# Attendance Policy

# Key Stage 3/4

# Heathcote School and Science College

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| **Approved by the Governing Body:** | **Summer 2026** |
| **To be reviewed:** | **Annually** |
| **Next review date:** | **Summer 2027** |

## Other Documentation

This Policy should be used in reference with the following documents;

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

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 Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

School census guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

## Contents


Overview …….. 4

Aims …….. 4

Why Regular Attendance is so important …… 4

Legislation and Guidance …….. 5

Roles and Responsibility …… 5

Recording Attendance ……. 11

Attendance Monitoring ……. 19

Child Missing Education …… 22

Migration …….. 23

Attendance of Looked After Children …….. 23

School Term Time …….. 24

Change of Address ……. 24

Telephone Number / Emails ……. 24

Transferring to Another School …… 24

Families Moving Abroad …… 24

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes …… 25

## Overview

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. We expect all our children to attend school, on time every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. As a school we aim for all children to have a minimum of 97% attendance.

## Aims

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

Regular school attendance is crucial if Heathcote pupils are to achieve their potential and maximise the life chances of every young person within Heathcote School.

National statistics show that poor attendance can have a profound effect on a child's attainment and achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than **50** per cent of school, only three per cent manage to achieve five 4 to 9s including English and Maths.
- Of pupils who miss between **10** per cent and **20** per cent of school, only **35** per cent manage to achieve five 4 to 9s GCSEs including English and Maths.
- Of pupils who miss less than 5 per cent of school, **73** per cent achieve five 4 to 9s including English and Maths.

## Why Regular Attendance is so Important

### Learning

Any absence disrupts the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will have a detrimental impact on their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence (1996 Education Act) and may result in prosecution or a penalty notice for poor attendance under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our Newsletter;

- Report to you on the school report on how your child is performing in the school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance**.**

## Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Child on Child abuse

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## 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

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## Roles and Responsibilities

### The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- 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

**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 Education Welfare Officer to be able to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

**The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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 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 Katie Morrison and can be contacted via kmorrison@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk

**The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Communicate with the Education Welfare Officer, Year Lead, SLT and attendance lead, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Ensure timely and accurate record keeping of attendance registers
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Communicating with key stakeholders (social care, class teachers, year lead) when there are concerns about pupils absence

The attendance officer is Elena Horder and can be contacted via attendance@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk

**Education Welfare Officer**

What is the Role of the Education Welfare Officer?

Analysing the attendance in attendance meetings identifying pupil concerns with lateness and absenteeism both during school and examination periods. This role extends to those pupils in Alternate Provision (AP) whom the school has on a dual registration.

The EWO will liaise with other agencies such as BACME and the Local Authority when concerned about a pupil's welfare and attendance. The EWO leads any pupil investigations surrounding attendance and liaises with parent/carers and support services; these include home visits and attending meetings of multiple agencies. Meetings with pupils are held to inform them of their current attendance and punctuality issues.

The EWO is also responsible for attending legal proceedings when requested on behalf of the school and provides supporting evidence for the authorities at their request; this also includes the school census when required. Minutes of these meetings are to be kept and stored centrally.

The EWO supports the Attendance Officer in carrying out duties and offers support and guidance when required. The EWO and Attendance Officer meet frequently with the Attendance Lead to discuss concerns and adapt strategies to tackle any falling attendance or punctuality across the school. Analysis of data and records forming patterns or trends are regularly monitored.

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher.

The Education Welfare Officer is Alex Poulton and can be contacted via apoulton@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk

**Education Welfare Advisory & Support Service (EWASS)**

Heathcote School commissions Education Welfare Advisory & Support Service Ltd (EWASS) to provide strategic advice, attendance intervention and education welfare support in line with the school's attendance priorities and statutory responsibilities.

The purpose of this partnership is to strengthen attendance systems, improve outcomes for pupils and ensure early identification and intervention where attendance concerns arise.

