

THE HESSLE ACADEMY
Access to Education Policy and Procedures



**THE
HESSLE
ACADEMY**

Effective Date:
November 2015

Date of minuted approval by the Local Governing Board:
23 January 2019

Review Committee:
Local Governing Board

Review Date:
Under Review

Owner:
Assistant Headteacher – Student Welfare (Secondary phase)

Rationale

The Education Act 1996 states as a legal requirement, once a parent has chosen a school as their child's educational provider, it is a parent's duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. The Hessle Academy views a good pattern of attendance and punctuality at school as being a life skill and having a direct impact on the outcomes and attainment of children and young people.

Attendance and punctuality are a high priority and this policy outlines the procedures which the Academy uses to address attendance and punctuality and also the statutory obligations of both the Academy and the Local Authority in ensuring learners achieve outstanding attendance and an exemplary record of punctuality.

We will take every opportunity to raise the profile and impact of outstanding attendance and punctuality with parents and learners. In addition, we will offer support such as Youth & Family Support Services, Educational Psychologist, Pastoral Support and Attendance Support to families and learners to improve areas of difficulty.

We will always comment on attendance and punctuality in any learner reference that is written by the Academy. Key staff will meet on a half termly basis to monitor and review attendance procedures.

Background

For a number of years schools have published figures for overall absence and unauthorised absence. Local Authorities were instructed in summer 2008 that from this point overall absence and persistent absence would be published (AAT).

The persistent absence indicator was developed because learner level data revealed that absence is highly concentrated among relatively few learners who account for a large proportion of all absence nationally. Following changes recently announced by The Department for Education 'Persistent absentee' learners miss the equivalent of 10% or more of school over a typical school year. The legal requirement is 90% attendance.

The percentage absence (% PA) is the number of learner enrolments with 10% or more absence expressed as a percentage of the total number of learner enrolments.

Aim

We strive to achieve the highest possible attendance by our learners; our target attendance for every child is a minimum of 96%. Good attendance is an essential prerequisite to achieving high standards and we will take every opportunity to reinforce the importance of attendance with learners and parents. We provide appropriate early intervention and support plans for learners with a record of poor attendance and monitor groups of learners so that individuals are given the best opportunities to learn and achieve success.

Through School Attendance Summary of Overall Absence and Persistent Absence

	Overall Absence	Persistent Absence
2016/2017	4.8%	9.9%
2017/2018	4.9%	11.9%
2018/2019	5.3%	15.1%
2019/2020	7.2%	24.8%
2020/2021 (target)	4%	15%

Attendance Thresholds are set by the Local Authority and ratified by the Local Governing Board. Intervention threshold set by The Hessle Academy is 92%.

Promoting Good Attendance

Primary Phase weekly attendance figures are calculated and a certificate awarded to the winning class. This is then celebrated publicly in the weekly celebration assembly. All students achieving 100% weekly attendance are given a sticker. Pupils achieving termly and yearly 100% attendance receive a certificate.

Secondary Phase students achieving 100% attendance and also good punctuality are celebrated within the school community. House group attendance is published on a weekly basis. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in a number of 'Celebration of Success' events throughout the year i.e. termly/yearly 100% attendance and punctuality certificates, recognition of any previous poor attendee who improves their attendance.

Senior staff, House Leaders and tutors will be emailed the weekly attendance figures to enable them to keep track and reward learners in passing and tutor time.

Across the Academy attendance is shared on Academic Reports sent home to parents to explicitly make the link between academic progress and attendance.

Recording Attendance

Learner attendance and punctuality is recorded electronically using SIMS and Lesson Monitor.

Primary Phase learners are recorded daily in the morning sessions and the afternoon session

Secondary Phase learners are registered in each lesson of the day. This enables the Attendance Team and Year Leaders to track internal truancy. Period 1 and Period 4 marks become the statutory recorded attendance marks.

Absence codes used in line with DFE Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities 2008 can be found at Appendix 1. Registers will close 20 minutes after the main session began and the register was taken. As a result, learners registering after 9.10am and 1.20pm at primary phase and 9am and 1.20pm at Secondary Phase will be marked as a U and given an unauthorised absence mark.

