



# HEBBURN

## Comprehensive School

# Attendance and Absence Policy

Review Period	Recommended Annually		
Date of next review	December 2024	Author	Mrs S Burdis
Type of Policy	Statutory	Approval	Governing Body
Signed by:			
Head Teacher	Mr D Thompson	Date: 06 December 2023	
Chair of Governors	Cllr A Ellison	Date: 06 December 2023	

While the full Attendance and Absence Policy is outlined below, a 'Quick Guide to Attendance' has been made available to all parents/carers, in the form of FAQs.

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## **Vision and Rationale**

Our vision at Hebburn Comprehensive School is to have a harmonious community where the emphasis for all is on learning and achievement, where pupils feel safe and happy and where a culture of success and ambition is celebrated and embedded throughout the school and wider community.

We believe there is an integral link between attendance, good behaviour, feeling safe, effective learning and enjoying and achieving. To ensure the most effective learning, all children have the right to attend school and learn in an environment which is safe and secure.

Regular attendance and good punctuality are essential to the furtherance of the school's vision and aims, by ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity, to reach their full academic potential.

Furthermore, establishing and maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality is important in preparing young people for their adult and working life.

We also understand that attendance at school is central to raising standards in education, as well as helping students to maintain a healthy equilibrium in relation to emotional well-being. Pupils need to attend regularly to benefit from their education, as missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. We recognise that the achievement of children who are poor attenders tends to be lower.

## **Statement of Intent**

Hebburn Comprehensive School believes that in order to facilitate the highest standards in teaching and learning, good attendance is crucial. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence, by acting early;
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all;
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- Ensuring that pupils are punctual;
- Rewarding regular attendance;
- Ensuring parents perform their legal duty in relation to the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## **1. Legal Framework**

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

- Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- DfE (2020) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2016) ‘Children missing education’
- DfE (2022) ‘Keeping children safe in education’
- DfE (2020) ‘Improving school attendance’
- DfE (2022) ‘Working together to improve school attendance’

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards Policy

## **2. Definitions**

2.1 The school defines “absence” as either:

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

2.2 The school defines an “authorised absence” as an absence which the school has given approval of, in advance, for a pupil to be away, or an absence in which the school has accepted an explanation offered, as justification for absence:

- 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 pupil was granted ‘Leave of Absence’ by the Head Teacher (in exceptional circumstances only).
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer or in

connection with an application for a place at an institute of further education or for a place at another school.

- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- The pupil is participating in an approved public performance.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).

2.3 The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as an absence whereby school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the pupil not attending school:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without a valid or permitted reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained or no explanation is forthcoming, following reasonable efforts on the part of the school to elicit one.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time.
- Leaving school, without the permission of key staff, during the day.

Note: this list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

2.4 The school understands the clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement; it also recognises the direct link between persistent absence from school, poor attainment and ‘not in employment, education or training’ (NEET) status.

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

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

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities:**

Improving attendance at Hebburn Comprehensive School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents/carers and staff.

3.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the Attendance and Absence 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.
- Scrutinising attendance data: they will require termly reports from the Head Teacher on overall attendance figures, Persistent Absenteeism and progress towards targets.
- Offering practical support with attendance, where appropriate.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.2 The Head Teacher and the designated member of SLT are responsible for:

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

3.3 Staff, including teachers, Intervention Managers, Attendance Officers and other support staff will be responsible for:

- Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils 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 pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Period 1 teachers will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session (Period 4.)

Current start times for each year group are outlined below:

Year Group	Period 1 Start Time	Period 4 Start Time
7	08:40	13:15
8	08:40	12:15
9	08:40	12:45
10	08:40	12:15
11	08:40	13:15

3.4 The school recognises the importance of the register as a legal document and has developed procedures to ensure that class registers are maintained to a high standard.

3.5 The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

3.6 Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, from our wider attendance team: Intervention Managers, Attendance Officers and other key members of the pastoral team.

3.7 At the end of each term, pupils whose attendance is either very good, or significantly improved, will be recognised by email, the Teams 'chat' function or text.

3.8 The school will have clearly-defined strategies to give due recognition to good attendance and punctuality, whilst also having strategies to address problems of poor attendance in the short, medium and longer-term, including persistent absenteeism.