Under the Service Level Agreement (SLA), EWASS provides support through:

- Monthly attendance support and challenge meetings with school leaders.
- Attendance monitoring and analysis to identify trends, vulnerable groups and pupils requiring intervention.
- Support for persistent and severe absence, including targeted casework for pupils with attendance below 85%.
- Home visits for pupils with attendance at or below 85%, where appropriate and typically within five school days.
- School-based attendance meetings and attendance panel support.
- Advice and guidance regarding attendance legislation, legal intervention and statutory processes.
- Support with attendance audits, register inspections and quality assurance of attendance systems.
- Guidance on register coding and statutory attendance requirements.
- Analysis of attendance patterns across vulnerable and disproportionate groups.
- Termly reporting to school leaders to evaluate impact and inform strategic planning.
- Support with preparing for external review and ensuring attendance practice reflects current national expectations.

The school and EWASS work collaboratively to ensure attendance intervention remains supportive, proportionate and focused on removing barriers to education wherever possible.

Where support and intervention have not secured sufficient improvement, the school may seek advice from EWASS regarding escalation routes in accordance with statutory attendance guidance and the Education Act 1996.

This Service Level Agreement operates from **1 September 2026 to 31 July 2027** and is reviewed annually.

**Class Teachers**

Registers are taken electronically at the start of every lesson.

The time of late arrivals is noted and absences recorded in the class registers. As well as late restorations issued

Class teachers contribute to procedures by promoting good attendance with their classes and informing their Department Lead and Year lead where there are concerns with poor attendance and punctuality.

Class teachers will notify parents or carers when they have concerns around attendance.

Class teachers must immediately alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they believe or suspect that an absence may be due to a CP issue.

**Parents/Carers**

Where this policy refers to a parent/carer, 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 and carers are expected to promote excellent levels of attendance and punctuality for their child. On rare occasions a pupil may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, parent/carer and the child. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

The school expects that all parent / carers communicate with the school giving a reason for child's absence;

- in advance of any planned absence
- immediately following any unplanned absence (the next session)
- during any periods of absence.

Make sure their child attends every day and lesson on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return and notify on each day of absence.

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 the school and dealing with the appropriate member of staff (Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer/Year Lead/Senior Lead for attendance)

It is the parent's responsibility to follow school procedures relating to all aspects concerning attendance, absence and punctuality as outlined within the school policy. Parents are expected to support the school and attend meetings to discuss and resolve any issues arising in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Parents are expected to support staff within the school in regard to any reasonable sanction given relating to poor attendance and poor punctuality- please refer to sanction guidelines within the policy appendices for further guidance.

**Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session, on time

We understand that there are some incidences where pupils are reluctant to attend school. On occasions issues arise that make it difficult for the young person and it is the responsibility of the pupil to seek help and guidance from their parent/carer or a member of staff in the school so that any concerns can quickly be resolved.

Unless unavoidable, it is the pupil's responsibility to attend school regularly and on time and to attend all lessons punctually.

If issues arise, it is the pupil's responsibility to ensure that they attend arranged sanctions and meetings relating to poor punctuality or poor attendance.

## The Role of the Behaviour, Attendance & Children Missing Education Officer (BACME)

The Behaviour, Attendance & Children Missing Education Officer (BACME) meets with the Head teacher/Head of School and is the point of contact between the Local Authority BACME and the school.

She/he advises the school and monitors performance in relation to attendance and punctuality. She/he also takes referrals from the school for more focused interventions with particular families. Intervening with children who are causing concern because of punctuality or attendance

These interventions include home visits, interviews at school, support for families with particular problems which affect attendance and punctuality. Where necessary, appropriate legal action against families who are not fulfilling their responsibilities under the Education Act will be taken. These include penalty notices, fines (£80 per parent per child for the first fine, rising to £160 if not paid within 28 days and for any subsequent fine (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004) or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.

