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## Harrogate High School

### Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2018 - 19

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#### Aims

To raise achievement and enhance progress 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 and punctuality.
- To inform parents/carers and students of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To ensure students and their parents in key categories are aware of the implications of poor attendance and potential Persistent Absentees status (as explained on page 4).
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take action through the Attendance Team.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the school in order to raise progress of all students, ensuring that safeguarding is a priority in the school. Ofsted places a high priority on excellent attendance and school figures are compared to national figures as part of the judgement on behaviour and safety.

#### The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents/carers 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/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act.

This policy has regard for the Equalities Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

## **The School's Guiding Principles**

- Emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Seeks to ensure that all its students access a full-time education, which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- Will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.
- Will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Has an effective and efficient system of communication with parents and carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Will continue to develop ICT based attendance recording and tracking systems in order to provide accurate information, an effective analysis of attendance trends and implementation of suitable intervention strategies to improve individual and overall attendance.

## **Home School Partnership - Rights and Responsibilities**

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children arrive on time, dressed in correct uniform and have the required equipment for the school day.
- Senior staff are on duty on both entry gates to the school. They meet and greet all students on starting their day and enforce standards of uniform, grooming and behaviour.
- Should a student arrive later than 8.30am, there are clear sanctions to promote improved standards of punctuality and uniform.
- Students arriving late are issued with a late pass to lesson 1 as well as a further sanction if appropriate.
- All staff are responsible for confirming with the Attendance Office details of students in meetings, events etc. that stop them from attending lessons.
- Should a student experience any difficulties in terms of attendance or punctuality, the School will work with the family to overcome these.
- If a student is prevented from attending, or is late, families are asked to notify the school by 8.30am on the first day of absence or lateness (contact with the School is required each day of a student's illness).
- A student's absence will be considered unauthorised until a reason is provided and considered by the School.
- In Touch contacts all parents on the first day of absence unless a call has been made by 8.30am to the Attendance Team.
- Families should not make routine medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Families should not take any holidays during term time. Students have 13 weeks holiday a year (see Appendix 1).

## **Student Absence from the School**

All students will have individual records of attendance/punctuality as taken from the official register. A register is a formal, legal document and is taken by staff every lesson. Approved DfE symbols are used to indicate the nature of absence. Registers close at 9.00am. Should the student arrive after that time, then such lateness will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

- If a student is absent without notification by 8.30am, then “In Touch” will automatically contact parents/carers.
- Authorised absence is recorded in line with DfE guidance. Only the Academy Head or delegated staff can give permission for absence.
- Should a student arrive late, they must register directly with the Attendance Team in the Attendance Office.
- Students who arrive late regularly or without any reasonable explanation will attend an after school or lunchtime detention as arranged.
- If a student shows a trend of arriving late, the Attendance Team will notify parents and a member of the SLT will be assigned to that case. Lack of punctuality is damaging to learning and has to be eliminated. Support work will focus on elimination of reasons for lateness, will engage both student and family as well as friendship groups.
- All students are monitored by their Vertical Mentors. Any absence trends will be shared with the Attendance and Senior Leadership teams.
- The Attendance Manager and Learning Manager will contact parents and work with the student to ensure better and more consistent attendance.
- Students with attendance of less than 97% will be monitored on a weekly basis by the Attendance Team.
- Fixed Penalty Notices can be used to encourage improved attendance and punctuality (see Appendix 2).

### **Absence from school may be unauthorised for the following reasons**

- No explanation is given by the family.
- The School is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The student has been absent for reasons such as being at home caring for siblings, shopping, having a haircut, slept late, birthday or family celebrations.
- The student goes on holiday without permission having been granted by the School.

### **Harrogate High School definitions of attendance**

- 98% - 100% = Excellent.
- 97% = Good.
- 97% = National average (no more than 5 days absence in the whole academic year).
- 95% - 96% = Below average – needs to improve to 97%.
- 91% - 94% = Causing concern – trigger point for PA.
- 90% and under = Persistent Absentee status with potential for legal action.

## **Persistent Absentees**

Students are monitored on a daily basis and a range of intervention strategies are employed when attendance falls below 97%. Should these fail, students and parents are informed as to consequences of PA status (the latest threshold for PA is 10% absence of the student's possible sessions which is 90% attendance). They will be provided with an action plan and strategies to increase attendance and be warned that they will be placed on to the Fast Track process if improvement is not made.

## **Fast Track Attendance Framework**

In cases where attendance fails to improve, parents/carers will be given 12 weeks to ensure their son or daughter attends the school regularly. Parents/carers could face prosecution or being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The 12-week framework will make parental responsibilities clear whilst at the same time offering parents and students the support of the School.

- Parent/carers will be invited to a S.A.P. (School Attendance Panel) meeting at the school at which an action plan will be agreed.
- The student's attendance will be closely monitored and progress on the action plan reviewed at a further panel meeting.
- If there has not been sufficient improvement in the student's attendance at school, the Education Authority would instigate legal proceedings or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **Long-term Absence**

There are sometimes genuine cases where students return after a prolonged illness. The school will ensure that;

- The Learning Manager and Attendance Team will meet with the family to plan the re-integration. A personalised package will be considered as part of the re-integration process.
- All staff are informed of the circumstances.
- The Learning Manager is involved to act as the primary liaison between home and school staff and will work with other agencies to ensure a successful outcome.

## **Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students at the school.

- The School reports on each student six times a year. This report, posted to parents/carers, always includes the latest attendance statistics for their son or daughter.

- Parents/carers are welcome to contact the Attendance Team at any time to discuss attendance.
- All students have individual attendance and punctuality targets, which are monitored by their Vertical Mentor.
- The target at Harrogate High School is 97 % attendance and 13.5% PA. The Senior Leadership Team discusses weekly, termly and annual comparative data.
- The Academy Head provides the Governing Body with attendance data in a regular report.
- Rewarding improved and good attendance is incorporated within the school's positive behaviour system as well as the Attendance Team recognising individual and group improvements.

### **Appendix 1 – Holidays in term-time**

Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be granted by the Academy Head for a holiday taken during term-time. As part of improving all students' life chances, the school does not authorise holidays taken in term time and has the right to serve Fixed Penalty Notices to those parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation.

### **Appendix 2 - Sanctions**

Prosecution in court can carry penalties of up to £2500 and/or a term of imprisonment.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Fixed Penalty Notices are a sanction introduced for dealing with unauthorised absence from the school and require a parent to pay a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or rises to £120 thereafter. The Local Authority will take legal action if the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of date of issues. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from Penalty Notices.

### **Contact details:**

To report an absence, please ring school on 01423 554087

To discuss any concerns you may have regarding attendance, please contact the Attendance Manager:-

Mrs Clare Bennett

Direct Line: 01423 554087

Mobile: 07 960 597 111

Email: [cbe@harrogatehighschool.co.uk](mailto:cbe@harrogatehighschool.co.uk)

**Further information is available on the following websites:**

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

[www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)