- 3.9 The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and, liaising closely with parents/carers, will promptly investigate all absenteeism. Staff will respond to absenteeism firmly and consistently.
- 3.10 The Attendance Officers and the member of the SLT responsible for attendance and punctuality will monitor whole-school attendance on a daily and weekly basis, including analysis by groups (such as age/gender/PA/PP/SEND). Attendance will be monitored and tracked using the A Star Attendance module, Fisher Family Trust software and DfE data collection. Data will also be shared with the LA authority regularly, especially when seeking support with individual cases.
- 3.11 The Pupil Premium will be used to support vulnerable groups, where problems arise with attendance.
- 3.12 The school will inform the LA of any pupil 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.
- 3.13 The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers.
- 3.14 The school will have robust procedure to reduce Persistent Absenteeism.
- 3.15 A referral to Services for Young People will be made, if necessary, but this will only happen after the school has initially dealt with the matter and it is considered that further support is necessary.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- 3.16 Ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn. They have a legal duty to ensure their children attends school on a regular basis.
- 3.17 If a child is prevented, for any reason, from attending, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, on the first day of absence. This is regarded as an essential safeguarding procedure. They should give details of the child, reason for absence and expected date of return.
- 3.18 Parents/carers should continue to contact school at the start of each new day of absence, for safeguarding reasons.

Where no contact is received about absence, the school will respond in the following ways:

Day 1: School will send a text to the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for absence. One text message will be sent in the morning, then another in the afternoon, if contact has still not been made.

Day 2: If a parent/ carer does not respond to the text message sent, then a phone call will be made to ascertain reason for absence.

Day 3: A home visit will be carried out, if the reason for absence has still not been ascertained. If the visit is successful, then the matter will be referred to our DSL. Please note that home visits may be carried out by school staff or by an external Attendance Officer, as part of our service level agreement with Aim Higher.

- 3.19 A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers.
- 3.20 Parents/carers are also responsible for:
- Providing accurate, up-to-date contact details.
  - Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
  - Updating the school without delay, if their contact details change. Parents and carers can update their contact details via the My Child At School App.
- 3.21 Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. These matters will be handled with sensitivity.
- 3.22 Whenever possible, parents/carers should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. It is accepted that parents have no control over hospital appointments but can exercise some control over appointment times at local dentistry or medical practices.
- 3.23 If there is a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness, the school can request that parents/carers provide medical evidence to support the illness. Schools can record the absence as 'unauthorised' if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness. Medical evidence could take the form of prescriptions and/or medical appointment cards.
- 3.24 Parents/carers are expected to notify school immediately, if their child is going to be absent from school. They should provide an appropriate reason for absence before 8.30am on the first day of absence.

## Pupil responsibilities:

- 3.25 Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school. They are expected to attend all of their lessons and any agreed activities throughout the school year, regularly.
- 3.26 Pupils are expected to reach and hopefully surpass the whole school target of 95% attendance.
- 3.27 Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, from our Attendance Officers, Intervention Managers, other members of the pastoral team and the member of SLT with pastoral responsibility.
- 3.28 Pupils will be rewarded and recognised for having good attendance, at the end of each year and at regular intervals throughout the year.
- 3.29 All pupils are also responsible for their punctuality to school and to lessons.

## **4. Training of Staff**

- 4.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent unwanted habits/behaviours. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.
- 4.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3 Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.
- 4.4 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## **5. Pupil Expectations**

- 5.1 Pupils will be expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year.
- 5.2 The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

## **6. Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence**

- 6.1 The designated member of SLT responsible for attendance will:
- Establish a range of interventions to address barriers to attendance.

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek
  - evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
  - Facilitate, attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
  - Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Rigorous monitoring.
    - Having a weekly review during form time, in which pupils update
    - attendance trackers.
    - Letters to parents/carers, at each stage of the attendance process.
    - Attendance meetings.
    - Attendance Reviews.
    - Attendance Clinics (LA in Attendance.)
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using Penalty Notice Warnings and Penalty Notices.
- 6.2 Where necessary, HOKS, the designated member of SLT or Governing Body will engage in attendance reviews to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of future training and employment.
- 6.3 Teaching staff will:
- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
  - They will build positive relationships with pupils and encourage good attendance.
- 6.4 Intervention Managers and Attendance Officers will:
- Provide staff with support in relation to the process of completing the register.
  - Monitor attendance.
  - Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
  - Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support or make referrals for intervention, where appropriate.
  - Lead daily and/or weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
  - Make regular contact with families to discuss progress, and to offer support or challenge, where needed.
  - Escalate their concerns, where sufficient progress is not made.
  - Offer praise, encouragement and incentives.
- 6.5 Pupils 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.
- 6.6 The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups such as:

