

# Attendance Policy



**William Hulme's Grammar School**  
The best in everyone™  
Part of United Learning

## Introduction

At William Hulme's Grammar School, we believe that regular school attendance and punctuality is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, committed and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their broader school community. We expect every student to achieve a minimum of 96% attendance during an academic year and to be on time for school and lessons every day.

## Principles

A high level of regular attendance is important because:

- Every child has a right to an education
- There is a direct link between poor attendance and under achievement
- Good attendance helps to ensure children are appropriately safeguarded
- Good attendance encourages social as well as academic progress
- Routines become easier to follow and children become more engaged as active learner

## Policy Aims

- To prevent school absence in the first place, by spotting patterns and trends before they become persistent.
- To demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves the overall attendance of pupils and reduces the number of persistently absent pupils
- To promote the framework of a Whole School Attendance culture, identifying roles and responsibilities of the school community
- To highlight a clear structure for promoting good attendance and tackling absence
- To promote effective, non-bureaucratic systems for monitoring attendance
- To encourage the use of attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance
- To monitor and evaluate all interventions for level of impact on attendance
- To promote high expectations of the general importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- To enable early intervention when an individual pupil's absence gives cause for concern
- To put support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- To reward and celebrate good and improved attendance using affective resources (displays, assemblies, rewards)
- To promote effective partnerships with external support agencies and the Local Authority to provide targeted support to families (including legal)

## Legal Framework

Regular and punctual school attendance is subject to education laws and this policy is written within that context.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and respond to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at a school, academy or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools and academies to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Parents found guilty of an offence under the above act can receive a maximum penalty of a £2500 fine and/or up to 3 months imprisonment.

If a registered pupil is identified as either persistently absent or as having accumulated more than 5 unauthorised sessions of absence in an academic year, then William Hulme's Grammar School will instigate monitoring and intervention procedures that may lead to a referral to the Local Authority for the consideration of statutory action.

Parents will receive written notification prior to any legal action being taken and will be expected to engage with support measures.

Other legal measures are available and will be considered by the school and/or the Local authority as and when necessary. These include:

### **Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the school and the parent/carer. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to the family and is intended to offer support to families and resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

### **Education Supervision Orders**

The Local Authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents. A Local Authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education, either at a school, or at home for a specified period of time.

### **School Attendance Orders**

If it appears to the Local Authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

### **Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil's attendance has fallen below 96% and they are absent from the school for a period of leave of absence and the absence has not been previously authorised by the Principal.
- A pupil's attendance has fallen below 96% and they have accumulated at least five sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Arrival after the close of register at 9:00am, will count as an unauthorised absence for the morning session in line with DfE guidelines.

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at a school or academy or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol (this was updated in May 2017). The cost of such a Penalty Notice is £120.00 per parent per child or £60.00 if paid in the first 30 days.

Additionally, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2013, pupils may be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the Local Authority and the school have tried to locate the pupil or
- The pupil has failed to attend within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of a period for which leave of absence was granted

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown. (New guidelines issued April 2016)

## Categorising Absence

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

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence **before** 8.30am and indicating an expected date of return. Parents must notify school on each subsequent day of absence **before** 8.30am. This must also be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent on the first day of the child's return.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of reasons for absence. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and in turn, may lead to legal action being taken against the parent/s.

## Illness

Absence due to illness may be authorised by the school if parents follow the correct procedure for reporting absence as detailed. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note, appointment card or prescription when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. The request for this medical evidence will be made either by letter or phone call. Failure to provide medical evidence when requested will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and in turn, may lead to legal action being taken against the parent/s.

## Support for pupils with SEND

Have sensitive conversations and develop good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. The school is committed to working with parents to develop specific support for those with SEND. We establish strategies to remove in school barriers for these pupils. In conjunction with the SEND team, all pastoral support is appropriately in place to improve attendance

## Medical conditions

Pupils with medical conditions will be supported so that they have full access to education and are expected to maximise their attendance at every opportunity.

Individual Healthcare plans will be utilised in consultation with parents and appropriate professionals to effectively support pupils with medical conditions.

