



ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the duty of care of parents/carers to ensure their child attends school.

Rationale

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents relate to the following legislation setting 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](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

As a key focus, all personnel, including governors, are committed to deliver the acronyms **PAUSE and CARE**, the Academy's agreed moral code.

PAUSE reminds us all of the most important rules of the Academy:

P = Punctuality to the Academy and to lessons

A = Attendance at the Academy

U = Uniform

S = Safe & Sensible Behaviour

E = Effort Leading to Examination Success

CARE stands for **Consideration and Respect for Everyone**.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential prerequisites of successful learning. They are also an important training and preparation for the world of work. Ensuring good attendance must be a high priority for both the Academy and parents/carers; highlighted in the Home-Academy Agreement and in the Parents' Handbook. The efforts of pupils to achieve full attendance should be recognised and rewarded. There must also be identified procedures for responding to poor and irregular attendance and persistent lateness both to the Academy and to lessons. It is vital that everyone works together to achieve success.

Definitions:

Hodgson Academy is required to classify any absence as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

In order to classify absence parents/carers are always required to provide a reason or cause for an absence via telephone and the school Absence line (by 8am), email or a note.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Attending a medical or dental appointment is authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Approval for term-time absence

The Government has amended key legislation relating specifically to the authorisation of leave in term time, which came into force on 1st September 2013.

Schools and academies can no longer authorise holiday requests. Parents/Carers may request a leave of absence in term time but this may only be authorised by the senior team in exceptional circumstances. The senior team is unable to authorise any exceptional leave that is not requested in advance of the absence.

Parents/Carers must also be aware that the decision to authorise an absence from the Academy lies with the Academy. A note from home does not necessarily guarantee that the absence will be authorised. Any absence must be **unavoidable** to warrant authorisation (eg absence to go shopping is an **avoidable absence** in law).

Authorised leave of any kind is for exceptional circumstances and any absences cannot be authorised retrospectively. All absence requests must be submitted in writing by completing the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form. We strongly advise that you do not make any further arrangements for leave until the academy has responded to your request.

Short-term absence request is for a single day or less, such as for musical or sporting activities. In these circumstances, absence requests must be submitted at least 2 days before the date of the absence. The academy reserves the right to refuse to authorise short-term absence requests received less than 2 days beforehand.

If the absence request is for longer than a single day, such as for holidays, this will be regarded as a long-term absence. In these circumstances, absence requests must be submitted at least 14 days before the first day of the absence. The academy reserves the right to refuse to authorise long-term absence requests received less than 14 days beforehand.

If a long-term absence request is for four or more days, this request will be considered at a meeting that parents/carers may be invited to attend in school with our Attendance Improvement Officer. The academy will not authorise any such requests for absence if parents/carers fail to attend this meeting. In addition, we ask that you refer to the School Calendar on the academy website for up to date information regarding holiday dates and other school events, rather than relying on other websites, which, may be inaccurate.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Hodgson Academy considers each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend the Academy. Any problems with regular attendance comes with collaboration between the Academy, the parents/carers and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is better not to cover up the absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Support systems exist to help with such problems.

Persistent absence

'Persistent absence' refers to absence of more than 10%, whether authorised or unauthorised. The Department for Education states that pupils with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at the school or stay in education after the age of 16 years. They are also significantly more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour, youth crime and are more at risk of other negative outcomes (including teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse). (DCSF – Improving attendance and Reducing Persistent Absence)

Attendance and Registration Procedures

Registration is a legal requirement. There are two registration sessions during a school day.

- The first Registration takes place in the morning during form time or assembly
- The second Registration takes place during 'Reg and Read' - unless the school day is shortened due to school events or end of term arrangements. If this is the case, then the second registration will be after lunch.
- In order for a pupil to receive a full day attendance mark both sessions, have to be attended. If a pupil does not attend the afternoon session, the second registration, they will be marked absent and will lose half a day attendance.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

The Academy works in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that good attendance is maintained. Parents are asked to support the Academy by:

- Ensuring that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually.
- Informing the Academy by telephoning the designated Absence Line, or by email if their child is unable to attend due to illness. This must be done **on the first day of absence**. Some indication must be given of the likely length of the absence.
- Providing a dated note explaining the absence when the pupil returns to the Academy if the information has not been communicated by other means.
- Completing the form requesting future leave of absence in good time. These forms are obtained from the School Office.
- Parents/ Carers must inform immediately the Academy about any unexpected lateness.

The responsibility of pupils

- **Pupils should accept responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality.**
- All pupils must attend registration and lessons on time and in the place indicated to them, for example, their designated form room or assembly.
- Pupils arriving late for the Academy **before 9.00 am** must enter via the designated entrance and be recorded as late by staff. Pupils accumulating lates in this way over the week will receive a standards log, which can end in a Thursday detention.
- Pupils arriving late between **9.00am** and **9.30am** must report to reception and be recorded as late. Pupils arriving late in this manner will also receive a lunchtime detention.
- Parents of pupils who arrive at the Academy after **9.30 am** will be contacted since, after this time, they are classified as absent.