- Boys
- Girls
- Those eligible for Pupil Premium
- Children in Need
- CP
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language
- Pupils with SEND

## **7. Absence Procedures**

- 7.1 Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. Parents should aim to contact school before 8.30am.
- 7.2 A text message will be sent to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence, on the morning of the first day of absence.
- 7.3 A second text message will be sent out in the afternoon of the first day of absence, if parents/carers have not responded to the first text message.
- 7.4 A phone call will be made on the second day of absence, if texts have not been replied to.
- 7.5 A home visit will be carried out on the third day of absence, by intervention Managers/Attendance Officers, where no contact has been made regarding absence.  
If the home visit is unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Safeguarding team and appropriate action will be taken.
- 7.6 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 system.
- 7.7 The school will inform the LA, on a half-termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 7.8 If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the attendance officers will arrange to meet with the parents/carers, unless other agencies are already involved.
- 7.9 Where a pupil 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 pupil from the admission

register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

## **8. Parental Involvement**

- 8.1 The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- 8.2 The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils 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.
- 8.3 The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance.
- 8.4 Parents will be expected to:
- Respond to all communication.
  - 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.

## **9. Attendance Register**

- 9.1 The school day must have two sessions divided by a break. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's Governing Body.
- 9.2 Period 1 teachers will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and Period 4 teachers will do the same at the start of the afternoon session, as outlined in section 3.3. This register will record whether pupils are:
- Present.
  - Absent.
  - Attending an approved educational visit.
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 9.3 A register will be taken at the start of every lesson throughout the school day.

9.4 The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school 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 school
- 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 = Pupil not on admission register
- # = Planned whole or partial school closure

Information about Covid-19 codes can be found in Appendix E.

9.5 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils 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.

9.6 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.

9.7 Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

9.8 An agreed member of staff will complete the ‘Educational setting status form’ on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

This will be monitored by the designated member of SLT. [During the Covid – 19 pandemic.]

## **10 Attendance Officers / Intervention Managers**

- 10.1 If attendance drops below the school target of 95%, pupils will work with their allocated Intervention Manager, who will attempt to identify barriers to good attendance and put appropriate intervention in place.
- 10.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officers, working in conjunction with the designated member of SLT, have the power to make referrals to the Local Authority, who will issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.
- 10.3 The Attendance Officers and Intervention Managers will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that early intervention is delivered quickly to address absence. Intervention Managers will focus primarily on pupils with 90-95% attendance and Attendance Officers will focus on the pupils with attendance of 90% or below (PA).
- 10.4 The Attendance Officers will also provide regular data reports to IMs/HOLS/HOKS/SLT, who will track the attendance of pupils and implement attendance procedures.
- 10.5 If they are persistently absent, pupils will work with Attendance Officers, who will, in conjunction with HOLS, HOKS and the designated member of SLT, attempt to resolve the situation, through attendance reviews and potentially, a parenting agreement can be put in place.
- 10.6 Attendance Officers will arrange Attendance Clinics, at intervals throughout the academic year, to address poor attendance and offer the necessary level of support or challenge. Attendance Clinics will be attended by school staff, parents/carers, the pupil/s and a representative from the Local Authority (SYP). A Member of the Governing Body may also be invited to attend, if relevant.

## **11. Lateness [to be updated further, but strategy not quite ready as it has to work in conjunction with changes to the wider detention system, which are not yet confirmed.]**

- 11.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated. Students should be on the school yard for 8:30 to ensure a prompt start to the day.
- 11.2 The school day starts at 8:40. Pupils should make their way to period 1; pupils will receive a late mark if they do not travel straight to their lesson.

11.3 The register closes 30 minutes after entry; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school within this time.

11.4 Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

## 12. Truancy

12.1 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.

12.2 All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

12.3 All pupils are expected to be punctual for their morning and afternoon sessions; class teachers will record attendance electronically.

12.4 Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again upon their return.

12.5 Immediate action will be taken when there are concerns that a pupil might be truanting.

12.6 If truancy is suspected, the Attendance Officers will be notified immediately. They will endeavour to identify the whereabouts of the pupil, as a matter of urgency. They will refer the missing pupils to Corridor Support who will check the school site (internal and external.) They will also contact the pupil's parents/carers, to advise that the pupil is no longer on school site. The matter will then be escalated in line with safeguarding procedures.

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

- In the first instance and following a quick search of the site, parents will be notified of the truancy.
- Once the pupil has been located safely, reasons for truancy will be explored and sanctions will be issued, in line with the Behaviour and Rewards Policy.
- If any further truancy occurs, the school may 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.

### **13. Children Missing and Absent from Education**

School understands that children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. School's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education will support identifying such abuse.

13.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless for a pre-arranged and approved reason.

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Attendance Office immediately.
- Attendance Officers will immediately try to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil, by checking with reception, the main office, First Aid, Corridor Support and the Child's Head of Learning/Intervention Manager.
- Year group staff and/or Corridor Support staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises.
- If the missing pupil/s cannot be located promptly, the matter will be referred to the Safeguarding team, who will act appropriately and promptly, in line with safeguarding guidance.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - Medical room
  - Reception
  - Both tutors' rooms
  - All corridors
  - Empty classrooms
  - Toilets
  - Stairwells and under stairwells
  - The school grounds
- If the pupil has not been found, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.

13.3 If the missing pupil has an allocated outreach worker, social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

13.4 When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

13.5 The relevant pastoral team will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

13.6 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

13.7 Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour and Rewards Policy.

#### **14. Holidays During Term-Time**

14.1 Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed. We also ask them to be aware that a two week holiday during term-time would result in a 50 hours of lost learning, which would have a significantly detrimental impact on attainment.

14.2 The current legislation does not give entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. An application for a leave of absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'. Only the Head Teacher, or his representative, has the authority to determine 'exceptional circumstances' and any requests made will be considered on an individual basis. Please note, family weddings are unlikely to be considered as 'exceptional', including when an extended amount of time off school is required to travel abroad.

If a pupil is taken on a holiday that has not been requested, or if the holiday has been requested but not authorised, their attendance will be marked as unauthorised absence. In all such cases, the Local Authority is likely to issue a fixed penalty notice, making parents liable to pay a fine for each child involved.

For further information, please see:

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/2205/Holidays-in-term-term>

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/2467/Penalty-notices>

We strongly urge all parents to plan family holidays during school holidays. Where this is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence form should be completed and returned to the Headteacher at least one month in advance of the required absence, for consideration.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head Teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

14.3 Leave during term-time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. For example, due to bereavement or serious illness.

14.4 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis.

## **15. Religious Observances**

15.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

15.2 Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

## **16. Appointments**

16.1 As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

16.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be checked at the attendance office.

16.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out at the reception by a parent, unless other arrangements have been agreed in advance.

16.4 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment, wherever possible.

## **17. Young Carers**

17.1 The school understands the difficulties Young Carers face, and will endeavour to identify Young Carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

17.2 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.

## **18. Exceptional Circumstances**

18.1 When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

18.2 Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause;
- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

18.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## **19. Rewarding Good Attendance**

19.1 The school acknowledges outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- 1:1 praise and recognition
- Communication with parents: written and verbal
- Shout-outs on the plasma screen and on social media
- Attendance leagues

19.2 Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Weekly merits for full attendance (and no behaviour points)
- Small prizes awarded on an individual basis when short-term targets are met
- Postcards/letters home
- Termly Attendance Certificates
- Prizes and certificates for the 'Top Class in Year Group' at the end of each term
- Weekly attendance lottery, which rolls over if the 'winner' has been absent that week. (Voucher awarded.)
- End of term attendance draws, with vouchers as incentives for full attendance.
- Attendance awards presented at our Annual Awards Evening.

19.3 School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90%, without a genuine medical reason, these privileges may be taken away.

19.4 In order for Year 11 students to be invited to the end of year prom, attendance must be 95% or above. Allowances will be made for genuine medical reasons, where evidence can be provided and cases will be considered on an individual basis.

## **20. Monitoring and Review**

20.1 The extended attendance team, including Intervention Managers, Attendance Officers, Heads of Learning, Heads of Key Stage, and the designated member of the leadership team, monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

- 20.2 The school's attendance target is 97% each year.
- 20.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the designated member of SLT and Head Teacher, in conjunction with Attendance Officers.
- 20.4 Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 20.5 The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2022.

### **Prosecutions by Local Authorities**

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

Penalty Notices are one of a number of important additions to the interventions available to promote better school attendance. Improving attendance is essential to improve a child's educational prospects and to avoid putting them at risk of criminal or anti-social behaviour.

The Local Authority's Code of Conduct is a requirement of The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 including amendments to the regulations in 2013. The Code ensures that the powers to issue Penalty Notices are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

The LA Code supersedes all previous Local Authority documentation and Codes regarding Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **Circumstances Where a Penalty Notice May Be Issued:**

Penalty Notices are intended to provide an early intervention to deter patterns of unauthorised absence developing. Parents and pupils are supported both at school and at Local Authority level to overcome irregular attendance and any of the sanctions available are only for use when there is no parental co-operation or it is not sufficient to resolve the difficulties.

Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice may be a suitable intervention will include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- A pupil is taken out of school during term-time where this has not been authorised by the Head Teacher or no request for authorisation has been sought.
- Persistent lateness, after the register has closed.
- Unwarranted delayed return from leave of absence (without school agreement)
- Being in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any exclusion. For an exclusion of less than 5 days, this applies for the whole of the excluded period.
- The above list is not exhaustive.

## **Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices (in line with South Tyneside Council's Code of Conduct for Education Related Penalty Notices):**

Penalty Notices are to be issued by Services for Young People in South Tyneside. This will ensure:

- fair and consistent delivery
- help maintain home-school relationships
- avoid the issue of duplicate notices; and
- ensure that Penalty Notices are used effectively alongside other enforcement sanctions.

Penalty Notices may be requested by schools, Police and neighbouring Local Authorities. These requests will be actioned, providing:

- The pupil has recorded at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- Circumstances of the absence meet the criteria laid out in the agreed Code of Conduct
- All relevant information is supplied, in writing, and in line with the agreed Code of Conduct
- The request for a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies or other enforcement action already in place.

Requests, according to the above criteria, will be actioned within 10 school days by the Local Authority through the following process:

- Parents will normally receive a formal written warning stating the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no further unauthorised absence.
- Services for Young People will monitor attendance and, at the end of 15 school days, where further cases of unauthorised absence have occurred, a Penalty Notice will be issued, using first-class post.

In exceptional circumstances, no warning will be issued i.e. the deliberate taking of leave of absence during term-time without the written permission of the Head Teacher or other authorised person. This will apply where it can be clearly demonstrated that permission had not been/would not be given, and where this has created an unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions (5 days).

**NB:** No parent will receive more than 2 Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any 12 month period.

For Penalty Notices issued in relation to excluded children, no parent will receive more than 2 Penalty Notices in any 12 month period where their child has been found in a public place during school hours.

A Penalty Notice will not be issued when proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act are being contemplated or have been commenced by the Local Authority.

Within this Code, 'parent' is defined as in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This includes individuals who have parental responsibility for a child.

'School hours' are defined as "a school session or the break between sessions on the same school day."

'A public place' means any highway or any other public place to which the public have access. A school is not a public place for this purpose.

### **Withdrawal of Penalty Notice**

Once issued, a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Where it ought not to have been issued (for example, the issuing of the Penalty Notice did not conform with this Code of Conduct); or
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person; or
- It contains material errors.
- Where after the expiry of 28 days the Penalty Notice remains unpaid and the LA has not started legal proceedings or wishes to take such action under section 444 of the education act.

### **Payment of a Penalty Notice**

Payment arrangements will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice is raised at the rate of £120.00 per "parent" for each child of the family that as meets the criteria as detailed above. Payment is required within 28 days of issue. Notices paid within the first 21 days of issue are discounted to £60.00. Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

No reminders will be issued either orally or in writing.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for conviction for the unauthorised absences in the period in question, and they cannot be prosecuted for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for non-attendance Notices, or section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for exclusion-related Notices, unless it can be withdrawn in accordance with the circumstances above.

Where the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, and the Local Authority has not commenced proceedings against the parent for the offence contained in

the Notice, nor is contemplating such proceedings, the Local Authority must withdraw the Penalty Notice.

