# Higham Lane North Academy

# Attendance Policy



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# 1. Aims

The importance of consistent attendance in secondary school cannot be overstated. When pupils are in school, they are not only safe but also engaged in learning, which significantly shapes their future opportunities. At our school, we are fully dedicated to ensuring that every pupil maintains excellent attendance, recognizing its direct impact on their academic success and overall life chances. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

## 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
    - Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
    - Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
    - Ensuring that the link governor for attendance supports monitoring of pupil attendance

## 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy Headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

## 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader Romayne Charles is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Romayne Charles and can be contacted via the school.

## 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/deputy headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Caroline Smith and can be contacted via the school.

## 3.5 Pastoral Leader

- Monitoring and analysing attendance.
- Intervention and support in line with the school's attendance procedures.

- Meeting with pupils and families: Where appropriate, meeting with pupils and parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns, understand barriers to attendance, reinforce expectations and identify practical ways to improve attendance.
- Escalation and referral: Referring ongoing or significant concerns to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and contributing to further intervention, multi-agency support or formal attendance processes where appropriate.

## 3.6 Class teachers and house champions

Class teachers and house champions are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information onto the SIMS register within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. For registration, the attendance register should be completed within 5 minutes of entering the classroom.

## House Champion

The house champion is seen as the key person in promoting regular punctual attendance. The house champion needs to:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration, give a high profile to attendance and punctuality and praise pupils who arrive on time.
- Welcome all pupils with a 'meet and greet' and positive approach.
- Carry out registration on SIMS in a timely manner within 10 minutes from the start of the school day.
- Accurately record attendance using appropriate codes for pupils that are present (/), unauthorised absence (N) and late (L).

House Champions will receive attendance and punctuality data for their house group every week and they are expected to:

- Conduct and log conversations with pupils where their attendance has declined and/or pupils have unauthorised absence
- Conduct Stage 1 House Champion Attendance Intervention Meetings with pupils once their attendance drops below 97% and complete action plan
- Conduct half termly review of attendance with house group, pupils must record their attendance and complete a reflection task and action plan in their organisers

House Champions will be expected to understand the attendance and punctuality information for their house group and recognise where pupils have falling attendance or if there is a cause for concern. House Champions can then check the attendance certificate on SIMS to detect any patterns.

## Class Teacher

The class teacher is key to promoting punctuality to lessons and that pupils are actively attending to their learning.

They need to:

- Provide a good example by arriving on time to lessons welcoming pupils with a 'meet and greet' positive approach
- Carry out a register of the class at the beginning of the lesson (within the first 10 minutes) so that punctuality is promoted, and late pupils are recorded together with the number of minutes late.
- Provide relevant, appropriately challenging learning opportunities to engage pupils in learning thus promote attendance and punctuality.
- Provide relevant 'catch up work' for pupils to do if they have returned following an absence

- Be supportive of pupils when they have been absent in providing them with strategies to catch up any missed work.
- Follow the school policy regarding lateness to lessons.
- Conduct and log conversations with pupils

## 3.7 All School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Call parents/carers on the first day of absence to ascertain reason for absence if parents/carers have left a voicemail message
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Head of Year where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Support the Attendance Officer in recording reasons for absences received from parents/carers via telephone messages, Class Charts and via email attendance@hlna.co.uk
- Register late pupils and reasons
- Support the Attendance Officer to ensure all registers for Registration are completed.
- Contact staff where this has not taken place before 9.00am and ensure the register is completed.
- Support the Attendance Officer in checking attendance of whole school and send text messages to parents/carers where absence of pupils is unexplained.
- Record text is sent against individual pupils on SIMS and phone parent/carers if no response from text message within a timely manner.

## 3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session of each day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's Head of Year who can be contacted via the school's telephone number and/or email address.