Alternative Provision

Parents/carers will be legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends any arranged alternative provision. A 'direction' will be issued by the Academy.

The direction:

- Must be given not less than two school days before the start date of the alternative provision.
- Will be issued by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Must be made aware of by the LA if the pupil has a statement.

The direction must state:

- The address of the new provider(s)
- Contact name and details at the alternative provision
- Number of days that the requirement is in place
- The reasons for and objectives of imposing the requirement
- Start and end times, including lunch time for the alternative provider

Parents/carers are expected to make arrangements for the supervision of children who have been excluded from school on any day, which is one of the first five school days to which any exclusion relates.

Parents/carers are expected to contact Hodgson Academy at an early stage and to work with the Attendance Improvement Officer, Pastoral Support Officer and/or Progress Tutor and/or Head of House resolving any attendance problems together, sometimes with the help of outside agencies.

Strategies for responding to persistently poor attendance

Excellent attendance leads to excellent achievement and progress. In addition to the strategies already outlined, other possible actions that might be taken are as follows:

- Pupil's whose poor attendance is linked to disaffection should receive prompt attention. Where appropriate, they should be placed on a Behaviour Management Plan
- pupils should be referred to the Initial Assessment and Support Team (Children's Social Care) where appropriate, following the Safeguarding guidelines
- when appropriate, pupils should be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer and/or School Medical officer and/or Governors' Attendance Support Panel for discussions about their attendance
- the use of penalty notices (see information below)

Penalty Notices will be considered for the following:

- Persistent unauthorised late arrival at the academy (persistent lateness refers to pupils who arrive after the school register has closed)
- Persistent unauthorised absence from the academy (please see attached information sheet for further details Appendix 1)

Penalty notices will apply for:

- Unauthorised requests for leave of absence, including holidays.
- Penalty notices will be applied for when a pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a term or 14 sessions (7 days) over 2 successive terms. Penalty notices will be applied for when absences cross two academic years as per the trigger across two consecutive terms.
- Parents may now be issued with up to 3 penalty notices in a year.
- Penalty notices will be issued when pupils are located in a public place without justification during the first five days of any period of exclusion.

If attendance difficulties cannot be managed using any of the above strategies, Hodgson Academy will bring the pupil to the attention of a Court Officer of the Local Education Authority. Court proceedings can be used to prosecute parents where the maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or three months imprisonment. Other disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. Costs may also be imposed.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Policy reviewed by Miss F Bate (Deputy Headteacher) November 2021

Approved by SLT –

APPENDIX 1 PENALTY NOTICES

Tackling Poor School Attendance

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

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Education Act 1996 Information for Parents and Carers

Introduction

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices where a parent/carers is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

What is the cost?

Penalty notices are issued at £120 however, if paid within 21 days of being issued the cost is £60.

How are they issued?

Penalty notices will always be issued by post to your home and are issued to each parent individually in respect of each child.

When are they issued?

Lancashire County Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

- unauthorised absence
- truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);
- parentally condoned absence without good reason;
- persistent late arrival at school;
- unauthorised holidays in term time
- delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission;
- relating to the whereabouts of excluded pupils (see rationale below)

Rationale – penalty notices for whereabouts of excluded pupils

Parents must arrange the supervision of children who have been excluded from the academy on any day, which is one of the first five academy days to which any exclusion relates. The LA is notified if a parent is believed to be failing in their statutory duty to ensure such children are not in a public place. An investigation will be undertaken to establish the basic facts of the case in each instance in order to determine whether an offence is likely to have been committed.

- It is expected that in the first instance parents would be reminded of their duty under this legislation and warned as to future behaviour, but subsequently a penalty notice could be issued where the criteria set out in the relevant code of conduct have been met. However, where a child is reported on more than one occasion during any single episode of exclusion, the LA will only consider a penalty notice for any one offence.
- Where there is evidence of repeat episodes, which suggest parenting, is a significant contributory factor to the pupil's continuing behaviour concerns, schools will be expected to have considered/offered a parenting contract for behaviour before the LA will consider more than three requests for penalty notices in any one academic year.

In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of five school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 7 school days lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered. The Authority never takes such action lightly, and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement action. However, school attendance is of such importance to all of us that the Authority will use these powers if it is felt that it can secure a child's schooling.

Is a warning given?

In cases of unauthorised absence and persistent lateness**, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued. This will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to bring about an improvement. In that time, your child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of an unauthorised holiday, warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning, you can make representations should you wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices. No reminders will be sent.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period stated in the Penalty Notice, since payment of the penalty discharges your liability for that period. However, it could be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending on the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty in full, after which the Authority is required in most instances to commence proceedings in the local Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

If proven, this can attract a range of sentences including fines up to £2,500 and/or up to three months imprisonment. Other disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. Costs may also be imposed.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Yes, Lancashire Children's Services Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance. It is very important that you speak with the school or with Lancashire County Council at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's school attendance.

Appendix 2: 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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	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
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
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		
G	Unauthorised holiday	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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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