The Local Authority will retain the revenue from Penalty Notices to cover the enforcement costs of issuance, collection and any prosecutions in the event of non-payment.

### **Publicity**

All school Attendance Policies will include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents.

The Local Authority will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional/public information material.

### **Review**

The use of Penalty Notices will be reviewed annually and changes will be made to the general enforcement strategy as appropriate.

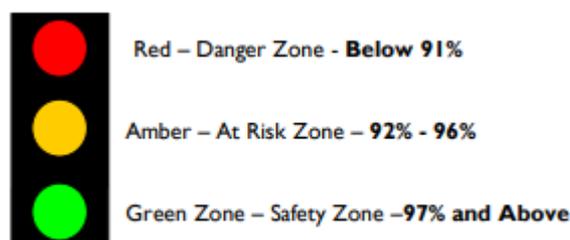
### **General**

This Code of Conduct is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments to the regulations 2013, having regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and in consultation with Head Teachers, Governing Bodies of all schools maintained by the Education Authority and the Chief Officers of Police for the Local Policing Areas within the Borough of South Tyneside.

## Appendix A: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

At Hebburn Comprehensive, we believe that in order to facilitate the highest standards of education and to secure the best possible outcomes for students, excellent attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

From September 2021, we will be operating under the following traffic light system:



### Key information:

This attendance program follows a 4-stage monitoring process, which is intended to improve pupil attendance levels and maximise learning potential. We endeavour to give our pupils the very best start in life and have high standards in relation to expectations about attendance and punctuality.

The 4-stage process will be used to monitor the attendance of pupils:

**Stage 1** – If there are emerging concerns about attendance, a letter will be sent out reminding parents/carers of the importance of good attendance.

**Stage 2** – If no improvement is made following Stage 1 and there is additional absence, which causes further concern, another letter will be sent home. This letter will include a parent survey, requesting more information regarding the barriers to your child attending school, so that we can identify ways to support your child and put appropriate intervention in place. At this stage, we would encourage parents/carers to arrange to speak to school about any concerns they may have in relation to their child's attendance.

**Stage 3** – Pupils continue to show little, or no improvement and attendance has deteriorated even further. A letter will be sent home advising that the pupil is now on a four-week monitoring period. During this monitoring period, 100% attendance is required, unless medical evidence can be provided.

**Stage 4** – Pupils who are absent within the four-week time frame, and who, therefore, do not pass the four-week monitoring period, will be moved to Stage 4 and considered for referral to the local authority.

Our aim is for our pupils to have excellent attendance and punctuality.

**Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year**

Pupils in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will get into the habit of good attendance, helping to prepare them for the world of work.

**95%: 10 days absence a year**

Pupils in this group are likely to reach their target grades and form a habit of attending school regularly.

**92%: 15 days absence a year**

Pupils in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their target grades. The school may consider referring pupils with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.