**SENDCO**

Working with the parents 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

## Recording Attendance

### 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 08:40 and ends at 15:10.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:10. Any pupil who arrives at registration after 8:40 will be marked as late. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50 and will be kept open until 13.20

## Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of ‘parent’, as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child’s attendance and absence levels. This is done via termly progress reports and termly letters where a child’s attendance falls below 95%. All parents are able to access their child’s attendance records via the Arbor App and parents are encouraged to engage with this regularly.

## Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The Senior Leadership Team works closely with class teachers, the school office and the London Borough of Waltham Forest Education BACME Service. School registers are monitored daily to identify absent pupils. Whole school and individual attendance and punctuality is monitored on a regular basis with interventions actioned.

The Education Welfare officer and Senior Lead for attendance meet with each Year team bi-weekly to review all children's punctuality and attendance are discussed. In line with our school attendance strategy any pupil with

## Co-ordinating Responses to Concerns about Attendance & Punctuality

School attendance officers check the registers daily for when there is an absence with no reason given. Parents/carers are contacted to explain the reason for absence. Only the school may authorise this absence and the absence may still go down as unauthorized even with a parent/carer providing a reason. Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school can refer the child to the BACME Officer from the London Borough of Waltham Forest. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, fines can be issued and court proceedings to prosecute parents can be used as a last resort.

## Rewards

The 100% Club. All pupils with 100% attendance after each term will be given entry to The 100% Club. This is a reward club whereby pupils receive certificates and termly rewards.

## The 100% Attendance Club

Maintaining an attendance record of 100% is a brilliant achievement and one that we are delighted to reward and celebrate. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance will be given a much deserved place in the 100% Attendance Club. Membership of the club entitles pupils to a range of rewards, including celebration activities and an early lunch queue.

The Resilience Club. Any pupil who has made significant improvements to their attendance will be a member of The Resilience Club. These pupils will be selected by their Year Leads, will receive a certificate and postcard home and be entitled to the early lunch queue.

Year Leads will organise separate rewards throughout the year relating to attendance.

We recognise 100% Attendance as being a huge achievement and one that needs significant reward and celebration! Therefore, only pupils with 100% Attendance will be granted access to the club. The 100% attendance club is a reward for those pupils who show resilience and excellent attitudes to school. We do, however, recognise that in some cases, absence from school is unavoidable. Examples include pupils being absent from school:

- to mark a religious observance, including attending the wedding of an immediate family member
- to attend a specialist medical appointment related to a ***lifelong medical condition***.
- to grieve for, and attend a funeral of an immediate family member.

In all cases where a parent / carer is seeking an exception to be made, the Deputy Head Teacher must authorise this.

Please complete an 'Exceptional Circumstances form' and return to the school by email or post

## 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

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).

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.

### 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

**Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

An **authorised absence** is where the school accepts that there is an exceptional or unavoidable reason for a pupil's absence. Authorised absence must be supported by communication and, where applicable, evidence from the parent or carer. All authorised absences are recorded by the school's Attendance Officer.

An **unauthorised absence** is where the school does not consider the reason for absence to be reasonable, or where no explanation has been provided. The school operates a **zero-tolerance approach** to unauthorised absence.

**Examples of authorised absence may include:**

- Sickness (up to three separate absences or three consecutive days without medical evidence)
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Days of religious observance (maximum of three days per academic year)
- Interviews or entrance exams for secondary school
- Exceptional circumstances (up to three days, authorised by the Headteacher)
- Sporting events in which the pupil is participating

**Examples of unauthorised absence include:**

- Shopping for school items
- Birthday celebrations
- Waiting for household appointments (e.g. deliveries or repairs)
- Holidays during term time
- Personal grooming or hair appointments
- Airport trips to drop off or collect relatives
- Accompanying family members to appointments
- Visiting friends or family

*Authorisation is at the discretion of the school and may be declined, even for reasons listed above.*

Class registers officially close at **9.10am**. Pupils arriving after this time will receive a **(U)** code, which is recorded as an unauthorised absence. 10 or more (U) codes or (O) codes within any ten-week period may result in a **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)** being issued.

