

Henley-in-Arden Secondary School Attendance Policy

This policy outlines the expectations and procedures for managing student attendance at Henley-in-Arden Secondary School, in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on "Working Together to Improve School Attendance." The school is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality, as these are essential for students' academic achievement, well-being, and future opportunities.

Safeguarding Statement: The Arden Multi-Academy Trust holds safeguarding at the core of its culture and fully recognises the risks associated with poor attendance. It is therefore policy and procedure that pastoral, safeguarding and attendance teams work in constant liaison through supportive, targeted and relentless intervention to reduce and alleviate any potential concerns, through effective early help and intervention.

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1. Introduction

2. Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To ensure that all students attend school regularly and punctually, aiming for an attendance rate of at least 97%.
- To identify and support students at risk of persistent absence.
- To establish a consistent approach to attendance across the school.
- To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality among students, parents/carers, and staff.
- To outline the roles and responsibilities of the school community in improving attendance.

3. Attendance Expectations

- All students are expected to attend school every day unless they are unwell or have a valid reason for absence.
- The school will promote the importance of good attendance through communication with parents/carers, students, and the wider community.

4. Absence Procedures

4.1 Reporting Absences

Parents/carers must notify the school by 09:00 am on the first day of a student's absence and any subsequent days of absence, via telephone or School Gateway providing a valid reason and, if possible, an estimated date of return.

School Gateway – Reporting-Attendance – Advise of absence

Absence Telephone Line - 01564 792 364 – select option 1 and leave a message

If no notification is received, the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers to establish the reason for the absence.

Parents/ Carers are requested to keep the school informed and to supply a short note or medical evidence where applicable when the child returns to school. If we do not receive any information, the absence will count as unauthorised and could trigger a staged response as per this policy. Once your child has recovered, it is important that he/she returns to school as soon as possible to ensure they do not miss too much teaching – even if this means returning to school on the last day of the week or term.

4.2 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Only the Head Teacher and/or designated members of staff have the authority to authorise absences. The School will code all absences in line with the Department for Education School Attendance Coding Guidance.

4.2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is considered “authorised” when the school has accepted a valid reason, such as:

- Illness or medical/dental appointments (proof may be requested).*
- Religious observances.
- Family emergencies (at the Headteacher's discretion).
- Educational activities, including study leave or work experience.

**Parents/carers should note that, ideally, all medical and dental appointments should be arranged for after school so that students do not miss any lessons.*

4.2.2 Unauthorised Absence

An absence is considered “unauthorised” if:

- No valid reason is provided.
- The absence is due to family holidays or trips during term time without prior approval from the Headteacher.
- Absences are for reasons not deemed acceptable by the school.

4.2.3 Granting Leaves of Absence

Henley-in-Arden can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment, when requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances: The Headteacher can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. Each application will be assessed individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant

background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

4.2.4 Holidays

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. As such any holidays should be taken outside of term time.

4.3 Medical Notes and supporting Evidence

The school fully supports student's welfare and prioritises any on-going medical conditions and if your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, the Pastoral Manager(s), Head of Year, SENCo, or Attendance Officer can arrange for a meeting to discuss what additional support can be offered to help your child access school. If your child's attendance falls to a level that is likely to adversely affect their long-term educational success the school Pastoral Manager/Head of Year, SENCo, or Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting to discuss this with you personally and may ask you to supply medical evidence for any future absences. This will enable us to provide suitable care in school and support our coding process. Where possible, students with medical conditions should attend school as per normal and the school shall try to meet their individual needs through reasonable adjustments. Unfortunately, the school is not able to accept parental information alone without the correct medical evidence.

4.4 Lessons and Absence

Whilst absence is sometimes unavoidable, lessons missed cannot be repeated and "catching up" on work is never as good as the original learning experience. The School recognises the need to support students during and after long term absence of any kind and will at the Head's discretion endeavour to provide work for students to be completed off-site where appropriate and medical evidence has been received. ii. Consider all strategies in partnership with other agencies, to encourage the return of students to the School. This may include negotiated timetables and/or gradual re-integration. (This is part of our prepathways and pathways approach – a lead will be assigned) iii. Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within tutor groups and lessons in which students are welcomed back to the School. iv. Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

Every lesson missed is an opportunity missed. Although every effort is made to support students in catching up with work missed, it simply cannot be made up, so students inevitably lose out and their progress will be affected. As such, the school upholds the following expectations:

- Students who have permission to be absent from school (see above) are expected to get work in advance from teachers and make up any written work missed as soon as they can.
- Students who are off school for an extended length of time may obtain work to complete during their absence.
- This may be obtained by contacting the relevant pastoral leader.
- Students who are absent without notice (e.g. due to illness) are expected to complete all work missed. We ask that parents/carers also monitor this, to ensure all work is completed. School asks that planners are utilised in recording any work.

5. Punctuality

- Students must arrive by 8:40 am for registration with the exception of Wednesdays where arrival should be before 08:55 am.
- Students arriving after 8:40am (09:00 on Wednesdays) will receive a 20-minute lunchtime detention unless :00 am will be marked "late," and arrivals after the register closes at 9:30 am will be recorded as unauthorised absences unless a valid reason is provided.
- Repeated lateness will be addressed through discussions with parents/carers and may lead to disciplinary actions or referrals to the local authority.

6. Monitoring and Intervention

- The school will monitor attendance daily and review records regularly.