### 3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Arrive to school and to all lessons on time
- Be prepared for school, this includes wearing the correct uniform and having the correct equipment

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 15.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken within 10 minutes of the start of the session (p1). If the pupil is not in the lesson whilst register is taken, the member of staff should record a ‘Missing Pupil Alert’ on Class charts to inform the ‘On Call’ staff and record them as unauthorised absence (N code) unless a code has already been inputted for the pupil (e.g. M for medical). If a pupil arrives late to lesson, they need to be recorded as late on SIMS (L code) and the teacher should issue a S2- Lateness to lesson on Class Charts. Pupils will be required to attend a same day detention for 45 minutes from 15:15pm to 15.45pm.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence between 8.00am and 8.30am by calling the school admin/office staff, who can be contacted via the school.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The NHS have produced a helpful guide for parent/carers on which common illnesses require them to keep their child at home, a summary of the guidance is below:

- High temperature- If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.
- Feeling anxious or worried- It's normal for children to feel a little anxious sometimes. They may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping. Avoiding school can make a child's anxiety about going to school worse. It's good to talk about any worries they may have such as bullying, friendship problems, schoolwork or sensory problems. You can also work with the school to find ways to help them. If your child is still struggling and it's affecting their everyday life, it might be good to talk to your GP or school nurse.
- Coughs and colds- It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes.
- Head lice and nits- There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP.
- Sore throat- You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.
- Vomiting and diarrhoea- Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

For further details, the NHS guidance can be found at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keepmy_child_off_school_guidance-A3-poster.pdf https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parent/carers will be notified of this in advance.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

A pupil who arrives late: Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code, after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U. Pupils who arrive to school between 8.40am and 9.30am without a valid reason such as a medical appointment will be given an L code (L means late for the morning session) and issued a Late to School- Same day 45-minute detention on Class Charts by the Reception team.

Pupils who arrive after 9.30am, again without a valid reason, will be recorded as U and issued a Late to School Same day 30-minute detention on Class Charts by the Reception team. This means that they arrived after the register has closed and therefore that session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils who receive U marks can be referred to WAS as these absences are unauthorised and fines can be issued once a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

Punctuality Procedure

- The school day starts at 8.40am when all pupils need to be lining up on the playground with their house champion. Pupils arriving at 8.40am or after, need to report to Reception.
- Pupils who arrive at 8.40am or after and before 9.30am without a valid reason will be marked as late and receive a L mark on SIMS.
- Those that arrive after 9.30am (without a valid reason) will receive a U mark (session is recorded as an unauthorised absence). These pupils will also receive a Late to School- Same day 45-minute detention on Class Charts.
- The school office will record pupils that are late to school as a L on SIMS and a Late to School- Same day 30-minute detention on Class Charts.
- Pupils are expected to be on time to all lessons and a register is taken in all five lessons and AM registration.
- Staff will take the register as a priority, within the first 10 minutes of the lesson
- If the pupil is not in the lesson whilst register is taken, the member of staff should record a 'Missing Student Alert' on Class charts to inform the 'On Call' staff and record them as unauthorised absence (N code) unless a code has already been inputted for the pupil (e.g. M for medical).
- If a pupil arrives late to lesson they need to be recorded as late on SIMS (L code) and the teacher should issue a R2- Lateness to lesson on Class Charts. Pupils will be required to attend a same day detention for 45 minutes from 15:15pm to 15:45pm
- Pupils whose punctuality is a concern for both lessons and morning registration will be placed on Punctuality Report. Letters are sent to parents to inform them of the concern when pupils have had 3 Lates (House Champion), 5 Lates (Progress Leader) and 8+ Lates (Senior Leader Link) within a half term.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text and email via the SchoolComms app are sent to the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we can issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below):

Potential Child Missing Education (CME)