Absence Guide

Education is very important and children should be in school, on time ready to learn every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The Academy requires all parents to notify us of absence as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Day 1 of absence | inform the Academy before 8:30am of the reason and expected date of return of your child. Any medical advice given or visits made |
| Day 3 of absence | update the school on your child's progress, any medical advice given and confirmation of when your child will return to school especially if the condition worsens |
| Day 5 onwards | update school on your child's progress regularly. Medical evidence will be required to authorise five days of absence or more in line with East Riding of Yorkshire Council Education Welfare Service guidance. If no medical evidence is provided to support a period of absence of five days or more the Attendance Manager will notify the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a penalty notice |

Please note that only the Academy can decide whether or not to authorise an absence and will only authorise:

- Illness / Sickness (if current attendance is 96% or more)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments when supported by medical evidence
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted by the Headteacher
- Arranged transport has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond the statutory walking distance

The Academy will not authorise when:

Parents/carers keep children off school unnecessarily i.e. birthdays, shopping, visiting family
Absence for illness and child's attendance is below 96% unless medical evidence is provided

Medical appointments

Always look to make medical/dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible and do not keep your child out for a whole day for an appointment unless there is no alternative (e.g. hospital appointment some distance away). You will be required to provide an appointment card or letter from the practice in order for the absence to be authorised.

If your child feels "under the weather" in the morning please provide us with any appropriate relief/medication and send them to school whenever possible. Let the school know what this issue is and we can support them with administering some medication if needed. We would expect your child to attend if they have a minor illness that can be managed in school. There is a useful DfE page that advises on illness and Public Health guidance on when a child should be kept at home from school.

Monitoring Attendance Daily Monitoring

- Parents are frequently reminded of the need to inform the school if their child is legitimately absent on the morning of each day of absence. This is done via the school website, newsletter, Learner Diary and the Annual Summer Holiday letter.

- Attendance is checked at least twice daily by the Attendance Team. The Attendance Officer will contact the parent on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be made, then a letter will be issued that day and the Attendance Officer will contact the child's emergency contacts and/or other professionals who may be able to advise us of the child's whereabouts. If no response to the letter is received within three days of posting the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Whenever a learner absence is recorded as unauthorised parents will be sent a letter explaining that this has been done and providing an opportunity to discuss the absence further (Appendix 2). When a learner has 10 unauthorised absences in a 13-week period the Attendance Manager will notify the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a penalty notice. Weekly attendance totals will be issued to House Leaders and Senior Leaders for review.
- The Local Governing Board will receive phase relevant termly updates on attendance and punctuality.

Longer term Monitoring

- The Attendance Manager will work closely with the Head of School (primary phase) and Assistant Headteacher - Student Welfare (secondary phase) to identify learners causing concern. The team will work together to monitor learners with 90% or less in either phase on a fortnightly basis to attempt to resolve any issues and put together attendance support plans for learners/families when required.
- Learners with 90% attendance or less and not already on an attendance support plan, parents will be sent a letter and attendance certificate from the Trust indicating a cause for concern. (Appendix 3)
- Learners affected will be closely monitored and if significant improvements are not made, parents will be given the opportunity to attend a school-based attendance support plan meeting (with the student in the Secondary Phase). The support plan meeting will be run by the Attendance Manager and a senior member of staff. During this meeting the reasons for absence will be analysed and support offered by the school to help improve attendance/punctuality. Medical evidence may be requested at any stage to support a learner's absence if attendance is below 96%. This requirement is removed once a learner is sustaining attendance levels above 96%.
- If the learner's absence does not significantly improve over the next four weeks a Pre-Legal Meeting will be held with the Assistant Head – Student Welfare, the Attendance Manager and a member of The Hessle Academy Local Governing Board who will endeavour to attend.
- The monitoring of the 90% or lower learners will continue at fortnightly intervals and follow the above procedure.
- If a learner continues to achieve attendance of 90% or less despite the above procedure being followed, then the Attendance Manager will refer the learner to the Education Welfare Service who would then compile the case for the Local Authority legal team. This is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.

*The staff involved in attendance across the Academy will be expected to contribute to the LA legal case and will therefore undergo regular training to remain up to date with expectations.

Headteacher Authorisation of Absence

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is **not an entitlement**. The Headteacher will only authorise absence in line with the East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Absence from School for

Exceptional Circumstances' Policy. Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education. **Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted with your request for absence. The request must be submitted at least 21 days in advance of the proposed absence.**

There is no longer a provision in law for Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday. Students are in school 190 days out of 365, this leaves 175 days for holidays.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence you may be liable for a penalty notice (one day's absence equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.).

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration **or unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances**. In these cases the warning is given on the absence request form and detailed within this information leaflet and no written warning will be given. Where parents do not follow school procedures of submitting a request and simply remove their child without seeking prior approval, a warning may not be given. Parents must complete a request for exceptional leave form and submit this to the school, at least 21 days in advance of the proposed absence, thus allowing for sufficient time to enable the school to consider the request and inform the parent of the decision.

Fines are issued for unauthorised absence of five or more days and each school day is divided into two registration periods. **For example, if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions.**

If your request is declined and you still take your child out of school each parent within your household will be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child you have taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 21 days it will increase to £120. If after 28 days it remains unpaid you may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's attendance, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this. We aim to work collaboratively with children and parents, by working together we can equip students for academic success.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.

