

ATTENDANCE POLICY



HARDWICK HOUSE SCHOOL

Date: September 2022

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2023

Hardwick House School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This Policy is one of a series of School Policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the School's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each and every one of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this Policy should be read alongside all of these Policies in order to get the full picture. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy and the Health and Safety Policy.

All of these Policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to evidence the work that the whole School is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values: Confidence, Competence, Creativity, and Character.

In all the School's Policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. [Department for Education guidance](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative

- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

1 Statement of Intent

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, therapists, and anyone working on behalf of Hardwick House School, pupils, parents/carers, external agencies and members of the public.

2 Purpose

Regular attendance and punctuality is crucial if the learners at Hardwick House School are to achieve their potential and reach their academic and wellbeing targets. Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

The objectives of this procedure are:

- To ensure high attendance and punctuality across the whole school.
- To reduce the percentage of school absence experienced in mainstream school and increase the percentage of completed weeks in school.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

3 Rationale

Under The Education Act, it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that he or she receives an efficient full time education. Schools are

required to keep an attendance register within which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, the presence or absence of every pupil on the school roll is recorded. Schools have a responsibility to inform the local authority of details of any registered pupil who fails to attend regularly or who has been absent for a continuous period of ten or more school days, except where such absences are covered by a medical certificate or where the pupil has been granted leave of absence.

4 Procedure

Pupil Registration

The Hardwick House School day has two registration sessions. The morning Form Period counts as the AM registration and the PM registration starts at 12pm. Any pupils who are missing from a lesson who have been present in previous lessons are identified by the class teacher and a member of support staff is sent to the school reception to investigate.

Morning registers will close at 10.45am and afternoon registers will close at 1.15pm. The school register is a legal document. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational off-site activity, or absent. If a learner is absent, the absence has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED and an appropriate code must be entered.

Form Tutors will complete the morning register in SchoolPod by 9.30am. Any pupil who is absent with no known reason will be coded as N. Anyone arriving after 9.30am will sign in at Reception and the School Administrator will amend the register on SchoolPod. The afternoon registers will be taken by the School Administrator at 12pm.

The School Administrator will investigate any missing marks on a daily basis and will endeavour to make contact with legal guardians to ascertain reason for any absences, should the school remain uninformed by 9.30am. The N code on the register will be changed once a reason for absence is established. Attendance data from registers will be collated at the end of each half term for analysis.

First Day Calling

The parents of absent pupils are telephoned from 9.30am when no contact has been made to explain the absence of their child. For safeguarding reasons it is important that Hardwick House School address any absent pupils and speak to parents about this. Parents are also required to contact the school every day of any illness.

A record of all first day calling conversations are kept in the bound First Day Calling

Log Book which is held in reception. Each entry in the log book is signed, dated and includes a summary of the reason for absence as well as a record of the name of the parent or carer spoken to.

Attendance at Medical Appointments

All pupils at Hardwick House School have a diagnosis of autism and many of the pupils require regular appointments with CAMHS and other medical practitioners. The school encourages parents to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time, however when such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the Headteacher should be informed in advance. A “present” mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. We always expect learners to attend school before and after appointments. Copies of appointment letters and cards are asked to be sent into school prior to an appointment and these are stored in the individual pupil’s record.

5 Request for Absence During Term Time

The government set out a clear expectation that term time holiday leave should only be granted in ‘exceptional circumstances’. If, despite the law, a parent wishes to request an absence, an Absence Request Form must be completed and returned to the Headteacher detailing the exceptional circumstances. It is recommended that this is done well in advance of booking a holiday.

Leave may however be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of a close relative). Parents are encouraged to provide a written note explaining the absence in advance and the school will determine whether the absence is to be authorised or not.

The School also acknowledges that holidays can be extremely stressful for a child with autism. Having a break during traditional school holiday times can be very difficult due to circumstances associated with this, such as sensory overload and change of routine. The School will take this into consideration when a request for holiday leave is made.

6 Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school to be aware of and bring attention to

any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the family.

7 Monitoring of Attendance

The school will monitor attendance on a half termly basis. Those pupils who achieve 100% attendance will receive an attendance certificate. Half termly, a 'traffic light' method will be used, with Red, Amber and Green triggers. Meetings will be held with the parents and carers for whom attendance is falling or below 90%.

Red = (attendance less than 85%)

Amber = (attendance between 85% and 94%)

Green = (attendance between 95% and 100%)

8 Roles and Responsibilities

Parents and Carers Responsibilities

- Ensure that medical appointments are notified to the school without delay.
- Contact the school before 9am to advise of absence due to illness.
- Ensure an Absence Request form is completed and submitted to school in good time.

Form Tutors

- Alert emerging patterns of absence to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Promote habits of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Set an example of punctuality by arriving for lessons on time.
- Accurately completes the registers twice a day on SchoolPod.
- Pass on Absence Request Forms from parent/carers to the school reception.

Administration Staff

- Check the accurate completion of morning registers on SchoolPod.
- Sign in any late arrivals and record lateness in SchoolPod.
- Fill in the First Day Call Log and ensure that all pupils are accounted for.
- Telephone parents and carers for any absent pupil with unknown reason, adding to the First Day Call Log.
- Sign out any pupil leaving school at times other than the end of the day.
- Report any absence/punctuality problem to Form Tutors and Senior Leadership Team.
- Produce absence reports on a half termly basis for the Senior Leadership Team.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure registers are properly maintained and absences followed up.
- Liaise with other staff on attendance related matters
- When necessary, communicate with and meet parents/carers of those pupils experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Consult when appropriate with other agencies.
- Process requests for authorised absences
- Celebrate good attendance.
- Create a school ethos which values and promotes excellent levels of attendance and punctuality by all.

The Governors

- Ensure that the school's attendance procedure is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

9 Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL and the headteacher, in line with the updated 'Keeping children safe in education' released in September of each year.