

Hurworth School

Attendance Procedure

Hurworth School is committed to providing a full and effective education for all students to ensure they achieve their full potential in all that they do. We recognise the importance of full attendance and aim to ensure all students achieve and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance is a pre-requisite to a good education and therefore a priority for the school.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day
- Through our effective pastoral system, report any problems which could impact on their attendance or punctuality
- Follow school rules

We expect all parents to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and on time
- Ensure that their child arrives to school wearing the correct school uniform and with the necessary equipment, fully prepared for the school day
- Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers
- Inform school in confidence of any problems which might impact on their child's attendance or punctuality
- Be aware that it is their responsibility to inform school of the reasons for their child's absence. They should contact school every day that their child is absent, before 9am, and provide written confirmation upon their return to school
- Arrange all holidays during the thirteen weeks of school holidays, and not during term time
- Support our school's procedures in promoting outstanding attendance for all and attend appropriate meetings in school to discuss their child's attendance
- Work in partnership with the school, emphasising to their children the importance of respecting policies and procedures

Parents/carers can expect that school will:

- Provide the highest quality of education
- Promote and encourage excellent attendance and punctuality
- Raise awareness of the importance of excellent attendance with parents, around school and within the local community
- Maintain an effective electronic registration system
- Regularly monitor attendance and use data to identify emerging patterns of absence
- Closely monitor the attendance of identified vulnerable groups of students
- Address the causes of non-attendance
- Work with parents, the Local Authority and external agencies to improve attendance
- Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carer when a child fails to attend school and the school has not been notified of the reason for the absence
- Provide work during a period of authorised absence if requested
- Support students upon return to school after a period of absence

- Work with primary schools as set out in our transition programme
- Include attendance data in appropriate school reports
- Act promptly and confidentially when notified of a problem which could impact on attendance or punctuality
- Comply with safeguarding regulations

Governors of the school will: Attend Attendance Case Conferences when required

- Agree attendance targets
- Ratify the attendance procedures
- Monitor and evaluate attendance statistics

Governors will set areas for improvement to establish and maintain the best levels of attendance for all students. To assist with this, the Head of School will report to Governors termly on attendance related issues.

Targets

At Hurworth School all students are expected to achieve good attendance and we will work with students and their families to ensure maximum attendance is achieved.

Rewards

Hurworth School recognises the importance of praise and reward. To encourage all students to realise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and not only to achieve their full potential at school but also their life goals, there is a monitoring system which incorporates rewards and consequences. In order for a student to be considered to take part in school trips and receive their rewards, they must have high attendance and punctuality.

Intervention

There are school procedures in place where all students whose attendance falls below an acceptable level are placed on an intervention programme to improve their attendance. Where a student has missed more than 3 days of school the Attendance Officer/Head of Year will arrange with the student a suitable 'catch up' programme. Where a student is absent for several days due to illness/hospitalisation the school will arrange for suitable work to be sent home. If a student is to be absent for a sustained period of time, the school will arrange a bespoke package which could include teachers visiting the family home and working with the student.

Absence

As stated, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform school of the reason for their child's absence. When a child is unable to attend, parents/carers should contact school every day that their child is absent, before 9am and written confirmation is required upon their return to school. If the school does not receive notification, the school operates a first-day response as part of school procedures.

A home visit may be made at the discretion of the school to ascertain the whereabouts of student who has failed to attend.

A 'return to school' interview may take place.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' legislation requires all school to "inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority".

Registers

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session to mark students present or absent. There is also a requirement that attendance records must show whether an absence of a student of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. Hurworth School has a SIMS computerised registration system in place which incorporates a lesson monitor. Both staff and students see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was intended by the law, and particular attention is paid to accurate registration.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only school can approve absence, not parents/carers. The school is not obliged to accept a parental note or other form of notification as a valid reason and further evidence may be requested. If, after investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered or where no explanation is given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Where parents condone unjustified absence, the school will commence attendance procedures at an early stage.

Should a student feel too unwell to remain in school, the Admin staff will speak to the Attendance Officer and/or Head of Year and then contact parents who can decide if they wish their child to be collected. Students are not allowed to directly phone either parents/carers without permission. School does not allow parents/carers to collect the student during the school day without the school's permission as this has serious implications for safeguarding.

Medical Appointments

The school recognises that occasionally medical appointments during the school day are unavoidable. However, students are expected to return to school immediately following an appointment and medical evidence may be requested. The vast majority of medical appointments do not require a full day, or even half a day.

In line with safeguarding regulations, students are required to sign in and out of school when they arrive or leave during the school day.

Requests for absence in term-time

Permission from the Head of School must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence' form must be completed in advance of the absence (available from the main school office or from the school website). Only the Head of School can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

Under current legislation, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the decision about what is exceptional will be made by the Head of School. If the Head of School decides not to authorise the holiday and intends to refer to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice should be holiday go ahead, the school will issue a letter to the parent/carer warning of their intention.

At Hurworth, we appreciate parents/carers who support excellent attendance throughout the school year. Therefore, if permission has been requested in advance and a student's attendance is above 95% just prior to the holiday taking place, school will not refer for a penalty fine (the attendance percentage will be calculated from the start of the school year. However, if a student has been taken on holiday and permission has not been requested and/or the student's attendance is below 95% just prior to the holiday then a Penalty Fine will be requested.

It is important that Parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. There are 190 statutory school days in one year. There are 175 days (week-ends and school holidays) available to use for holidays which would not have a negative effect on your child's education. Research has shown that a 10% drop in attendance can mean a one grade drop at GCSE.

For absences that are due to sporting or other educational activities which have not been organised by school, evidence of the event must accompany the 'request for leave of absence' form.

Punctuality

At Hurworth School punctuality is extremely important. All students are required to arrive punctually for registration at 8.50am in the morning and 1.15pm in the afternoon. If a student arrives for school after the close of registration, the session can be recorded as unauthorised absence. We also expect students to arrive punctually to all lessons. Student who arrive late to lessons not only affect their own learning but also seriously disrupt the learning of others and this is not acceptable. The school has procedures in place to deal with persistent lateness and students may be placed on punctuality report.

Truancy

When school becomes aware that a student is truanting, whether it is internal or external truancy, parents/carers will be contacted and the truancy will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Disciplinary action will be taken.

Penalty Notices

In order to improve attendance and tackle lateness, the school uses the Local Authority Penalty Notice procedures. If a student has 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 days) in any 6 week period, including unauthorised sessions caused by holidays and punctuality, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of the Penalty Notice Process.

Persistent Absenteeism

The Department for Education states that if a student's attendance drops below 90% they become known as a 'persistent absentee' regardless of the reason for absence and irrespective of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and the full support of parents/carers is required to avoid this.

At Hurworth School all absence is monitored thoroughly and any case seen to have reached the Persistent Absence level or becoming at risk of reaching it, is given priority.

Review

This procedure is reviewed annually.