STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Number:	**10**
Member of Staff Responsible for the Policy:	**Katy Townsend**
Date on which this Policy was last reviewed:	**July 2024**
Date by which this Policy is to be reviewed:	**February 2026**
Dissemination of the Policy:	**All Staff, Parents (via website), Governors**

GDPR Compliance: Please refer to the (IGF) Data Protection Policy

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Purpose and Aims

It is clear that none of the school's aims can be achieved unless pupils are in attendance. With that in mind it is important that achieving excellent attendance is given a high priority by all staff in whatever capacity they are working, i.e. form tutors, subject teachers, subject leaders, year leaders and members of the SLT. It is a particularly important priority for all staff working in a pastoral capacity. In this respect all staff should be much encouraged by the fact that the school maintains a consistently high level of attendance and low levels of truancy and that this is demonstrably true when comparing attendance/truancy levels within the school with those of other schools in York. We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance;
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all;
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students;
- Rewarding regular attendance;
- Following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 2011 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".

1.0 Introduction

1.1   Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve well and Huntington School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.2   As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.3   We also recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, antibullying and behaviour.

2.0 Categorising Absence

2.1   Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

2.2   Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

2.3   We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or if a student's attendance has fallen below 90%. In such circumstances the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other form of evidence.

2.4   Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on 01904 752165, email to absence@huntington-ed.org.uk or Classcharts notification on the first day of unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible and provide the school with an expected date of return. We ask for parents to regularly update the school as we cannot assume a reason for absence. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

2.5   Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school attendance team in advance of the appointment. Please provide medical evidence of the appointment if a student's attendance has fallen below 90%. However, we encourage medical and dental appointments to be made out of school hours where at all possible. Where this is not possible, a student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

2.6   We recognise the opportunities that extra-curricular activities can offer our students, such as arts, sports and cadets. We are happy to authorise these with an official supporting letter from the relevant organisation, providing that the student currently has an attendance at school of over 90%.

2.7   Where unexplained absence persists or absence is prolonged the school will follow up on this. The school may:
- Call the student's parent/carer and emergency contacts.
- Make a home visit.
- Contact a relevant social worker.
- Contact the police.

2.8 Absence will be categorised using the guidance from the DfE School Attendance (last update February 2024)

[Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Please see appendix 1 for attendance codes.

3.0   Leave of Absence

3.1 Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must send a written request to the Headteacher before arrangements are made and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. A leave of absence request form is available via the school website. Each request will be considered individually and all requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has not been granted the letter should state the reasons why. Where a request has been granted the letter will state:
- The expected date of return;
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur.

3.2 The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time that the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

3.3 We define 'exceptional circumstances' as *one off events which are unavoidable; examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.*

4.0 Religious Observance

4.1 Huntington School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

4.2 It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

4.3 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

4.4 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than three days in total in any academic year be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

5.0 Late Arrival

5.1 Registration begins at 0830 and pupils arriving after 0835 will be marked as present but arriving late.

5.2 Pupils arriving after 0835 will be required to enter the school via the student reception and sign in here. A reason for this lateness must be recorded and if there is no valid reason given then this lateness will be considered when pastoral teams issue late reports. If a pupil arrives after 9.05am in the morning or 1.40pm in the afternoon, then this will count as absent for that school session.

5.3 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

5.4 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday;
- Shopping for uniforms;
- Having their hair cut;
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes;
- "Couldn't get up";
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.

5.5 All students must go directly to lessons. Any student arriving to lesson more than five minutes after the bell will be recorded as late. Persistent lateness to lessons will be monitored and sanctioned.

6.0 Reporting to parents/carers

6.1 Parents/carers can access their child's attendance via the ClassCharts app. To access this, scroll to the right of the green bar at the top of the app and click on 'report an absence'.

6.2 The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via each report.

6.3 Where the school is concerned about a student's level of attendance then further communication will take place from the student's pastoral team and/or the attendance team.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Huntington School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents throughout the year e.g. in assemblies, at parents' evenings.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance. Regularly review the school's attendance procedures through the pastoral SEFs and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement any interventions.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree a school wide attendance target (currently 95%) and where appropriate link these to the Performance Development of members of staff.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance (currently Katy Townsend).
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

7.2   The Headteacher will:

- Challenge and support all staff in the implementation of this policy in order to maximise attendance and reduce avoidable absence.
- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school.
- Issue fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3   The designated senior leader responsible for attendance will:

- Provide strategic leadership on attendance across the school.
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Promote excellent attendance across the school via assemblies, parental communications and social media, use of rewards and parents' evenings.
- Evaluate expectations and systems for the monitoring of attendance.
- Have an oversight of data analysis and report this to the Headteacher and governing body.
- Monitor the school's attendance at year team meetings and Senior Leadership Team/Year Leader meetings. Report this and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed weekly to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that students whose attendance drop below 90% are monitored more closely by form tutors and actions taken to improve their attendance.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance.
- Ensure the targeted intervention and support to pupils and families is effective is minimising avoidable absences.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the attendance procedures and adequately trained to address attendance issues.

