Persistent Absence

Persistent Absence (PA) is a term used by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to denote absence of more than 20% for an individual student, whether authorised or unauthorised. There are clear links between poor attendance and poor attainment. Any child whose attendance falls to unacceptable levels will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Registration Codes

All schools use the registration codes set out by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF – May 2008). *See appendix*
Similarly if a child is formally excluded from school but attends tuition, for example at the local library, he/she should be coded as B (present).

Attendance Returns

The Pastoral Deputy Head will take responsibility for regular attendance returns to the Local Authority and the DCSF. Form Tutors will be asked to code as many absences as possible using letters received from parents. Use of first day of absence telephone confirmation only should be avoided if possible since this is not proof of the child's whereabouts or reason for absence. Parents are asked to send written confirmation of the reason for absence when the child returns to school. If a child fails to bring a note from home, a standard letter requesting confirmation of specific dates should be requested from the school office. If confirmation is still not received, the tutor should request that parents are contacted by the Student Support Office to confirm a reason for absence.

Missing Children Procedure

A missing child school referral form (*see appendix*) should be used when a child 'disappears' e.g. when parents move without providing a forwarding address; when it is suspected that the family have gone on an extended holiday without school agreement; when a child does not return two weeks after the expected return date of a family holiday. If the school has child protection concerns, social services should be contacted and if the school suspects that a crime may have been committed the Police should be contacted. The County Children Missing Education Co-ordinator should be contacted in such a situation. He/she will take referrals from a variety of outside agencies for any student who has been out of school for more than four weeks. Such children are recorded on the DCFS S2S (school to school) website and may be removed from school roll in accordance with the guidance in the attendance manual (p.12, 13 & 14).