**Long-Term Sickness and Medical Conditions**

If a pupil is unwell and expected to be absent for a week or more, they should continue learning through the school's online platforms (Heathcote Pupil Portal and Google Classroom).

For extended absences, parents and carers should contact the **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**, who may make a referral for **Hospital Home Tuition**, provided there is supporting medical evidence.

Where a pupil is admitted to hospital, the hospital will normally provide education. Parents should inform the school so that attendance can be recorded correctly. If hospital education is not provided, the school will seek to organise appropriate work for the pupil.

For pupils with long-term medical conditions, the Attendance Team will work closely with families to support attendance and ensure suitable educational provision.

**Approval for Term-Time Absence**

Taking holidays during term time disrupts learning and impacts achievement. Parents and carers are therefore asked not to arrange holidays or family trips during school time.

Under government legislation, **term-time holidays will not be authorised** except in **exceptional circumstances**. Any request for leave must be submitted to the Headteacher using the school's **Absence Request Form**, available on the school website, and accompanied by evidence of travel and return dates.

The Headteacher may authorise leave only in accordance with the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**, which include:

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

Authorisation for leave, and its duration, is entirely at the **Headteacher's discretion**. Leave will not be authorised for protest activity during school hours.

Each request will be considered individually, taking into account previous attendance patterns and any history of unauthorised absence. Supporting evidence (e.g. medical documentation or proof of bereavement) may be required.

**Leave will not be authorised:**

- When a pupil has recently joined the school and is settling in

- Immediately before or during assessment or public examination periods (e.g. GCSEs)
- When the pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absences
- When current attendance is below 94%, or would fall below this level as a result of the absence

Any leave taken without approval, or beyond the authorised period, will be recorded as **unauthorised** and may result in a **Fixed Penalty Notice** being issued.

Requests should be submitted as soon as possible, ideally at least **four weeks in advance**.

**Other Valid Reasons for Authorised Absence**

Other authorised absences may include:

- Illness (including mental health) and medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance (where the day is exclusively set apart by the relevant religious body)
- Occupational travel for recognised groups such as Roma, Gypsy, or Traveller families
- Suspension or exclusion from school (where no alternative provision is in place)

**Approved Off-Site Educational Activities**

The following are not classified as absences and will be authorised:

- Attendance on a school-approved trip, visit, or educational activity
- Dual registration at another school
- Attendance at provision arranged by the local authority
- Approved work experience placements
- Unavoidable causes such as travel disruption or school closure

## Special Leave Requests in Term Time

We understand and encourage participation in external school activities and pursuits. This can sometimes lead to pupils requiring special leave from school to attend additional training, competitions and other events.

The school will grant a maximum of 5 days special leave throughout the academic year to support the development and aspirations of the children. Any child requesting special leave must apply by completion of an absence request form and sending to the Headteacher, accompanied by an official invite on headed paper from the organisers / providers.

Any days additional to this or absence due to sickness prior to or after the requested date will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless medical evidence is provided.

Child License – if your child is modelling / performing for film / TV / publications etc. legislation sets out that in addition to the above guidance the parents must obtain a Local Authority License

## Extended Leave of Absence

If the school has received no forewarning about an extended absence, the Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate. Such investigations are initiated to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils. If no information can be obtained regarding the expected return date of the pupil, the child's name may be removed from the school roll after 21 days. The onus will then be on the parent/carer to seek alternative school place or educational provision.

If the school has been advised in advance of the absence and date of return, the parents will be warned of the possible educational consequences of extended leave of absence.

