

Howden School



Attendance Policy

Effective Date:	1 May 2021
Review Committee	The Governing Body
Minuted Approval	Approved by email 17/07/2023
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Reviewed	17 July 2023
Owner	Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attendance)

Statement of intent

Howden School believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential.

Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. 'Attend to Achieve'.

We understand that barriers to attendance are sometimes complex, and that some students may find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with students and parents. We take a whole school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as student premium – can have on improving student attendance

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the education Act 1996 which states that: 'The parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable, to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents, and students.

- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts who may require more support.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural for Learning Policy

Definitions

The school defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

The school defines an "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments, which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

The school defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.

- Absences, which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time, which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

The school defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping children safe in education’ when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attendance) is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents and carers.

The Wider Pastoral Support Team

- The Wider Pastoral Support Team includes the Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour and attendance, Assistant Headteachers KS3 and KS5, Learning Managers, Pastoral Managers and the Reflections/The Bridge Manager.
- Members of the wider pastoral team may occasionally require a young person to be with them instead of attending the start of a session. When this happens, it is important that attendance information is communicated to the Attendance Team. This does not replace the responsibility of tutors and teachers to maintain accurate registers and update these if a student arrives late.

- All members of the Wider Pastoral Support Team are responsible for providing timely and accurate information regarding any young person that is required to be with them during session both morning and afternoon session registrations and period 1. This is to ensure the accuracy of attendance data and to avoid an absence alert being incorrectly sent and causing concern to parent.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

- Whole school approach- 'Attendance is everyone's business'.
- Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring students do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

Timetabled Teachers are responsible for:

- Will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session via ARBOR
- Ensuring registers are always completed swiftly and accurately, for the morning and afternoon session and every lesson during the school day.
- Ensuring registers for intervention sessions and extra-curricular activities are completed and accurate.

The **School** will ensure that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The School will inform the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by students, parents and carers.

Parents / Carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Parents / carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.
- Parents / carers will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day.
- Students are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- All students are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

Training of staff

We recognise that early intervention can prevent difficulties. As such, members of staff will receive information on identifying potentially at-risk young people as part of their inductions and annual refresher information will be shared.

- Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Attendance Policy as part of their induction.
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Expectations of students

- Students will be expected to attend school every day.
- The school expects all students to attend lessons punctually.
- If leaving during the school day, students will be expected to report any absence immediately to the Attendance and Welfare Manager in the School Main Office or to reception in their absence.

Students at risk of persistent absence

7.1 The Attendance and Welfare officer and or Pastoral Teams alongside the Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and attendance) will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents carers.
 - Having a weekly pastoral review.
 - Engaging with LA EWO.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The Governing Board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Attendance Officer and / or Pastoral Staff will:

- Meet with students to discuss absence, patterns, barriers, and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Students potentially at greater risk of harm who require a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups such as:

- Child Protection / Children in need
- CLA
- Students who are eligible for FSM
- Students who speak English as a second language
- Students with SEND

Absence procedures

- Parents are required to contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of any absence by:
 1. Telephone 01430 430448 and leaving a message on the absence line. This is a 24-hour voice mail service.
 2. Send an email to attendance@howdenschool.net

An ARBOR alert (in app messages, email and text message) will be sent to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. This will be supported with a phone call where no response is received.

A home visit will be conducted when we have concerns regarding absence or the student has not been in school for a number of days. This is a supportive measure designed to safeguard all students.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

- The school will inform the LA of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 academy days or more without permission and support is needed to ensure improving attendance.
- If a student's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance and welfare officer and Pastoral Manager will track the young person's attendance, and formal contact will be made with the parents/carers.
- Where a student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the student from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

Absence of vulnerable young people

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that an accurate list of more vulnerable students is identified and held by the Attendance and Welfare Officer; this might include those known to the Safeguarding and Social Care.

- The Attendance and Welfare Officer will check the attendance of this group as soon as the register closes. The Attendance and Welfare Manager will contact named contact to confirm the whereabouts of the young person.

- If the student is identified as missing, section 'missing education' of this policy would be followed.

Parental involvement

- The school will build respectful relationships with parents /carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- The school will communicate openly and honestly with students and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. if a student has a social worker.

Parents / carers will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call on staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances, which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

Attendance register

The school uses Arbor management information system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether students are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the academy to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made

- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site educational activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in academy
- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z – Young person not on admission register
- X- COVID 19

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example: induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

The school day starts at 8:40am. Students will have a morning break at 11:05am which will last for 20 minutes. lunch break at 12.25 which will last for 35 minutes. Students will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning after 5 minutes of movement time (pre bell at 11.20 and 12.55). Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The register will be taken promptly at the start of period 1, any student(s) arriving after the start time of 8.40am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:30am. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend the school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked at 13.00pm Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- Class teachers will also take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that students attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy

Leave of absence

Our aim is to prepare students for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents / carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

The school will only grant a student a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Attendance and Welfare Officer in writing at least two weeks (10 school days) prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the students previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from the school.

The school will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents and carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Attendance and Welfare officer

If they are persistently absent, the Attendance and Welfare Officer will attempt to resolve the situation through contact with parent / carer.

If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance and Welfare Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

- The Attendance and Welfare Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that early intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.
- The Attendance and Welfare Officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of students and to implement attendance procedures.

Lateness

Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.

- The school day starts at 8:40am; students should be lined up in their year group zone.
- Registers are marked promptly; students arriving after 8.40am will receive a late mark if they are not on site by this time.
- The register closes at 9:30am; students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site but will count as an absent mark.

Truancy

Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

- All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of students, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
- Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting.
- If truancy is suspected, the Assistant Headteacher, Behaviour and attendance and the Safeguarding Lead will be notified and they will contact the child's parents / carers, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, contact will be made to the parents / carers of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

Missing children

Young people are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from a parent/carer to attend a pre-arranged appointment or in the event of illness.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing during the school day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- All available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises.
- If the student has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents carers of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a CLA, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the young person has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the young person to ensure they are safe and well.

The Assistant Headteacher, Learning Manager will take the appropriate action to ensure the young person understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

- Parents / carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the young person has been located.
- The Assistant Headteacher, Learning Manager will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

- Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with guidance in this policy.

Religious observances

- Parents / carers must inform the school in at least 7 days advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the young person's parents belong.

Young carers

- The school understands the difficulties young carers face and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Rewarding good attendance

- The school acknowledges 100 percent attendance using the Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:
- Letters / certificates home
- House points
- Other alternative rewards

School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away.

Monitoring and review

- The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- The school's attendance target is 96 percent each year.
- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher – behaviour and attendance and the Attendance and Welfare Officer.
- Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.