7.4   The Year Teams will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that attendance figures of all students and vulnerable groups within their year group are analysed regularly and actions taken as required.

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that the Student Support Leaders and Year Leaders monitor attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource each week for supportive conversations with families.
- Discuss the year group's attendance and related issues with the attendance team on a fortnightly basis.
- Ensure that students whose attendance drop below 90% are monitored more closely by form tutors and actions taken to improve their attendance.
- Work with the attendance team to interpret the data, devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families if and when appropriate.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

7.5   The attendance support worker will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance data.
- Identify areas of focus for improvement and families who need support.
- Attend regular attendance meetings with the year group teams to identify students whose attendance is of concern.
- Work alongside the year group teams in supporting students and families to improve their attendance.
- Ensure attendance procedures are followed to remove barriers, support students and families and ensure all mechanisms available to school are utilised to maximise attendance.
- Work with external agencies to support students and families to minimise avoidable absence.

7.6   The attendance officers will:

- Ensure that all registers are completed accurately.
- Monitor and quality assure the completion of registers to ensure all pupils are safe and accounted for.
- Contact parents/carers of students who are unaccounted for by 10am on the first day of unplanned absence via first day text or call.
- Collate medical evidence in cases where this has been requested from parents/carers.
- Communicate to relevant year teams any necessary information regarding absence.

- Ensure that Leave of absence requests are processed and where necessary gather the documentation required to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Complete the rewarding of students for 100% attendance in the previous week.

7.7   Teaching staff will:

- Complete registers each lesson accurately and promptly
- Report any students missing from the lesson to ensure that safeguarding procedures can be followed and ensure that all students are safe.
- Promote a safe and secure environment in which to learn that encourages students to attend regularly.
- Alert the pastoral and attendance teams to any problems with attendance.

7.8   Form tutors will:

- Ensure that registers are completed accurately and promptly.
- Ensure that students are aware of procedures for absence and lateness.
- Hold conversations with their tutees that encourage good attendance, challenge all absence and establish solutions if possible to avoid absence in the future.
- Inform the Attendance Officer and Year Team of any communication in the planner regarding attendance from parents/carers.
- Promote a safe and secure environment in which to learn that encourages students to attend regularly.

7.9   Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and forward to the Attendance Officer or relevant year team.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed when students are leaving site outside of the normal school day – eg. ensuring they have been entered onto the 'leaving site' spreadsheet or have verified with the reduced timetables schedule.

7.10   Request that parents/carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.

- Contact the school by 8.30am if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Minimise avoidable absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking leave of absence during term-time; where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Headteacher in advance the absence.

7.11   Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Follow correct procedures for known absences.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- Inform a trusted adult if they are struggling with their attendance.

8.0   Using Attendance Data

8.1   Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

8.2   Every week the attendance team will provide attendance figures to the SLT and pastoral teams.

8.3   Each term the designated senior leader for attendance will produce an overall summary of attendance for that term.

8.4   Although the Student Support Leaders and the attendance team continually check students whose attendance is a concern (near 90%), a list of students whose attendance is 90% or lower is generated each fortnight. These students are deemed Persistent Absentees. Students will fall into one of a number of categories and their attendance will continue to be monitored closely until the attendance and pastoral team are satisfied that they are and will continue to attend well.

8.5   Where a student has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period the attendance and pastoral team will consider using the Fast Track process to work with   students and families to improve attendance.

8.6   Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

8.7   Huntington School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

8.8   All information shared will be done so in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

9.0   Support Systems

9.1   School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

9.2   Huntington School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with SEND, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

9.3   The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils.
- Home visits.

- Attendance panels.
- Parenting contracts.
- Attendance report cards.
- Referrals to support agencies.
- Learning mentors.
- Friendship groups.
- Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, Economic Education.
- Postcards home.
- Time limited part time timetables in exceptional cases.
- Additional learning support where applicable.
- Reintegration support packages.

9.4   Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

9.5   Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Huntington School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

10.0 Legal Sanctions

10.1   Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

10.2   Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

10.3   A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

10.4   Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Agreements, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

10.5   A Parenting Agreement is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

10.6   The agreement will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The agreement will be reviewed regularly.

10.7   The agreement can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

10.8   Parenting Agreements will be used in accordance with York Local Authority's Fast Track Cycle (see Appendix 2 for guidance).