## Registration

Legal Registration is taken between 8.40-9.10 and **12:50-13:20** Class registers are legal documents and must be treated accordingly. The class teacher will ensure that the registration period is orderly and calm and that the registers are called promptly and accurately every morning and every afternoon. Registration should be taken at the same time to ensure consistency in identifying latecomers.

Failure of staff to take registers will be considered a failure to meet teacher standards and is a key safeguarding issue and this could result in disciplinary procedures where this becomes a persistent issue.

Truancy of lessons is also monitored via the lesson registers. Staff must take the registers at the start of lesson and report any pupil who is missing from their lesson but was previously present to the PSA / IEU / Year Lead / SLT via an immediate email. Failure to not report persistent absence to lesson could be considered as failure to meet safeguarding expectations and this could result in disciplinary procedures.

The actions taken by the school regarding truancy can be found in our behaviour policy.

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

## How we Manage Lateness:

- The school gates open at **8.30 am.**
- **All pupils are expected to arrive at 8:35 and be in their form class by 8:40** at the latest.
- **School gates will close at 8:35.**
- Any time after 8.40am pupils will be marked as late (L) as they enter through the 'Late Gate' process and have their name taken by a member of staff. Students who are late will be issued with a 20 minute restoration.
- At **9.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (U code) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence** for the morning. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice, as set out in the local authority Code of Conduct, if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head of Year to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time; we are here to support you and your child if there are difficulties.

## Penalty Notices

Please note that after 3 instances of 'late to school' that are AFTER our registers close, this will result in a Fine Warning letter from the Education Welfare Officer.

Should this lateness persist, Children receiving 10 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES (which includes arriving after registers close) within 10-week period will be reported to the BACME team and this may result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued by LBWF

Any pupil who arrives late for Form time, after 8.40 must be marked late, and given a late sanction (20-minute restoration).

Persistent lateness is often significant indicator of under-achievement. Lateness to school and lateness to lessons must be acted upon, lateness to lessons will be sanctioned by the teacher and will be referred to a restoration.

Parent/carers and pupils must be made fully aware of the school's expectations concerning punctuality; parents will be kept informed regarding sanctions relating to punctuality and lateness by the relevant member of staff.

## Lateness Sanctions

| **Action by pupil** | **Sanction** | **Staff Responsibility** |
|---|---|---|
| Late to school | Lunch restoration | Lunch restoration rota |
| Late to Lesson | Lunch restoration | Lunch restoration rota |
| Late to school after registration closes (U code) | 60 minute restoration | SLT |
| 6 lates or more over a fortnight | 60 minute restoration | SLT |
| Failure to attend lateness restoration | 60 Minute Whole School<br><br>Restoration after school | SLT |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Persistent lateness | Parent contacted by EWO/PSA/YL<br><br>Fines | EWO/PSA/YL |

## Attendance Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, 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.

The school, in line with DfE 2024 guidance, has granted access to its management information system so that data can be accessed daily.

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.

### Analysing attendance

Heathcote 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

### Using data to improve attendance

Heathcote 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 Year Leads and form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Attendance reports will be shared weekly in tutor time between form tutor and tutees to discuss and recognise the importance of attendance.

- 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

## 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. This is analysed in bi-weekly attendance meetings with Education Welfare Officer, Senior Lead for Attendance and relevant Year Lead. This is for each year group.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Bi-weekly meeting with DSL, SENDCO and Senior Lead for Attendance to review pupils who are persistently absent and severely absent to put in place support
- Follow our attendance intervention strategy (stage 1 – 3). 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
- Regular communication with termly letters informing parents of their child's attendance (please note that this is done for all pupils below 95% and not just those who are below 90%)
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section above)

## Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by 9am **on each day of absence**; ring the school on **0208 498 5110.** Please leave a clear message that states your son/daughter's name plus their tutor group and reason for absence.
- Medical Evidence will be requested if the school has a genuine concern regarding the authenticity of the illness or your son/daughter's attendance drops below 95% to allow the absence to be authorised or if the child has more than 3 separate days of illness or 3 consecutive days of sickness.
- If you are unable to ring or email, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you as soon as possible.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Telephone/email you on each subsequent day of absence – if we receive no response by the third day then we may decide to complete a home visit.
- If no contact can be made with the family via phone or email or no-one answered when we completed the home visit. We may decide to complete a Child Missing in Education Form.
- If a long absence occurs 3 or more days we may invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the attendance team or your child's Year Lead. We will require medical evidence on day 4.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer- if attendance moves below 90%.

