



## Attendance Policy

THIS DOCUMENT IS AN APPENDIX TO THE MAIN OVERARCHING POLICY HELD BY NEXUS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

<b>Date Published</b>	<b>June 2016</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Approved Date</b>	<b>January 2023</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Biennial</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>January 2025</b>

An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”



## 1. Aims

- 1.1. Hilltop School aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve the best they can in everything they do. For our children and young people to reach their full potential it is vital that they attend and be on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child or young person's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- 1.2. The minimum level of attendance for our school is 90%. We recognise that for some of our children and young people with significant medical needs, that this will be an aspiration. However, our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful learning.
- 1.3. Through the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We work very closely with families whose child has complex medical needs to ensure that learning continues, as appropriate.

## 2. Legal

- 2.1. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children and young people of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2. For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents/carers committing a criminal offence.
- 2.3. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child or young person is no longer compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Although children and young people in Early Years Foundation Stage and Sixth Form are not compulsory school age Hilltop School acknowledge the need for good attendance throughout school so will therefore treat



absences in these phases the same as compulsory age pupils in terms of register marks and follow up procedures.

- 2.4. Under the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children and young people of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.5. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.6. The register must record whether the pupil was:
  - present;
  - absent;
  - present at approved educational activity; or
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### 3. Types of Absence

- 3.1. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- 3.2. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absence can only be authorised by the school not by parents/carers.
- 3.3. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.
- 3.4. This includes:
  - Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily;
  - truancy before or during the school day;
  - absences which have never properly been explained;
  - pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
  - shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;



- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;
  - holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the headteacher.
- 3.5. For those children and young people who are struggling to attend school full time due to their complex medical needs, school and the parents/carers may discuss flexible hours. When a parent/carer seeks a reduction in hours or days, the school and health professionals will look at the individual child or young person and their needs and work with the parents/carers to provide appropriate education for their child. If a reduction in hours is agreed then a Parental Agreement form will be completed and reviewed on a termly basis.
- 3.6. A part time timetable will be offered to EYFS pupils starting in FS0 and FS1 depending on their needs. This will be agreed during the admission process. Sessions pupils do not attend due to this agreement will be marked 'C' or 'X' in the register.

## 4. Registration

- 4.1. The school day begins at 9:20am and all pupils should be in school at this time. The morning register is taken at 9:25am and closes at 9:45am. The afternoon register is taken at 1pm and closes at 1:15pm. Pupils not in school by the close of registers will be marked as absent for that session. Registers are taken by class and monitored by admin staff.

## 5. Absence Procedures

- 5.1. Parents/carers should advise school that their child will be absent by contacting the school office before 9:30am. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform school directly. Messages via transport staff, other parents/carers or social media will not be accepted and will be followed up by a phone call. Office staff will then inform class teams that the pupil is absent.
- 5.2. Hilltop uses a first day response policy therefore if a pupil does not attend school and no adequate reason has been provided then a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer by office staff. The member of staff making the first day response call will update the school register as necessary.



- 5.3. Parents/carers are expected to keep in contact with school when a pupil is absent for a long period to keep school informed of the situation and any expected return date.
- 5.4. Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Parents/carers should contact the office to inform school of such appointments as early as possible. Office staff will then inform class teams. Pupils may only leave school premises if they are accompanied by a parent/carer. Proof of the appointment may be requested, this could be an appointment card or a letter from hospital.
- 5.5. In-line with Government guidelines, Hilltop School will no longer authorise absences for holidays in term-time unless there are exceptional reasons. All requests will be considered individually. Parents/carers will be required to submit any request for absence in term-time at least 4 weeks before the proposed absence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form on our website. Parents/carers will be expected to give a full explanation of why the holiday request is exceptional. A child or young person's previous absence will be considered before a decision is made. School will respond to all requests in writing, however, parents/carers should not automatically expect the request to be authorised. All requests for holidays and the responses will be kept in the pupils' record. If permission to take leave is not granted and a pupil still goes on holiday then the absence will be unauthorised. In recurrent cases the school may make a request to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued which could incur a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child raising to £120 per parent/carer per child if unpaid after 28 days.
- 5.6. Hilltop School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the community and recognises that on some occasions religious festivals may fall outside of school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- 5.7. If a pupil arrives after the registers close at 9:45am with no prior explanation then they will receive a late mark. If a pupil has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but can approach school at any time if there are problems getting pupils to school.



## 6. Working With Early Help, Families And The Local Authority

- 6.1. Class teachers meet at least termly with all parents/carers and part of the discussion focusses on attendance if there are any concerns.
- 6.2. School leaders meet with the Family Support team regularly and the attendance Officer in the office. When a child has less than 90% attendance the reasons for this are discussed.
- 6.3. Families will be written to and invited into school to discuss issues.
- 6.4. When attendance remains an issue, the school follows the 'Attendance Matters' guidelines from RMBC.
- 6.5. When a child or young person stops attending school for 10 days and no contact can be made to establish the child or young person's whereabouts school will complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' form. They will then be placed on the CME register after 20 days unauthorised absence. School will follow up regularly with the Local Authority to check the progress of the missing pupil.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1. Parents/carers:
  - Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
  - Contact the school office on 1st day of absence by 9:30am to give a full reason for their child not attending;
  - Contact school regularly during a pupils' absence to keep staff updated;
  - Do not pass on messages to school via transport staff;
  - Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance by completing the relevant form;
  - Avoid medical and dental appointments in school hours wherever possible and if unavoidable ensure they are half a day if possible;
  - Attendance at meetings in school;
  - Ensure their child goes to bed at a reasonable time;
  - Ensure their child is ready for transport in a morning;
  - Ensure their child comes in to school ready to learn;
  - Discuss any issues affecting absence or lateness with school via Senior Leadership Team or class teacher.



### 7.2. Pupils:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school e.g. early bedtime;
- Attend school punctually;
- Speak to parents/carers/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on their school attendance.
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or other agencies.

### 7.3. Head Teacher and SLT:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- Ensure adequate time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities;
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance;
- Ensure there are designated staff to oversee educational provision for children and young people who are too poorly to attend school (class teacher and Senior Leadership Team).

### 7.4. Designated Staff:

- First day response: Contact parents/carers if an adequate reason for absence has not been provided;
- Input and update the attendance registers;
- Regularly identify and monitor school attendance and punctuality levels;
- Work with children and young people and parents/carers to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance;
- Ensure, if appropriate, children and young people who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons have opportunities to access educational activities.

### 7.5. All staff:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and young people and provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns;
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- To see pupils' attendance as everyone's responsibility;
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures;
- Be pro-active in providing learning opportunities for children and young people who cannot attend school due to significant medical needs.



## 8. Rewards

- 8.1. Hilltop School rewards good attendance. Pupils are rewarded individually with attendance certificates for high or improved attendance. Parents/carers are informed of rewards for good attendance through school letters.