

High School for Girls Attendance Policy



Reviewed and updated: January 2018

This policy has been formally approved and adopted by The Governing Body at a formally convened meeting.

Policy approved: B. BA . Date: 2nd MAY 2018 .

(Chair of HR and Pastoral Committee)

Date of Policy Review: 2nd MAY 2021

HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE POLICY

Purpose of the Policy

At the High School for Girls and High School Sixth Form we take the issue of attendance very seriously and we do everything in our power to obtain 100% attendance from all of our students.

1.1 Aims:

- To make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers and students) the School's expectation of high attendance levels.
- To emphasise the importance of maximum attendance at school as an essential prerequisite for maximising an individual's achievement and for making full use of all educational opportunities.
- To promote a consistent approach across the main school and Sixth Form towards all matters relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To emphasise the importance of the home and school working together to achieve a high level of attendance and punctuality.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all concerned with respect to attendance/punctuality.
- To communicate to everyone the legal position with respect to attendance and the different categories of absence.

1.2 Good attendance is important at the High School for Girls and in the High School Sixth Form because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

1.3 Attendance at school is central to ensuring all students fulfil their full potential. It is central to raising standards and it is clear that regular attendance brings learning benefits. Missing out on learning, due to absence, means that the process becomes fragmented.

It is a legal requirement that students of compulsory school age receive a full time education and this, with the exception of those educated elsewhere due to a variety of reasons, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance means a student is not fulfilling her/his potential and is potentially putting the student at risk.

1.4 The attendance target for both the High School For Girls and the High School Sixth Form is 100%

2. Consultation Process

2.1 This policy was developed in consultation with governors, parents/carers and students.

2.2 This policy takes into account both the statutory and non-statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

3. Understanding types of absence

A young person is expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for absence.

There are 2 main categories of absence:

Authorised absence –

- When school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for the absence/has given approval, in advance, for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absence –

- When a school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved the young person's leave of absence from school after a parent's/carer's request.

This includes:

- Time off for birthday/family celebrations, holidays or looking after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Unexplained absences
- Caring for relatives.

A school can, if necessary, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be if a parent stated a young person is unwell but on returning to school there is evidence that they have been on holiday.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Headteacher

- a) The Headteacher must make sure that the school meets all the statutory requirements.
- b) The Headteacher will ensure that there is effective monitoring of attendance and that appropriate support and intervention is in place for students whose attendance causes concern. This is delegated to Student Support for the High School for Girls, who is supported by the Attendance Officer, Year Coordinators, Assistant Head : Student Support (Years 7 – 11) and to the Director of Post 16 for the High School Sixth Form who is supported by the Sixth Form Administrator.

4.2 The Governors

- a) The Governing Body has the responsibility for setting the school's attendance target.
- b) The Human Resources and Pastoral Care Committee of the Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring the school's attendance rate.

4.3 Parents and Carers

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is the law that parents/carers must ensure that their child (children) of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at an alternative provision or otherwise, for example, the parent/carer can choose

to educate their child/children at home. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16. From September 2015, all 16 year olds are required to continue in education/training until their 18th birthday. If a child/children attend school parents/carers must ensure that they attend school regularly and punctually.

Allowing unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents/carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child's (children's) absence from school is a significant cause for concern. Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's/children's regular attendance at a school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Definitions of Parent/Carer

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the young person.

A carer means:

- Any person who has care of the young person, i.e. lives with and looks after the young person.

