



HIGH WELL SCHOOL

Preparing for Positive Futures

Attendance

Policy Lead:	Attendance Officer
Date approved by Governing Body:	26.02.2021
Date Shared with Staff:	01.03.2021
Date of Review:	November 2021

Signed by Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end.

Date:

01.03.2021

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1. Policy Statement

All staff at High Well School will work with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil attends school regularly and minimise absence of any kind. Good attendance and punctuality is an essential life skill and central to High Well's ethos: Preparing for Positive Futures. Improving attendance is a key priority for High Well and we will achieve this through:

- Raising awareness of the effects of absence and lateness
- Ensuring effective systems are in place to monitor absence and to identify and address any underlying barriers that pupils and their families face
- Reviewing and enhancing systems for recognising and rewarding pupils who improve their attendance
- Providing challenge to pupils and parents/carers through partnership working where a lack of priority is given to good attendance leading to persistent levels of absence/ lateness

2. Reward system

Weekly

Every pupil who achieves 100% attendance, or has the most improved attendance is awarded with a certificate which is presented in assembly for them to take home. Parents/carers are sent a positive message home to offer thanks for their support. Pupils with 100% attendance have their name added to a draw and have the chance to win one of six £50 Amazon Vouchers at the end of term. The class who achieve the highest attendance are awarded a trophy in assembly which is put on display in school.

Half-Termly

The class who achieve the best attendance over each half term are rewarded with a whole class treat where they can celebrate their achievement together on the school site.

A display board on the main corridor in school, displays pupils' achievements and is updated weekly.

3. Attendance and Punctuality

OFSTED regulate and inspect all schools and academies in order to achieve excellence in the care of young people in education. They regularly collate and analyse data regarding attendance from all education establishments.

The Department for Education (DfE) guidelines state that it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend school regularly. At High Well School each pupil's attendance is regularly monitored and the school will pursue all interventions available to promote good attendance.

Effective education can only take place if a pupil attends regularly. High Well School promotes through its ethos good attendance and punctuality and is committed to working in partnership to ensure that pupils arrive at school, on time and ready for the day ahead.

4. New for 2020 to 2021- not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If pupils test negative and feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time the negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test.
- If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days from when the member of the household first had symptoms.
- In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents/carers to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in future local lockdown scenario only

Children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from a high risk area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.

Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield and parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC guidance on what

measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is limited to certain groups, not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID19)- code X should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote Education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools should be immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

5. Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census resumed in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. From January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

6. The Attendance Team

The attendance Officer or a member of the Admin team will contact parents/carers by phone or text where a pupil is absent and the school has not received any notification regarding the absence. Any late arrivals and punctuality issues will be discussed on the day with pupils and if necessary parents/carers.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works as a link between home, school and other agencies and the Local Authority, in order to address attendance issues and ensure that all pupils are receiving a full time education. This involves explaining to parents/carers their legal responsibilities, referring to other agencies and encouraging families to build good relationships with school. The EWO may conduct home visits with the school's Attendance Officer and may work with other agencies including the Police.

7. Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

High Well School has a special responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. This adds up to missing almost half a term. High Well school applies the following procedures in how to deal with individual absences:

- Pupils should arrive in school from 9am with registration from 9.15am to 9.25am
- Pupils missing from registration will be marked as absent and first day response will take place before 10am by the Administrative Team and/or Attendance Officer
- If a pupil is unable to attend school parents/carers should contact the school on 01924 572100 to explain the reason for absence

Punctuality

High Well is committed to ensuring all pupils arrive on time, in uniform and ready to start their day. Pupils who arrive late to school will be marked as late in the register and expected to make up the time missed at break or lunch times, unless there is a valid reason for late arrival to school.

Letters Home

Attendance and punctuality letters will be sent out to parents/carers when patterns of poor attendance or punctuality occur. This can include warning letters and notifications of the action that High Well is required to take if improvements are not made.

Each communication home will escalate where poor punctuality/attendance persists.

Persistent Absence – Fast Track Meetings

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% this pupil is classified as '**Persistently Absent**'. A pattern of attendance approaching or falling below 90% will trigger involvement from the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). A meeting will be scheduled with parents/carers with the EWO and High Well's Attendance Officer. This will provide an opportunity to discuss barriers to good attendance and identify strategies/support which the school could provide to improve attendance. Where concerns exist, parents/carers will also be made aware of the possible actions if the pupil were to remain 'Persistently Absent'. It is important to note that High Well does take into account genuine reasons for absence including illness, family bereavement, regular medical appointments or other issues that may lead to attendance falling below 90%.