- Attendance Officer will monitor unauthorised absence carefully and inform Head of Year, Safeguarding Team and Attendance SLT Lead if a pupil has been absent for 3 days with no reason provided (N/O code) as this is potentially a CME.
- Telephone calls will be made to all contacts from the pupil's details to establish the pupil's whereabouts if necessary i.e. no response is received from parents/carers. If contact is not made with the parents/carers or other contacts, a home visit will take place to check on the pupil and provide a reason for the absence. WAS should also be contacted at this stage.
- After 5 days of unexplained absence, where no valid reason is provided for absence, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. If there are still concerns about potential CME at this stage the local authority would be contacted regarding if a referral should be made. If the advice is to monitor, the referral will then be made at a later stage but no later than 10 days.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers are regularly reminded how to check their child's attendance via the SchoolComms App and are required to record their child's attendance (YTD) in the pupil organiser on a weekly basis. Parents and house champions are required to sign organisers weekly. House Champions will complete a half termly reflection task that records pupil attendance in their organiser and complete an action plan for improvement if necessary. Parents and house champions are required to sign organisers weekly. The school also regularly informs parent/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly Progress Reports.

The school also notifies parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern and below the School Attendance Target of 97% via Stages of Intervention letters home.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

Expectations

- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).
- A Leave of Absence Form must be completed and submitted to the school in advance (at least 3 weeks' notice before the proposed absence). The Warwickshire County Council Leave of Absence Application Form can be found on the school website.
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- 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 Headteacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the 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 their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

- Where applications for Leave of Absences 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 take either prior to or after the request, they 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 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.
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Leave of Absence taken in the academic year 2024-25

The law relating to Penalty Notices is due to change with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence after this date 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 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.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3-year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will 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.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We have an effective whole school culture for high attendance that is underpinned by clear expectations for all pupils to attend school every day, where possible, to support the whole school attendance target of 97%.

At Higham Lane North Academy we provide an environment where pupils feel valued, welcomed and a sense of belonging. Our ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent or late.

Whole School Approaches to promote good attendance:

- A varied curriculum will be offered to all pupils and learning tasks will be matched to pupils needs
- Children and parents/carers feel safe, welcome, supported and a sense of belonging at Higham Lane North Academy
- Maintain a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed to set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and progress to support pupils
- Parents will be reminded at all school events and via regular communication the importance of good attendance and the strong link to attainment
- Attendance is a consistent focus within our pastoral programme
- Regular communications regarding attendance are sent to parents/carers and on school website
- Pupils are expected to record their weekly attendance in their organiser weekly to ensure pupils and parents/carers are aware of their attendance
- Pupils complete a half termly review of attendance with house group, pupils must record their attendance and complete a reflection task and action plan in their organisers
- Rewarding and recognising good attendance:

We have a positive and inclusive culture of recognising and rewarding good attendance and celebrate this regularly with the following:

- Termly Amazon Voucher Raffle for pupils at or above School Attendance Target of 97%
- Termly Gold (100%), Silver (99-98%) Bronze (97%) and Improved Attendance Certificates at end of term Reward Assemblies
- Year group and House group attendance is regularly communicated to pupils and Weekly House Champion Attendance Trophy presented in assemblies.
- Weekly merits are issued for pupils with good attendance and punctuality
- Weekly positive messages home for good and improving attendance
- We recognise improving attendance with attendance improvement letters home and merits are issued for pupils that have improved their attendance to above 97% during a monitoring period.

# 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### Individualised Attendance Support and Application of Interventions

Higham Lane North Academy is committed to promoting excellent attendance, identifying barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity and working in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant external agencies to improve attendance.

The school adopts a graduated, supportive and proportionate approach to attendance concerns. The strategies and interventions outlined in this policy and its appendices describe the range of approaches available to the school and the processes that may be used to support and improve attendance. They are intended to guide practice rather than prescribe an identical response in every individual case.

Interventions will be considered and applied on **an individual, case-by-case basis**, taking account of the pupil's attendance history, identified barriers, individual needs, safeguarding considerations, family circumstances, previous interventions and their effectiveness, the engagement of the pupil and family, and any relevant professional advice.