Parents/carers must follow the school's procedures for reporting any absence:

- (i) If a child is unwell a telephone message should be left on the absence line before 09.00 am on the first day of absence, or an email should be sent, stating the reason why a child cannot attend school.
- (ii) If a child returns to school following an absence then the parents/carers should write a letter explaining the absence.
- (iii) Absence which remains unauthorised will be reported to the Local Authority
- (iv) Notification of absence for hospital appointments/orthodontist/music/dance examinations must be made at least one week in advance on the Medical Absence Form/Non Medical Absence form which needs to be handed into the main school office for approval. NB: students in the main school must be collected by parents/other authorised individuals for appointments. Sixth Form students should sign out with the Sixth Form Administrator.
NB: Routine Medical/Dental appointments should be made outside school hours, whenever possible.
- (v) Parents should provide proof for hospital or orthodontist appointments or for Music/Dance examinations.
- (vi) Only the school's acceptance of the explanation will authorise the absence.
- (vii) Parents/carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually to school every day. Students are expected to be on site by 08.30 to ensure they do not receive a late mark in the morning and must be in their form rooms by 14.10 for afternoon registration. Persistent lateness may result in a detention being issued.
- (viii) Parents/carers should support their child/children in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- (ix) Parents/carers should only ask for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances as defined by the Department for Education.

4.4 Students

- Students should attend school every day unless prevented from doing so due to illness or other circumstances.
- Students must arrive at school punctually at 08.30. This will allow a student to have sufficient time to register, speak to friends and prepare themselves for their first few lessons.
- Students are expected to be punctual to all their lessons throughout the day in order to minimise disruption to the teacher and fellow students and so maximise learning.
- Students should take responsibility for registering at Student Services if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours. Sixth Form students should sign in/out with the Sixth Form Administrator.
- Students must be collected by parents/carers from Reception.

4.5 Staff

Recording Attendance

All teaching staff must take an electronic register on SIMS at the start of morning registration and in the afternoon during pm registration. These constitute the statutory registration of students. All teaching staff should also register students electronically for each lesson during the day.

Recording Absence

It is the school's responsibility to classify every half day of absence using the approved Department for Education coding as either authorised/unauthorised. (Appendix A)

Requests for other Absence during Term Time

- Requests for absence during term time should be sent to the Headteacher at least a month in advance for consideration using the correct form (Appendix B).
- These requests will be viewed in line with the Department for Education latest guidelines and **will not** be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- The Headteacher or senior leader designated in the Headteacher's absence will make the final decision as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances.

Absence through a young person's participation in public performance, including theatre, film/TV work and modelling

The regulations related to a young person participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Any parent seeking such leave of absence for their young person must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the young person has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.

Absence through completing at regional, county or national level for sport/music

Parents of able sports women and men can seek leave for absence for their young person to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this. Parents should discuss with the Headteacher the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Permission for a young person to leave early/arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher. It is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event and disrupts the education of the young person.

Absence through term time holidays

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise holidays during term time in **exceptional circumstances** and therefore the vast majority of requests will be refused. If the holiday is taken anyway, this will constitute unauthorised absence which may result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent in respect for each child absent. **A fixed penalty notice will be issued for an unauthorised holiday of 5 days or more without a warning letter.**

Record Preservation

School registers are legal documents. The High School for Girls and the High School Sixth Form will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. We are a SIMs school and registers are now centrally hosted and are preserved as electronic backups.

Prosecution by Local Authorities

If a young person of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided then the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority. Only Local Authorities can prosecute parents/carers.

At the High School for Girls and High School Sixth Form attendance is closely monitored by Student Support (Years 7 – 11) and the Sixth Form Administrator (Years 12 – 13) and reports are produced six times a year for the Year Co-ordinators, Assistant Head : Student Support (Years 7 – 11), Assistant Head : Director of Post 16 and the Headteacher. Any attendance/punctuality issues are followed up.

At the High School for Girls and the High School Sixth Form we work closely with the Local Authority and take action when required. However, we do work with parents in the first instance to improve attendance and punctuality.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines which can be imposed on parents/carers for unauthorised absence, i.e. failure of parents/carers to send their young person to the school regularly, at which they are registered or to a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/offences.

The decision to impose a fixed penalty notice is taken only by the Headteacher in discussion with the Administrator (Years 7 – 11). Such fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holidays of 5 days or more without a warning letter.