Tutors will:

- Ask pupils for reasons for absence
- Flag any concerns with Year Leads regarding punctuality and attendance.
- Ensure registers are taken for tutor time.
- Support pupils if there are issues around attending school and contact parents where appropriate
- Share attendance reports with tutees and promote good attendance and punctuality

Teachers must:

- Register pupils every lesson
- Flag with subject leader or Year Lead concerns over non- attendance to lessons
- Contact parents if there are persistent issues with attendance
- Start every lesson on time
- Log lateness to lesson and set restoration
- Log truancy to lesson and set restoration

Head of Year will:

- Monitor pupils with attendance below 90%- refer concerns to EWO and AHT in charge of attendance
- Reward pupils for good attendance and punctuality. Promote the 100 Club and Resilient Club
- Ensure weekly attendance reports are utilized by Year Lead and Tutors and shared with tutees so that each pupil is aware of their attendance figure
- Create incentives and rewards to incentivize good attendance
- Support pupils how are having issues with attendance.
- Meet parents when attendance drops below 90%
- Put strategies in place for those with 90% attendance and below or poor punctuality

SLT will:

- Support the monitoring of attendance.
- Ensure all rewards are given
- Support with parent meetings
- Ensure all codes are accounted for and are accurate.

Attendance SLT lead will:

- Refer concerns to EWO

- Meet fortnightly with EWO
- Support with parent meetings
- Monitor whole school attendance
- Make decisions around actions to be taken- penalty fines/ court action.

Attendance officer will:

- Contact home on the first day of absence (email/call)
- Where pupils have a social worker to ensure that they are informed for each day of absence
- If no response contact again on the second day of absence
- On third day of absence – refer for a further call and possibly a home visit.
- Authorise absence for up to three 1 day instances of illness and 3 days only for any instance, medical notes needed from parents for more than 3 days.
- Log reasons for absence
- Monitor lesson attendance
- Refer concerns to EWO
- Accept absence requests and provide them to the Headteacher / Senior Lead in Charge of Attendance to review
- Monitor AP attendance
- Issue restorations for late to school

EWO will:

- Raise concerns to SLT i/c of attendance.
- Produce an attendance report for each year group.
- Support pupils with attendance issues via meetings and discuss various ways to support via school based interventions/external.
- Create penalty notices
- Complete CME/EHE/HHTS/School nurse referral/MASH referral/SAP and migration paperwork
- Conduct home visits where appropriate
- Organise school based meetings for SLT / YL/PSA
- Meet with parents/carers and pupils
- Organise TAF and professional's meetings

## Child Missing Education (CMFE)

- Children who have failed to take up a school place or who have been unexpectedly absent from school for 5 or more consecutive school days are potential Children Missing from Education. In order to safeguard these children and ensure that they are able to access education, schools and other educational establishments must investigate the whereabouts of these children.
- Investigations should include attempts to make telephone contact with all family members, home visits and liaison with partner agencies such as the School Admissions Service, Safer Schools Police Officers, the Revenue and Benefits Service and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- If contact is established with the family and they are still residing in Waltham Forest, then the parents must be notified of their legal obligations. This is initially done through a parental responsibility letter which can then be followed up with a Notice of Parental Responsibility form (NPR form) authorised by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. This states that parents are to ensure that their child is in receipt of full time education and the matter should be pursued as an attendance concern.

