



September 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

### RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

At Harrogate High School our aim is to ensure that all students receive high quality pastoral care and teaching and learning opportunities, to raise the achievement of all students, as we know that this will improve their life chances.

Regular attendance at school is essential in ensuring that all students meet their potential. Research from the Department for Education (DFE) 2016, reinforces that students' attainment is directly impacted by poor attendance at school (90% and below).

The start of the new academic year is an ideal opportunity to reinforce our absence procedures and the Local Authority's response to poor student attendance.

#### Types of Absence:

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation, or unacceptable reasons are given.

#### Unacceptable Reasons:

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- mild student illness, such as a cold
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental illness

#### Illness and First Day Call:

If your child is unable to attend school through illness, please call the academy on the first day of absence before 8.30am (01423 548800 ext. 259). Alternatively, you can email the Attendance Manager (Mrs Reid) at [reid@harrogatehighschool.co.uk](mailto:reid@harrogatehighschool.co.uk). It is useful to highlight the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we will make contact daily, to ensure we are aware of every child's whereabouts, as per our safeguarding procedures. Where we are informed that a child is absent through illness or medical appointments, this will normally be authorised. **Where we have concerns over absence patterns through illness, we will communicate with parents/carers in order to gain a better understanding of issue and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.**





### Medical/Dental Appointments:

We request that these are arranged outside of school hours, however we are aware that this is not always possible. Where students need to attend such appointments during the school day, it is important that parents/carers contact school with the time that their child will leave and expected return time.

### Lateness:

Please ensure that your child arrives at school no later than 8.20am each day and attends their Vertical Mentor Group session. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for a student's social development. Lateness can mean that students miss essential information. If a student arrives after 8.30am, they will receive an after-school detention (2.30-3.10pm) on the next day, or the next available school day.

We expect all students to be on time to their lessons, in order to ensure that student learning is not interrupted. Students who arrive 5 or more minutes late to lesson, will be issued with a lunchtime detention the following day.

### Leave of Absence:

#### Holidays

It is against our policy to authorise holidays in term time. Term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Local Authority (it is our duty), who will support the imposition of a fixed penalty fine.

Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, they should complete the leave of absence form. This can be requested from the Attendance Office and is also available from the School Office.

In order to ensure the highest standards of learning for all students, Harrogate High School rates the subsequent attendance percentages as follows:

**99-100% - Outstanding (Rewards and special recognition)**

**97-98% - Good (Rewards and recognition)**

**94-96% - Concern (Attendance Manager liaison)**

**91-93% - Serious Concern (Meeting in school to discuss attendance with the Attendance Manager and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Referral to outside agency, where applicable)**

**90% and below – Legal Action initiated (Persistent absentee – Fast Track legal process commences over a 12 week period).**

Students' attendance that dips below 97% will lead to contact being made by the Attendance Team to offer support and advice, as well as remind parents of their legal duty. **Section 7 Education Act 1996** - places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise).





Duty of Care:

We have a duty of care, together with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Local Authority) for a student's frequent absence, or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays), then parents render themselves liable to a fine.

We are appreciative of your support in ensuring your child has outstanding attendance. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Should you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

*Mrs L Reid*

**Mrs. L. Reid**

Attendance Manager

**Ms. S. Wilkinson**

Assistant Head