Depending on the circumstances, the school may use a range of approaches, which could include attendance conversations, parental contact, attendance targets, personalised support plans, mentoring, reintegration arrangements, home visits, multi-agency working or referrals to appropriate external services. These examples are not exhaustive, and the suitability, availability, timing and frequency of any intervention will depend on the individual circumstances of the case.

The school will use its professional judgement to determine the most appropriate next steps, including whether an intervention should be introduced, adapted, continued, reviewed or escalated. The attendance stages and percentage thresholds provide a framework for identifying concerns and guiding action; they do not prevent the school from responding earlier where concerns warrant this or adapting its approach where individual circumstances require it.

Where support is offered, the school will seek to understand barriers to attendance, work collaboratively with the pupil and family where appropriate, and review the effectiveness of interventions. Support and, where appropriate, formal attendance action may be pursued concurrently. Where necessary, concerns may be referred to the local authority or other relevant agencies in accordance with applicable guidance and procedures.

The school will continue to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, safeguarding duties and obligations to record, monitor and respond appropriately to attendance concerns. This approach enables the school to maintain high expectations and clear accountability while ensuring that decisions are proportionate, responsive to individual needs and focused on improving attendance and pupil outcomes.

## 7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance, mental or physical ill health or SEND the school will:

- The school will apply reasonable adjustment for pupils with needs to support their attendance to school, there may include flexible start and end of day, early leave and time out passes
- Offer targeted mentoring and breakfast clubs (this can be offered to any pupil but is mainly targeted at SEND and Disadvantaged students)
- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.
- Pupils that have complex needs and barriers to attendance (e.g. 'Emotional Based School Avoidance' (EBSA) or anxiety around attending school) can be referred by Progress Leaders to the Reintegration Unit.
- SEND pupils will receive additional support when absent or returning to school via their Key Worker e.g. helping with catch up work, supportive phone calls home/home visits and regular check ins when in school.

## 7.2 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school offers a variety of support for students that are absent or returning to school, please refer to Appendix 2 Attendance Stages of Intervention Process, these include:

- pupil meetings with Form tutor to discuss and remove barriers to good attendance
- Parent/carer meetings to build strong relationships and work jointly with families to improve attendance
- Attendance Targets, Action plans and Attendance Contracts can be utilised to support student and families to improve attendance
- Regular Home Visits to support students and families to improve attendance
- Support with transport to school/Flexible drop off and collection (where appropriate)
- Referrals to external agencies where applicable e.g. Early Help

When pupils have had a lengthy period of absence the school will:

- Provide relevant 'catch up work' for students to do if they have returned following an absence.
- Home visits will take place to support students and check on wellbeing during lengthy periods of absence
- Be supportive of students when they have been absent in providing them with strategies to catch up any missed work and gaps in subject knowledge.

# 8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance of pupils will be monitored during the school day by all teachers as identified using SIMS and a 'Missing Pupil Alert' on Class Charts is initiated if any student has been marked as present during previous lessons but are absent to the current lesson.

Weekly attendance data is provided to all staff by the Attendance Officer via the Attendance Tracker which includes, pupil's weekly attendance (whether this has changed from previous week), half termly attendance figure, Year to Date (YTD) Attendance, and previous year's attendance. This data is utilised by house champions and progress leaders to identify any trends/concerns and initiate attendance conversations with students and discuss barriers to good attendance. The attendance data generated by the Attendance Officer is monitored and analysed at regular intervals by Progress Leaders to ensure strategies are in place to promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality (Please refer to Appendix 2 Attendance Stages of Intervention Process for further information). Pupils below 97% attendance can be placed on a Stage 1 Attendance Target and their attendance will be closely monitored for a minimum of four weeks, if no improvement, students will progress to Stage 2- Attendance Action Plan and then Stage 3- Attendance Contract. The attendance of all students will be reviewed regularly by relevant staff to identify trends and concerns with specific year groups and subgroups including gender, disadvantaged, SEND etc. This will then be presented to Senior Leadership Team and governors to discuss appropriate actions.