Procedures and strategies for responding to unsatisfactory attendance

The Administrator (Years 7 - 11) and the Sixth Form Administrator (Years 12 - 13) are responsible for the day to day management of attendance, absence and punctuality. If any concerns are raised then

Student Support, Year Co-ordinators (Years 7 – 11) and the Assistant Head: Student Support (Years 7 – 11) for the main school and for the Sixth Form, Assistant Head : Director of Post 16 are informed and actions are taken immediately.

High levels of student attendance are encouraged and a range of procedures and strategies are used:

- The Administrator (Years 7 – 11) provides attendance and punctuality reports once a term for Student Support (Years 7 – 11) who annotates the reports and alerts the Year Co-ordinators, Assistant Head: Student Support (Years 7 – 11) and the Headteacher about any concerns. For the Sixth form the Sixth Form Administrator produces a report for the Director of Post 16. This is then discussed with the Headteacher.
- The Year Co-ordinator and Director of Post 16 meet with the students involved and closely monitor the students' attendance.
- Student Support and the Director of Post 16 will also inform parents in order to elicit their help in improving the situation.
- If there are medical or other issues then a meeting is called in school with all the relevant parties present. This includes Student Support (Years 7 – 11), Year Co-ordinator, Assistant Head : Student Support (Years 7 – 11), relevant outside agencies and parents. In the case of the Sixth Form it will include the Form Tutor, Assistant Head : Director of Post 16, parents, student and any outside agencies.
- At the High School it is extremely rare for further action to be required.
- However, should the situation arise that absence and poor punctuality are still issues then a School Attendance panel would be called. This would be a formal meeting, held in school, whereby the parents'/carers' responsibilities would be discussed ensuring regular attendance to avoid possible legal action.

Attendance codes, description and meanings**Appendix A**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity - Present
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity - Present
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity - Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity - Present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity - Present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity - Present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted



High School for Girls

Appendix B

Student Leave of Absence (Non-medical)

I wish to apply for leave of absence from school, during the term, to enable:

Name of Student: _____ Form: _____

- to attend a music/dance exam
- to take part in sports/drama performance
- to accompany me on annual family holiday
- other (please specify) _____

(Please delete those that do not apply).

Details of leave, including dates. If a request is made for a holiday, please specify the reason(s) for going during term time:

I understand that if leave of absence is not granted then the student's attendance is expected at school.

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

This form should be completed and returned to the High School for Girls **no later than a month before the proposed leave; excluding school holiday times.**

Leave for family holidays may be granted for up to 10 days at the discretion of the Headteacher for special circumstances, for example:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time and will only be given if the holiday will cause minimal disruption to the students education, and
- If a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Approval will not be given for the school examination periods (dates published in the School's Annual Calendar).

The school operates Safeguarding procedures and takes its responsibility of duty of care for students seriously. Therefore we would be grateful if parents/carers would abide by the procedures set for all students in the main school.

All students in Years 7-11 MUST BE collected from THE MAIN RECEPTION by their parent/carer, or another adult contact on their student data sheet. Students should go to Student Services to sign out. Students will then go to the main reception when their parent/carer arrives.

.....
(Please do not write below this line)

Leave of absence has been approved/denied* by the Headteacher:

(*To be deleted as appropriate).

% Attendance _____

Name of Student: _____ Form: _____

From: _____ To: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____



High School for Girls

Leave for Medical Appointments

Appendix B

All Appointments for Doctors or Dentist should be made outside of school time. For Hospital or orthodontic appointment please provide details below and attach a copy of the appointment letter or card to this form.

If Appointment made by phone please circle: Hospital/Orthodontist

Name of Student: _____ Form: _____

DATE OF APPOINTMENT: _____ To be collected from school TIME: _____

Time of return to school: _____

I will collect my daughter from Main Reception:

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

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All students in Years 7-11 MUST BE collected from THE MAIN RECEPTION by their parent/carer, or another adult contact on their student data sheet. Students should go to Student Services to sign out. Students will then go to the main reception when their parent/carer arrives.

.....
(Please do not write below this line)

Leave has been approved:

% Attendance _____

Name of Student: _____ Form: _____

From: _____ To: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____