- If the family have left the Waltham Forest area, details of their whereabouts must be obtained and the residing local authority (BACME Team) notified so that they can support the family to access education.
- If contact cannot be established with the family and their whereabouts are unknown, a CMfE referral form should be completed and forwarded to the BACME team. It is important that the BACME Service is notified if a child is unexpectedly absent from school for 5 days or more and the school have been unable to contact the family.
- Between day 3 and 5 we will complete a home visit and again between day 10-13. The information gathered at the time of these visits will accompany the CME referral form.
- After the home visit on day 3-5 if no contact with the family is possible we will send a letter advising of the return date to school. This date will be 20 days after the first day of absence. If the child does not return to school after 20 days and with permission from the CME team your child's name may be removed from School roll. Once a child is removed from roll the CTF will be uploaded to the school to school system.
- Please note that where a school has reason to believe that a child may be absent from school due to an unauthorised holiday, contact is not required and an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice should be submitted to the BACME Service.
- Children who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are vulnerable and at potential risk of abuse or neglect. School and college staff members should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children who are absent/ go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- Children with an EHCP or known to social care who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are extremely vulnerable. Where this happens relevant professionals will be informed (social workers, SEND department) and appropriate actions will be taken if we are unable to locate this young person.
- We will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in ***Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities*** (DfE September 2016).
- Where child sexual exploitation or the risk of harm is suspected, frontline practitioners should record a Cause for Concern on the Safeguard system which immediately notifies the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL). This must be followed up by the **reporting** member of staff to ensure that the cause for concern is actioned by the DSL.
- If the DSL believes that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm or have any other child protection concerns do not delay and contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team to discuss your concerns, and follow up in writing on the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF). This is to be emailed, alternatively a phone call immediately to the MASH team to obtain further guidance can be made;

## Migration

- When a pupil moves out of borough our EWO will complete a migration form to the new residing borough.
- Once the new borough accepts educational responsibility for a pupil they will then be removed from roll in line with our admissions procedure.

## Attendance of Looked After Children

The school has a designated teacher responsible for overseeing the education of children in public care. This role will include the monitoring of attendance rates which are reported to the Behaviour Attendance Children Missing in Education (BACME). Any concerns should be notified as soon as possible to the carer, social worker and School Attendance Officer for vulnerable children.

## School Term Time

Our term times are set in accordance and with consultation with the Local Authority recommendations.

The confirmation of our school term dates are available from our websites or the main school office. Please do not refer to any other sources as these are not confirmed by us.

## Change of Address

If a family are moving to a new address, parents/carers must provide the school with their new address and contact numbers. If the family are moving overseas, parents/carers must provide travel documents and a forwarding address. Failure to do this will result in a referral to the 'Children Missing Education' officer at the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

## Telephone Numbers / Email

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers. You must provide the school with TWO up to date numbers/email addresses if you don't then something important may be missed. There will be checks made on telephone numbers/email addresses and contact details throughout the academic year.

## Transferring to Another School

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school. The parents/carers must provide the name of the new school.

If a family are moving to a new address, which requires the child to attend a new school but the child is not yet registered then parents/carers must provide school with their new address.

Pupils must continue to Heathcote until they have a start date at the new school.

Occasionally children may move away from the school without notifying us. We make every reasonable effort to locate the child and their family. Removal from roll may be backdated if we subsequently receive proof of dates of attendance at the new school. If we are unable to make communication with the family, the child is kept on roll until we receive confirmation from the new school and then the BACME Service and Children Missing Education Service are notified.

## Families Moving Abroad

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are moving abroad and the parents/carers must provide the new home address and new school address. The parents/carers must provide flight details. Failure to provide this information to the school will result in a referral to the child/children to Child Missing from Education (CMFE) and will also communicate with `Home Office' and other child safeguarding agencies.

## 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 restoration | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>· In police restoration<br>· Remanded to youth restoration, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>· Detained under a sentence of restoration |
| **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 |