Punctuality to lessons and school is tracked and regularly monitored by Progress Leaders. Pupils whose punctuality is a concern for both lessons and morning registration will be placed on Punctuality Report. Letters are sent to parents to inform them of the concern when students have had 3 Lates (Form Tutor), 5 Lates (Progress Leader) and 7+ Lates (Senior Leader Link) within a half term. Pupils with unauthorised absence will be monitored by the attendance officer and warning letter sent home after 5 unauthorised sessions and referral to WAS if this reaches 10 session within 10 weeks The attendance officer will monitor students with unexplained absence and will follow the Unauthorised and unexplained absence process (please see Appendix 3 for further information)

## 8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

## 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### 8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupil meetings with Form tutor to discuss and remove barriers to good attendance
- Parent/carer meetings to build strong relationships and work jointly with families to improve attendance Attendance Targets, Action plans and Attendance Contracts can be utilised to support pupil and families to improve attendance
- Regular Home Visits to support pupils and families to improve attendance
- Flexible drop off and collection
- Referrals to external agencies where applicable e.g. Family Support

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher over time.  At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Expectations policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending a place other than the school** | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – leave of absence** | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **S** | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **C2** | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** | | |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| **E** | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** | | |
| **Q** | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| **Y1** | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| **Y2** | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Y4** | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| **Y5** | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>• In police detention<br>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>• Detained under a sentence of detention |
| **Y6** | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| **Y7** | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| **U** | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| **Administrative codes** | | |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| **#** | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |

# Appendix 2: Stages of Intervention and Support

**Rewarding Good Attendance**

- Termly House Points and Amazon Voucher Raffle for students at or above school attendance target of 97%
- Termly Gold (100%), Silver (99-98%) Bronze (97%) and Improved Attendance Certificates
- Atendance Improvement letters home and House Points awarded to students
- Weekly Tutor Attendance Trophy presented in assembly
- Weekly House points awarded for students with 100% attendance and punctuality

**Stage 1 Attendance Target**

- Student attendance falls below 97% attendance
- Parents/carers informed via supportive letter home and encouraged to contact school if any barriers or medical issues are impacting on child's attendance
- Form Tutor meets with student to discuss barriers to good attendance, strategies to improve attendance and sets student attendance target of above 97% attendance over a minimum of four week monitoring period
- Attendance monitored for a minimum of four weeks- if attendance improves above 97% during monitoring period letter sent home to inform parents/carers and students recieve 5 House Points

**Stage 2 Action Plan**

- Student has not improved attendance above 97% at Stage 1 after a minimum of four week monitoring period
- Parents informed of attendance concern via letter and Progress Leader meets with parents/carers to discuss support and action plan implemented to improve attendance above 97% for a minimum of four weeks
- External agencies/support are offered to parent/carers e.g. Early Help
- Parents/carers must provide medical evidence for any further absence
- Home visit may take place if further absence to support student attendance
- Attendance monitored for a minimum of four weeks- if attendance improves above 97% during monitoring period letter sent home to inform parents/carers and students recieve House Points