**90% or below: 19 days (or more) absence a year**

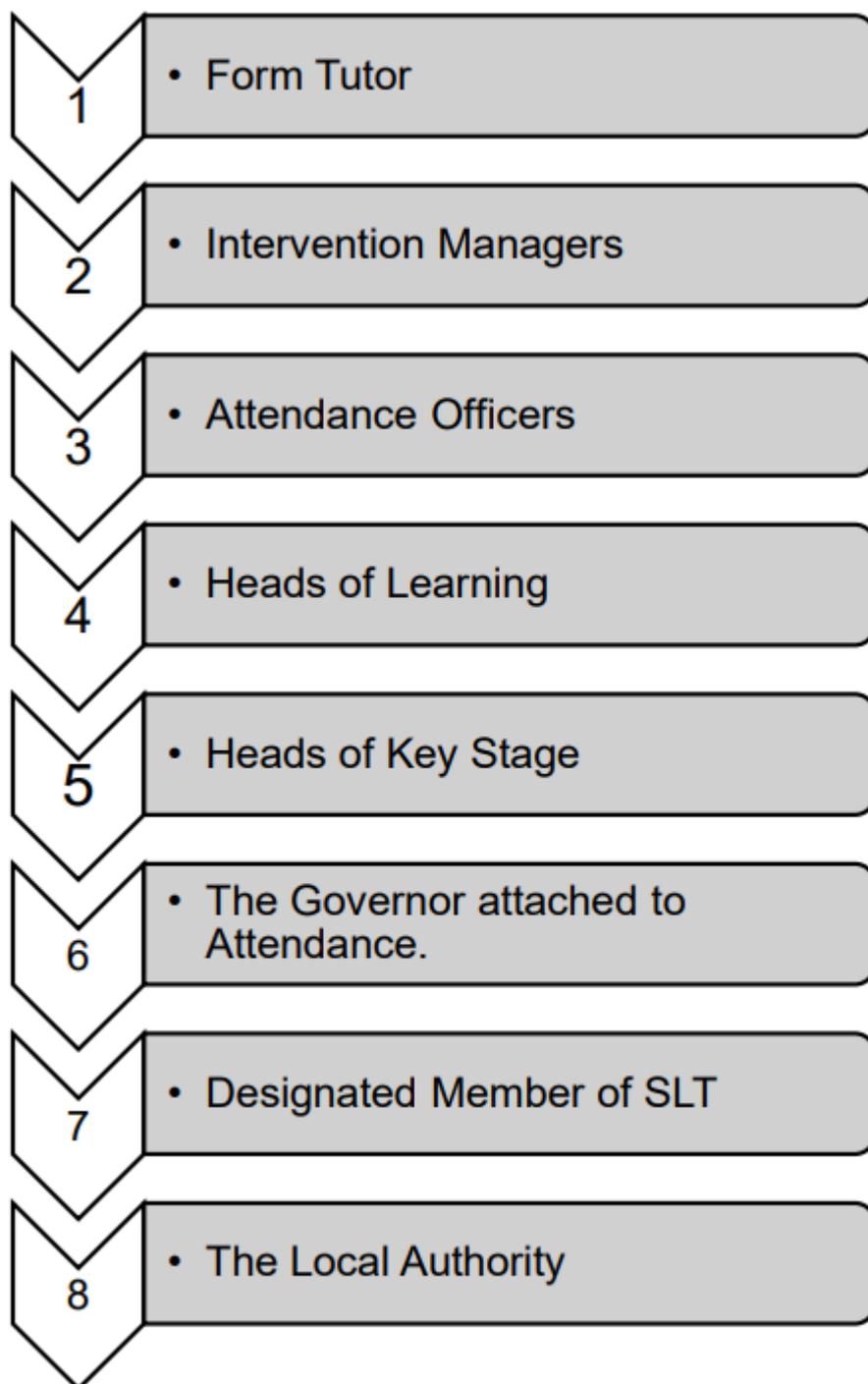
The Government categorise pupils in this group as 'Persistent Absentees'. It will be almost impossible for these pupils to keep up with their schoolwork, due to gaps in learning caused by absence. Parents/carers of pupils in this group could face the possibility of legal action from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers can help us by:

- Encouraging their child/ren to attend school.
- Encouraging them to be punctual.
- Contacting school on the first day of an absence.
- Continuing to notify us of any further absence.
- Informing us of any changes or circumstances which might affect attendance.
- Supporting your child and the school by attending meetings and keeping an open dialogue.
- Ensuring that medical appointments are made outside of school time, wherever possible.
- If medical appointments do need to take place during school hours, pupils should attend school before and after their appointment.
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term-time.

Please note that we are not able to grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and we ask for your support with this matter: please keep family holidays to outside of term-time.

## Appendix B: Attendance Reporting Structure



**APPENDIX C: LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM**

**Hebburn Comprehensive School**

**PARENTAL REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

You should be aware that any absence from school, for whatever reason, will potentially have a detrimental effect on your child’s learning and progress. Authorisation will only be granted in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**.

Should you wish to apply for your child’s absence from school, you are requested to complete the section below and return the form at least 1 month prior to planned absence to Mrs S Burdis, Assistant Head Teacher.

**NB: Requests received within a month of the planned absence are likely to be refused.**

<b>PUPIL’S NAME:</b>	<b>FORM:</b>
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<b>ABSENCE REQUESTED FROM:</b>	<b>TO:</b>
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<b>*REASON FOR THIS REQUEST, OUTLINING HOW YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS REQUEST MEETS THE CRITERION FOR “EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES”:</b>
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I request permission for my child to be absent from school on the above dates. I understand that this absence will disrupt my child’s learning. I will ensure that my child returns to school immediately after the agreed last date of absence and that all work missed will be completed.

<b>SIGNED (Parent/Carer):</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
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