10.9   Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time that exceeds nine school sessions (i.e. 4.5 days) within 10 school weeks and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions (i.e. five days) of unauthorised absence within 10 school weeks and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

10.10   A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £80 fine is paid within 28 days or £160 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued. A second Penalty Notice within a 3 year period will lead straight to a fine of the higher amount.

10.11   Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

10.12   Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with York Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocol.

11.   Sixth Form Attendance Policy

11.1   Introduction

Huntington School Sixth Form is an educational institution for full time students. Our staff provide outstanding care for all students, but there will be times when a

student's physical, emotional or mental health are so affected that they are no longer able, despite support to maintain reasonable academic progress. We are not a distance-learning Sixth Form and, while it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible on a temporary basis, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustainable. There are therefore occasions where it will be our judgement that, in the best interests of a student, continuing with a full programme of study or in their current year group is no longer the best option.

11.2 Studying in the Sixth Form

We will always seek to provide appropriate support to any student with ill health, whether the condition was pre-existing or commences during Sixth Form study. If the nature of the medical condition requires support or adjustment to the programme of study this will be done in negotiation with parents/carers and the student appropriate to each individual circumstance. The support or adjustment plan may also involve referral to or a request for documentary evidence from outside agencies, such as the student's GP. This is particularly true where the health condition causes significant concerns with regards to examinations.

11.3 Minimum expectations

Each case will be considered on its merits, but a minimum level of attendance needs to be maintained that will allow a student to realistically achieve. It is reasonable for teaching staff, on a short-term, temporary basis, to liaise with students via email but this cannot continue long-term. Academic success depends on engagement in classroom activity, so excessively long periods of complete absence or very poor attendance will make a student's studies untenable. With regards to coursework and homework, if students fall significantly behind with their deadlines, despite extensions being offered, then there comes a point at which catching up is not viable. The Sixth Form pastoral team will continue to monitor attendance levels and progress with work and coursework, with the addition of an attendance report that can inform prompt action and support. This attendance report will give students the chance, where possible, to rectify their academic position.

Any student who doesn't have an attendance figure of 90% may be withdrawn from their current course. The central reason for this is that a student who misses more than 10% of their lessons will not be able to perform to a satisfactory standard in an examination. Students will be given every opportunity to address any short fall in attendance levels.

11.4 Actions to address poor attendance

The following attendance trigger points will be adhered to:

- **Below 93% attendance** – the student will meet with their form tutor to explore reasons for their low attendance rate and discuss solutions.
- **Below 90% attendance** (persistent absenteeism) – the student will be interviewed by the Attendance Manager and a formal letter will be sent home.
- **No improvement made** – parents called in to discuss solutions with the Attendance Manager and Head of Year.
- **Attendance continues to be below 90%** - parents called in to discuss solutions with Head of Year and Director of Sixth Form.
- **No improvement made** - withdrawal decisions made in consultation with the Headteacher.

When a student is withdrawn from examination entry it may be appropriate to offer a possible Sixth Form restart of either Year 12 or Year 13. Students can only restart once. A student must restart their studies in the following academic year and before they turn 19. Where the opportunity of a restart has been made, the onus is on the student and their parents or carers to ensure that they are recovered enough for the restart or extra year to work.

11.5   Exceptional Circumstances

On rare occasions exemptions will be made to the 90% attendance criteria for exceptional individual circumstances. Careful consideration will be made in consultation with parents or carers. Any decision regarding an exemption will draw on evidence from assessments to determine whether a student can still succeed in their examinations.

There are occasions, however, when physical or mental health issues are so complex or so significant that this is not possible. Clearly each student needs to be considered on a case by case basis and the Sixth Form team needs to be kept fully informed of all pertinent medical evidence and the wishes of the student and the parents or carers. Ideally, a clear consensus would always emerge about the best way forward, but this will not always be the case. There will be occasions where the Sixth Form team believes that the student is unable to maintain their fitness to study and trying to catch up after a lengthy absence will be too stressful and likely to negatively impact on their health. The best interests of the individual student and their welfare are always at the centre of any withdrawal decision.

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.
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending another educational setting but this is not organised by the school.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement.

Authorised absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
C C1 C2	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness.

J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview	Attending an interview for employment or to attend another education setting
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance.
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations.
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school.

Unauthorised absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised leave of absence	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time).
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence.
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed.

Other codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access	The local authority has a duty to but has failed to secure access arrangements
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend.

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school.
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.