Persistent Absence – Penalty Notice

High Well may take the decision to prosecute where there is prolonged 'Persistent Absence'. This process can involve an initial Penalty Notice arising from any of the following circumstances:

- No improvements following Fast track review meeting
- Attendance falls below 90%
- Inappropriate condoned parental absence
- Unauthorised or excessive term time holidays
- Persistent late arrival to school
- Truancy or absconding from school
- A minimum of 10 school sessions lost to unauthorised absence

The cost of the penalty notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the Notice, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the Local Authority does not receive payment they may then progress the matter to the Magistrates Court. High Well School does not receive any monies attributed to the penalty notice.

Persistent Absence – Parental Prosecution

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child receives a full time education. Failure to do so may lead to a parental prosecution in the Magistrates Court and the possibility of receiving a Parenting Order or a fine up to £2,500 or a prison sentence for each parent/carer.

Prosecutions at this level would only be sought in exceptional circumstances, where the school felt all strategies had been used in seeking to improve attendance and that parents/carers were failing to cooperate.

Persistent Absence – Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order can be used in order to work with families and schools, often with the support of external agencies, to secure a return to regular attendance. An application to secure an Education Supervision Order is heard by the Family Proceedings Court where Magistrates have the power to grant the order.

8. Absconding from school

When a pupil has been seen to leave the school site or cannot be found on site then school will promptly notify parents/carers about the situation. Parent/Carers can then, if they wish, inform the police. If the pupil comes back to school then school will notify the parents/carers and the pupil will be expected to make up the time missed through break, lunch and/or after school detention. Parents/carers should also notify school if and when the missing pupil arrives home or their whereabouts is known. If the Police have become involved parent/carers should also alert the Police that the whereabouts of their child is known.

9. Holidays in Term Time

Families who would like to take their child on holiday during term time should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Whilst it might be considered that a holiday will be educational, pupils will still miss out on the teaching that they would normally have received during the holiday.

The DfE allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”. If you consider that your request for a holiday is exceptional you will need to write to the school explaining your circumstances. The request will be given full consideration with a response provided as soon as possible. If the holiday is not considered to meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances, and the holiday is still taken in term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice issued.

Please note that a Penalty is issued to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school. The cost of the penalty notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the Notice, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the Local Authority does not receive payment they may then progress the matter to the Magistrates Court. High Well School does not receive any monies attributed to the penalty notice.

All holiday requests must be completed by the parent/carer who resides with the pupil and submitted to the school at least 4 weeks prior to the start of the holiday.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following factors will be taken into account:

- Reasons given for the holiday
- The time of the year/term
- Whether the pupil would miss any preparation for examinations/tests
- Whether the pupil would miss any examinations/tests
- The previous attendance/punctuality record of the pupil

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents/carers should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

As guidance for parents/carers it is important to note that holidays **will not** be authorised for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Holidays booked as surprises by family members
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Only time available due to work (unless documentation is provided by employers which clearly states restrictions)
- Holidays will not be authorised in any circumstances during formal examination periods

Any exceptional request for holiday absence will be considered very carefully.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the school and Governing Board annually or in light of any relevant changes to legislation.

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

The recommended codes are grouped under the following 5 statistical categories:

- Present;
- approved educational activity (treated as present);
- authorised absence;
- Unauthorised absence;
- Not required to attend.

Code Meaning Statistical category

∧	Present at registration present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration) approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU) approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip approved educational activity
J	Interview approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based training) approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday authorised absence
I	Illness authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment authorised absence
S	Study leave authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance authorised absence
T	Traveller absence authorised absence

N	No reason for the absence provided yet unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions) unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement) unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed unauthorised absence
X	Untameable sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils not required to attend

Appendix 2

Holiday/Leave of Absence Request Form

Leave of Absence Request Form

Taking your child on holiday in term time can be disruptive to both the child’s learning and to the school. The school is only able to consider holidays in term time where both:

- The application is made to the Headteacher 4 weeks in advance of the holiday by a parent the child normally lives with.
- There are **exceptional** circumstances.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the holiday as possible and you should speak to the class teacher before you book.

High Well School will not ordinarily grant permission for leave of absence for holidays during term time. Families can expect to receive a penalty notice if they choose to take children out of school without permission from the Headteacher. The penalty is currently £60 per parent, per child. If the penalty notice is not paid within 21 days, the amount will rise to £120 per parent, per child.

However, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances around the holiday request, please submit your reasons in writing in the space below.

Name of Child	Class	Dates To/From	Reason for leave of Absence request

Total number of days not including weekends / Holidays / Inset Days:

Parent / Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Attendance year to date:	
Authorised year to date:	
Unauthorised year to date:	
Absence classed as:	
Headteacher Signature:	
Date:	
Copy to Parent / Carer:	