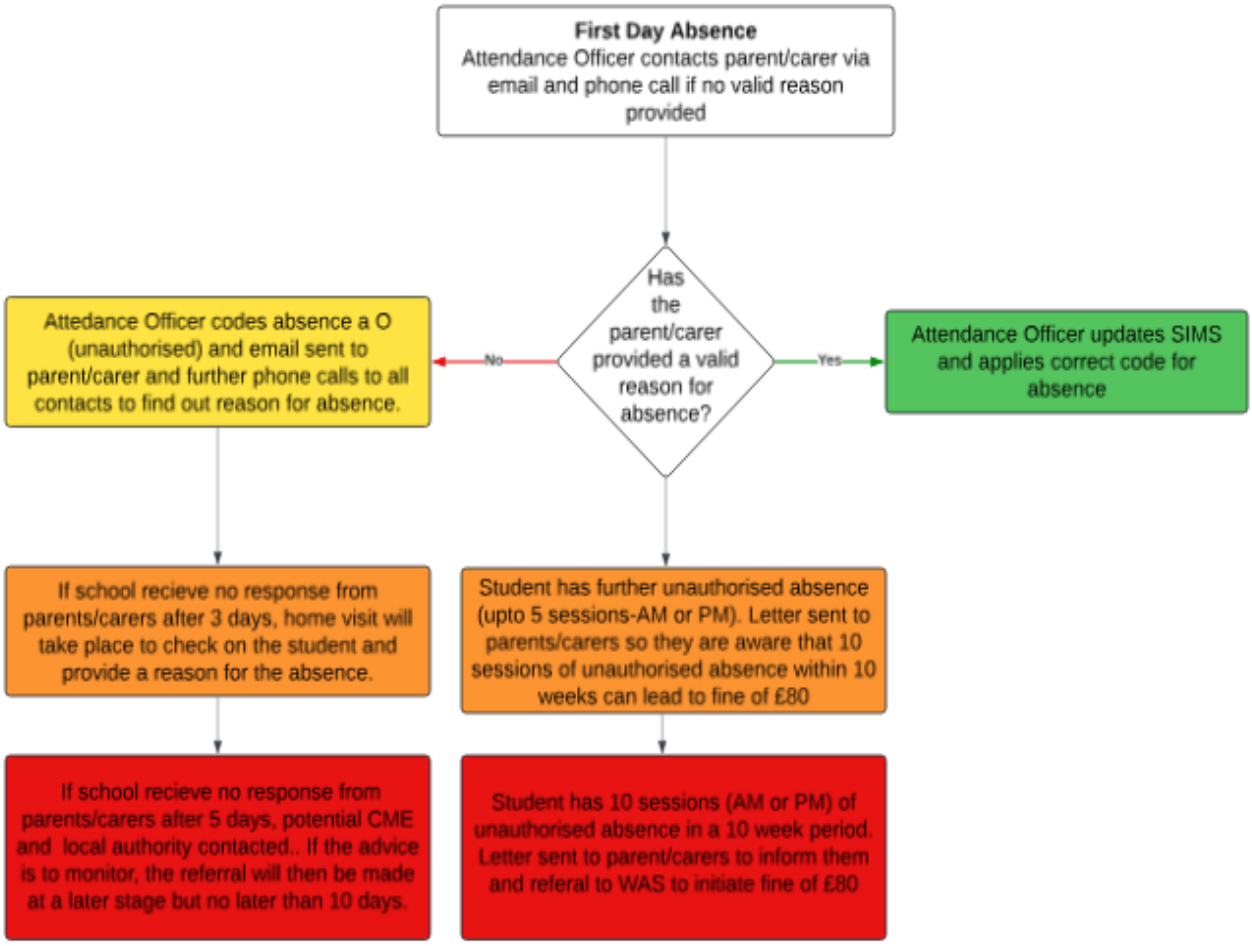
**Stage 3 Attendance Contract**

- Student has not met the Stage 2 Action Plan of above 97% attendance over a minimum of four week monitoring period
- Parents/carers informed of attendance concern via letter and Senior School Leader meets with parents/carers and attendance contract is implemented
- External agencies/support are offered to parent/carers e.g. Early Help
- Home visit may take place if further absence to support student attendance

**WAS Referal**

- Student and parents/carer have not met the requirements of Stage 3 Attendance Contract over a minimum of four week monitoring period
- Parents informed of notice of no improvment via letter
- School makes referal to Warwickshire Attendance Services to seek Targeted Attendance Support (Refer to Appendix 4 for further information on Targeted Attendance Support)

# Appendix 3: Unauthorised and unexplained absence process



## Appendix 4: Warwickshire Attendance Services: Targeted Attendance Support