## Medical/Dental Appointments

Absence for medical and dental appointments may be authorised by the school on occasion but parents are advised to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day or during holiday periods. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Pupils should collect a medical evidence form from reception before leaving for their appointment, this form should be filled in and stamped by the receptionist at their GP/dentist/opticians. Failure to do so may result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and in turn, may lead to legal action being taken against the parent/s.

## Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or a part time timetable agreed as a short-term reintegration package. In order for such absence to be authorised the parent must liaise with and have full prior approval from the school.

## Leave of Absence

Leave of absence is not a parental right and every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time.

William Hulme's Grammar School acknowledges that all absences result in lost learning which directly affects a child's education. As such, **applications for leave of absence may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.**

Where exceptional circumstances exist, an application for leave of absence should be made to the Head teacher in writing before any arrangements are made. This must be received by the school with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. You will be informed of the head teachers' decision in writing. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Leave of absence without a request being made will also be recorded as unauthorised.

In cases of unauthorised leave of absence, the school may request that a Penalty Notice be issued to each responsible parent for each child.

## Religious Observance

William Hulme's Grammar 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. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for this reason.

No more than one day will be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days, in total, in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a penalty notice is issued.

## Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend education as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending the school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school/academy
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

## Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a Persistent Absentee when their attendance drops below 90% for **any** reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions or 19 days. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. Children in this category will be identified as RED in our attendance banding system and parents will be expected to fully cooperate with an intensive level of support which could include the establishing of an early intervention assessment /or a targeted action plan.

All pupils who are Persistent Absentees or are considered to be on track to becoming such, will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and may also be referred to appropriate external agencies for targeted support.

Failure to engage with support that results in a pupil consistently remaining in the Persistent Absentee category may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings in the Magistrate's Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failure to secure their child's regular attendance under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

## Punctuality

At William Hulme's Grammar school all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the academic year. If a pupil fails to arrive by the expected time the school will follow its unknown absence procedure.

The school day begins at: **Secondary Phase = 8.30am / Primary Phase = 8.35am**. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site before these times to ensure a punctual start.

The register will be taken at: **Secondary Phase = 8.35am / Primary Phase = 8.40am**. All pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late.

The register will officially close at 9:05am in the secondary phase and 9.15am in the primary phase. Pupils arriving after this time without a valid reason will be recorded as code U for the morning session. This counts as an unauthorised absence.

Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in monitoring by the Attendance Team and/or referral to an appropriate external agency for targeted support and may also in turn, lead to legal action being taken against the parent/s.

## Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school/academy on a School Attendance Order
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed
- The death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools or academies
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated at home
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school, but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

The current Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 do not allow for a school or academy to delete a pupil from the admission register where the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age and has failed to meet the academic requirements for entry to their Sixth Form.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will allow this, thus bringing the regulations into line with the new School Admissions Code 2012, which allows schools/academies to set academic requirements for entry into sixth form.

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown (new guidelines March 2016).

## Roles and Responsibilities

All staff follow school procedures for recording, monitoring and responding to students with attendance concerns.

The Principal and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for attendance. Mr R Green, is the senior manager who leads on attendance.

The day to day responsibility for managing attendance lies with the Attendance Officer, Alan Hughes who is supported by the Staff Support team in both Primary and Secondary Phases.

The **Governors** support the school with the promotion of good attendance by:

- Having a named Governor with responsibility for attendance
- Monitoring attendance data
- Providing support to the Team Around Attendance.

The **Senior Leadership Team and Attendance Lead** will ensure there is a whole school approach to improving and reinforcing excellent attendance by:

- Disseminating the Attendance Policy to all staff

- Reviewing the Attendance Policy annually and updating all staff at regular meetings
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data
- Ensuring the Attendance Officer receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil their day to day duties
- Issuing a parent friendly copy of the Attendance Policy appropriate to primary and secondary phases
- Seeking to promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents during assemblies and at parent events
- Reporting attendance data to the Local Authority, DFE and the school's Governing Body as required

The **Whole School Team around Attendance** consists of various members of staff from the primary school, senior school and sixth form. They ensure that strategies and interventions are put in place to improve attendance across the phases:

- Meeting regularly to review persistently absent students and interventions required
- Planning rewards and ensuring that outstanding attendance is recognised
- Liaising in regard to statutory actions
- Reviewing attendance codes and ensuring registers are up to date

## Strategies for Promoting Excellent Attendance

- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters
- Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and house achievements
- Providing badges and rewards for good or improved attendance
- Raising the profile of excellent attendance and punctuality in pupil assemblies

## Strategies for Tackling Unsatisfactory Attendance

- First day calling / text messaging procedures and messages via ARBOR
- Late Gate – Students arriving late to school will be challenged by Attendance staff
- Pupil meetings which may lead to tailored support and Individual Action Plans
- Use of a standardised and escalating series of warning letters
- Home Visits to be completed on Day 3 of consecutive no contact (unless otherwise stated)
- Regular meetings by the whole school team around attendance to address attendance and punctuality concerns
- Case working of identified pupils/families
- Attendance Panel meetings leading to parenting contracts with agreed targets
- Referral to external support agencies
- Referral to School Nurse where medical issues are a concern
- Penalty Notices
- Referral to Local Authority for consideration of implementing legal proceedings
- Detentions for late arrival – if a student arrives after 8.30am = 30 minute detention

The Senior Attendance Lead also has responsibility for:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Undertaking attendance meetings
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Keeping accurate records of contact and interventions used
- Ensuring unknown absence procedures are followed as detailed below

## Unknown Absence Procedure

If a child is absent from the school and no reason has been provided the Attendance Officer will:

- Send a text message or make a telephone call to establish a reason for the absence.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Make home visits
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation
- Issue a Penalty Notice and/or legal proceedings warning letter
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency
- Refer the pupil's non-attendance to the Local Authority
- Request medical evidence in the form of a prescription or Doctor's note

The **Teaching and Support Staff Team** will support and promote excellent attendance by:

- Highlighting to the Senior Leadership Team any pupils causing concern
- Talking to their class about the importance of good attendance
- Promoting whole school initiatives, reward schemes and celebrations
- Delivering a diverse curriculum in a child centred learning environment
- Delivering informative lessons that are set to pupils' needs

The **Parents** will support excellent attendance and instil the value of education and regular attendance by:

- Talking to their child about school life and taking a positive interest in their child's educational progress
- Avoiding unnecessary absence such as holidays in term time
- Ensuring their child attends school every day and arrive before 8.30am
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the school if their child's attendance becomes highlighted as a cause for concern
- Contacting the school before 8.30am if their child is absent to let us know the reason and the expected date of return
- Avoiding unnecessary absences by making medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible
- Asking the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties and informing the school of any circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Adhering to the absence reporting procedure

## Vulnerable Student Absence Procedure

The attendance of pupils identified as vulnerable will be checked daily by 9am. If a pupil is not in school and no reason has been provided, then a phone call to parents or carers will be made immediately. Where there is no response the concern will be passed to the Safeguarding team who may carry out a home visit. If no response is gained then the Police may be contacted.

## Absence Reporting Procedures

If a child is unavoidably absent the parent must:

- Contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return
- Ring the school on each further day of absence before 8.30am.
- Send a written note on the first day of return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even after you have telephoned us
- Provide supporting medical evidence where requested

The **Pupils** will be expected to support excellent attendance by:

- Attending every day
- Being on time and ready for registration every day
- Monitoring own attendance levels and being aware of their current band
- Speaking to adults if situations arise that may have a negative impact on their attendance



- Cooperating with interventions and support when offered
- Adhering to consistent bedtime routines, completing homework in good time and making sure all equipment is ready the evening before

## Policy Information and Review

<b>Designated Lead Person/s</b>	Mr R Green, Assistant Principal (Attendance)
<b>Reviewed</b>	Annually
<b>Date of last review and by whom</b>	September 2023, Mr R Green
<b>Nominated Governor (if applicable)</b>	TBC
<b>Ratification by Local Governing Body</b>	
<b>Next Review Date</b>	July 2024