Please note the school day is divided into two registration periods; for example, if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five-day absence equals 10 sessions.

Court Action

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority. Where penalty notices are not paid within the published time frame then the Local Authority may be required to initiate legal proceedings in line with their statutory obligations. Any queries regarding penalty notices should be referred to the Local Authority:

Telephone: 01482 887700

Website: www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance/attendance-in-school/

Internal Truancy within Secondary Phase

All learners are registered electronically in each lesson by lesson monitor. The Attendance Officer will check the registers three times daily and, if staff do not mark registers they are immediately prompted to do so, the accuracy of the register marks is checked by the Attendance Officer. In cases of suspected internal truancy, the Attendance Manager will perform initial investigations and then refer the issue to the House Leader.

Maintaining high standards of punctuality

Staff are given regular reminders regarding the importance of accurate marking of registers which are statutory documents, in terms of absence as well as arriving late. Parents will be contacted on the same day as each late arrival.

At Primary Phase the responsibility for ensuring pupils arrive at school lies with the parent(s). The Academy endeavours to ensure parents are aware that children need to arrive promptly for school session times and if punctuality becomes an issue, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Deputy Head – Head of School to discuss the challenges they are facing.

At Secondary phase, any learners that are not in the school building by 8.30am will receive a sanction for late arrival; we will endeavour to administer this sanction on the day of poor punctuality. The parent/carer of any student who is late 4 or more times in a half term will receive a call from the Attendance Manager.

A half termly review of learners who are frequently late across the Academy may result in further action from the Assistant Head – Head of School, House Leader or Attendance Manager, this may include a punctuality panel with the involvement of local business leaders, Senior Staff and members of The Hessle Academy Local Governing Board.

The Attendance Officer will monitor punctuality to all lessons at Hessle High School & Sixth Form College and report concerns/patterns to the relevant House Leader and the Attendance Manager who will initiate appropriate action.

Children Missing Education

Tracking learners who are missing education is a statutory duty shared between all schools and the Local Authority and all schools follow the locally agreed policy on this matter. Any learners who have not attended school, without a parental reason being provided for their absence, for ten school days or more will be referred to the Local Authority.

If you are moving your child to another school, they should continue to attend until they actually start at the new school or we will follow this up as a non-attendance issue. If you think you have moved/are moving too far away for this to be possible, please speak to us and we will advise you. We will need full details of your new address.

Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education is the term used by the Department of Education to describe parents' decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is

different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

Parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 as follows:

'It is the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age "to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".'

Further information for parents considering educating their child at home is available from:

<http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/schools-and-school-places/elective-home-education/>

Supporting Guidance

Definition of terms

PACE caution	The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PA	Persistent absence (legal requirement is learners with 90% attendance or less)
OA	Overall absence
DFE	Department for Education
LA	Local Authority
HHS	Hessle High School
PPS	Penshurst Primary School
U	Unauthorised absence (late after registers have closed)

Appendix 1

List of attendance codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Dear Parent

I regret to inform you that *learner name* has a recorded unauthorised absence on *date*.

As you are aware the school closely monitors absences from the school as a poor attendance record not only has a negative impact on educational attainment but it also a breach of the Education Act (2003).

It is, therefore, important that *name* does not receive further unauthorised absences.

Please do not hesitate to us should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Appendix 3

Dear Parent

'Students who have a school attendance of over 95% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A to C including English and Maths'.*

As you may be aware the Department for Education (DfE) reduced the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold to 10% from September 2015. The DfE defines persistent absentees as school-age students missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year.

I am writing to inform you that *name* has been identified as a persistently absent student and his/her attendance in the first four weeks of the academic year xxxx/xxxx is currently xx%.

Name's attendance will be closely monitored and we are hopeful that significant improvement will be made. However, if there is insufficient improvement you may be required to attend a meeting to ensure we are all able to work together to support *Name* in improving his/her attendance.

I enclose a copy of *name's* attendance record. If there are any concerns arising from this letter or you require further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Appendix 4

For guidance on the legal measures available to secure regular school attendance by the DFE please visit:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-00529-200>

Leave of Absence Request

STUDENT SURNAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
STUDENT FORENAME		TUTOR GROUP	
ADDRESS			
TELEPHONE NUMBERS			
Sibling Details of Compulsory School Age (or other children living in the household)			
SURNAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
FORENAME		SCHOOL	
SURNAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
FORENAME		SCHOOL	
I request permission for my child to be absent from school:			
First Day of Absence		Date of Return to School	
			Total School Days
Please detail below the reason for you request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher <u>will not</u> be able to consider your request without your supporting documents. <i>Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents which is attached.</i>			
DECLARATION			
<i>I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we will receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. Please note the school day is divided into two registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.</i>			
SIGNED (Parent/Carer)		DATE	