- If a student's attendance falls below 95% or patterns of absence or lateness are identified, the school will:
 - Contact parents/carers to discuss the concern and agree on actions to improve attendance.
 - Provide additional support where necessary, including referrals to the pastoral team or external agencies.
 - Consider a referral to the local authority if attendance does not improve.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Attendance Officer

- Monitor daily attendance records and maintain accurate registers.
- Make first-day absence calls to parents/carers where no notification has been received.
- Identify patterns of absence and refer cases to the Head of Year or Director of Student Engagement.
- Provide attendance data to the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, and governing body.
- Liaise with external agencies, including the local authority, to support students with persistent absence.

7.2 Form Tutor

- Monitor and record daily attendance during morning registration.
- Discuss attendance concerns with students and encourage good attendance.

- Report any concerns or patterns of absence to the Head of Year.
- Support students in resolving any barriers to attendance through regular check-ins and mentoring.

7.3 Head of Year

- Monitor attendance data for their year group and identify students at risk of persistent absence.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to review attendance data and plan interventions.
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance concerns and set up meetings to address issues.
- Work with the pastoral team to develop and implement attendance improvement plans for students with attendance concerns.

7.4 Director of Student Engagement

- Oversee the strategic implementation of the school's attendance policy.
- Work with Heads of Year and the Attendance Officer to monitor overall attendance data and trends.
- Coordinate whole-school initiatives to promote good attendance.
- Liaise with external agencies, including the local authority, to support students with attendance challenges.
- Provide regular reports on attendance to the Senior Leadership Team and governing body.

7.5 Acting Deputy Headteacher

- Lead on the development, implementation, and review of the attendance policy.

- Ensure that attendance is a high priority across the school and embedded in the school culture.
- Monitor attendance at a whole-school level and address any issues in collaboration with the Director of Student Engagement.
- Support the Director of Student Engagement and Heads of Year in implementing interventions for students with poor attendance.
- Report to the governing body on attendance matters and outcomes of attendance interventions.

8. Stages of Intervention for Managing Attendance

To support students in improving their attendance, Henley-in-Arden Secondary School will implement the following staged interventions:

Stage	Number of sessions missed	Staff Responsible	Response
1	6	Attendance Officer	Phone call
2	12	Attendance Officer	Attendance meeting
3	18	Form Tutor	Attendance plan phone call
4	24	Head of Year	Attendance plan review meeting
5	30	SLT Attendance Lead	Meeting and contract
6	38	Assistant Head	Attendance panel
7	Home visits from the schools Educational Welfare Officer		

As a student reaches each attendance stage due to time off school, a letter will be sent detailing the response to absence and how the school will try to limit this moving forward. The staged responses will be followed regardless of circumstance, except for specific cases which are to be assessed case-by-case by appropriate staff.

9. Persistent Absence Thresholds

According to DfE guidelines, a student is considered to be persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across an academic year. Henley-in-Arden Secondary School follows the thresholds below to monitor persistent absence:

Half Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1-2 (Autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half term 1-4 (Autumn & Spring)	25 or more sessions
Half term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half term 1-6 (Full academic year)	38 or more sessions

10. Legal Framework and Relevant Legal Action

The school follows the DfE's "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidelines, which outline the legal responsibilities of parents and schools to ensure regular attendance. If a student has persistent unauthorised absences, the school may take the following legal actions:

10.1 Penalty Notices

- Issuing Penalty Notices: A penalty notice may be issued to parents/carers if a student has a high number of unauthorised absences (e.g., 10 sessions or more in a term), is late after the register has closed on multiple occasions, or is taken on a holiday during term time without permission.

- Penalty Notice Process: If a penalty notice is issued, parents/carers will be given the opportunity to pay a fine. The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

- Failure to Pay Penalty Notices: If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, parents/carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, which could lead to a fine of up to £2,500, a community order, or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

10.2 School Attendance Orders

- When to Use: If a student fails to attend school regularly, and no reasonable justification is provided, the local authority may issue a School Attendance Order, requiring the parents/carers to register their child at a specified school.

- Consequences for Non-Compliance: Failure to comply with a School Attendance Order can result in prosecution.

10.3 Prosecution

- Legal Grounds for Prosecution: If a parent/carer fails to ensure their child's regular attendance, the school may refer the case to the local authority, which could result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

- Potential Penalties:

- A fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer.

- A community order or parenting order requiring parents to attend parenting classes.

- Imprisonment for up to 3 months in extreme cases.

10.4 Education Supervision Orders

- When to Use: The local authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order through the Family Court if it is believed that this would improve the student's attendance.

- Supervision Arrangements: An Education Supervision Order appoints a supervisor to work with the student and family to improve attendance.

11. Support for Students with Attendance Issues

The school recognises that some students may face challenges that impact their attendance. The school will work with parents/carers and external agencies to provide tailored support, including:

- Pastoral support and mentoring.
- Attendance improvement plans.
- Referrals to specialist services.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body to ensure it remains in line with DfE guidelines and meets the needs of the school community.

13. Relationship to other Policies

The Attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Guidance on admissions
- Equality Statement
- Guidance for staff on the registration of pupils
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (otherwise known as safeguarding)

- The Behaviour Policy

Contact Information:

For any questions or concerns regarding attendance, please contact the school office or Attendance Officer

This policy integrates DfE guidelines and ensures a structured approach to managing attendance, addressing persistent absences, and providing support and intervention

Appendix 1

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

UPDATED INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Supreme Court has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time (Platt v Isle of Wright 2017). The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.

When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is the parents' responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent ie the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence.

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

Leave of Absence taken in the academic year 2024-25

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).
 - First Leave of Absence offence: The Penalty Notice amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
 - Second Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.

- Payment plans will not be offered and/or payments received outside of the 28 day period will not be accepted. Where a penalty notice expires unpaid the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider criminal prosecution.

- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): A penalty notices will be not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.