

Rationale:

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 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 special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Hungerhill School is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at Hungerhill, it is very important that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. Students who have higher levels of attendance achieve better both academically and socially. Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with. Statistics show that 91% of students with fewer than six days absence achieved at least five GCSEs. Of the students who had more than twelve days absence, only 36% achieved five GCSEs. In addition there is a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95%.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all our students in order to facilitate the highest standards of achievement
- To strive towards every student attending 100% of the time
- To promote excellent punctuality and attendance so that students are prepared for the disciplines of adult working life

What you can expect from Hungerhill School:

- We will promote excellent attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where a student's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support students to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality.
- We will support students returning to school after prolonged absence.
- We will reward high and improving attendance.

What Hungerhill School expects from students:

- To attend the school on school days and be on time.
- To be punctual to all lessons

- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Officer based in Reception, where appropriate, if they are not able to be registered.
- To ensure all messages and notes relating to absence, medical appointments etc from parents/carers are taken to Reception.

What Hungerhill School expects from parents/carers:

- To ensure their child attends school, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day school is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from school for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation.
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- To immediately inform the Attendance Officer / school reception if their child is unable to attend (by 9.30am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- For safeguarding reasons a call is required for **every** day of absence.

Registration:

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. This is at 8.50 am and at 1.30 pm
- Students are expected to arrive no later than 8.45 am in order to be ready for the start of registration period at 8.50 am.
- Students are registered at the start of every lesson throughout the day.
- Registers close at 9.20 am in the morning and 2.00 pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).

Punctuality

- The school gates close at 8.50 am.
- Any student arriving after this time should sign in at Reception.
- Students arriving after registration has closed given a 'U' for morning registration which is an unauthorised absence
- Students who are late will be given a 30 minute lunchtime detention which will take place during a lunchtime.
- Failure to attend the 30 minute detention will result in a 60 minute detention after school after school.

- Continued repeated offenders will be reported to parents/carers and parents will be invited into school for a Punctuality review.

How we Respond to Absence/Lateness

If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence using the following methods:

- **Mobile number of Contacts 1-4** (as identified by parents/carers on student registration form)
- **Text message**
- **Home visit**

The school asks that parents/carers ensure that school have the most up to date contact details at all times. All absence notes will be retained.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this.

Wherever possible, students should attempt to arrange non-school activities outside of their school timetable. Where this is not possible, the following is a list of reasons for absence which would be authorised:

- An unavoidable medical or dental appointment
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. family bereavement and/or attendance at a funeral
- A religious observance
- Involvement in a public performance
- Exclusion

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Evidence of medical/dental appointments will be required.

Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a student's absence, the school will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised. Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

Irregular Attendance at School

Where a student's absence is cause for concern, the school will write to Parents/Carers and/or invite the Parents/Carers into school or visit Parents/Carers at home. Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite support and intervention from the school, the Local Authority attendance process may be implemented including sending a warning letter regarding the **Education Penalty Notice (EPN)** and the request to issue an EPN.

Education Penalty Notice (EPN)

An EPN may be issued in the following circumstances:

- When a student is taken out of school during term time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school.
- When a student has had 4 or more sessions (2 days) of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period.
- Where a parent allows their child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

Penalties require **each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child** if paid within 21 days or **£120** if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An attendance support plan to improve attendance which may involve referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant school staff and parents/carers. If parents/carers are unable to attend meetings, the action plan will still go ahead.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought from the Local Authority which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of student's learning. Government Legislation that came out in September 2013 now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. This means there is no longer a provision in law for the Headteacher to authorise an absence for the purpose of a holiday, other than in exceptional circumstances:

Please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/Carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time.

Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam key assessment periods (these could be throughout the year).
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September.
- Your request will not be authorised for any student in Year 11.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the respective school's attendance target for the 12 months prior to application.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.
- Your request will not be authorised where there are coursework deadlines or controlled assessments (these could be throughout the year).

It is expected that a meeting to discuss a leave of absence is arranged with the Attendance Officer at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered will be discussed at this meeting. The school has the right to serve an Education Penalty Notice to parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation by referring the case to the Local Authority. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the school. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance. If the school believe an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken, an Education Penalty Notice may be served.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all students are more likely to have excellent attendance if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students.
- Students are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the attendance target of 97% will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.

- Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact the Attendance Officer/Student Support Team at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into school.
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Hungerhill School.
- Students' attendance will be reported on student reports.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the staff have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Subject teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all students to lessons.
- Will ensure all students are accurately registered in silence.
- Will ensure that students know the register is being taken.
- Will identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action this may include contacting home
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Form Tutors

- Will discuss absence and attendance regularly with students, by use of the weekly attendance report.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Officer.

Achievement Leaders

- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with students and set targets for improvement.
- Will, in liaison with the Attendance officer, Student Support officers contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support students to improve their attendance.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies.
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support students and their parents/carers to improve attendance.
- Will arrange for work to be sent home if the student will be absent for a known period of time.
- Will arrange a suitable reintegration for student who returns from a prolonged absence, which may include: liaising with the student and parents/carers about support needed, informing all relevant staff of the circumstances, consider a personalised programme of return, if appropriate.

Attendance Officer/Attendance Team

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and punctuality and reducing persistent absence.
- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding student absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding student absence.
- Will issue the cumulative attendance report to achievement coordinators and form tutors on a fortnightly basis.
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will ensure that registers are being completed and inform SLT Link at weekly Attendance meetings (where there are persistent concerns).
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance, including making home visits.
- Will support students to improve their attendance.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students.
- Will provide data to the Headteacher, Senior Leaders and the Governors on a regular basis.

The Headteacher and Senior Leaders, including the Governing Body

- Will ensure that the attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole School ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning