

Attendance Policy

Aligned with Ofsted, NCFE, SEND Code of Practice, Equality Act, and KCSIE

This is a controlled document and, as such, will be kept read only. Any changes must be approved by the Author.

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Hatfield Wick Education Attendance Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Hatfield Wick Education (HWE) is committed to providing a nurturing, inclusive, and safe learning environment where every student can thrive. Regular attendance is essential for safeguarding, wellbeing, progress, and positive outcomes. This policy outlines expectations and procedures to ensure compliance with statutory duties and reflects HWE's CARES values (Compassion, Autonomy, Respect, Empathy, Support).

Attendance is treated as a safeguarding priority. Where absence indicates potential risk, safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 Promote regular attendance and engagement in education.
- 2.2 Identify and address barriers to attendance promptly.
- 2.3 Ensure compliance with statutory attendance and safeguarding duties.
- 2.4 Provide reasonable adjustments to support learners with SEND or additional needs.
- 2.5 Work in partnership with parents, carers, commissioners, and schools.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy aligns with:

- Education Act 1996
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines
- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Board of Directors

- 4.1.1 Ensure that the importance of regular attendance is promoted across HWE.

4.1.2 Monitor attendance data, trends and vulnerable groups.

4.1.3 Support the implementation of effective attendance strategies.

4.2 **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

4.2.1 Oversee the implementation of the attendance policy.

4.2.2 Monitor attendance data and identify safeguarding risks.

4.2.3 Initiate early help or safeguarding referrals where appropriate.

4.2.4 Work with parents/carers and external agencies to address attendance concerns.

4.3 **HWE Staff**

4.3.1 Promote good attendance and engagement in education.

4.3.2 Accurately record attendance at each session.

4.3.3 Challenge absence promptly and support re-engagement.

4.3.4 Report any concerns regarding attendance to the designated lead.

4.4 **Parents/Carers**

4.4.1 Ensure their child attends their allocated sessions regularly.

4.4.2 Notify HWE before the child's session starts in case of absence, providing a reason.

4.4.3 Work collaboratively with HWE to address any attendance concerns.

4.5 **Students**

4.5.1 Engage with their sessions regularly.

4.5.2 Communicate any barriers to attendance to a trusted staff member.

5. **DEFINITIONS**

5.1 **Authorised Absence**

An absence approved by HWE, such as illness, medical appointments, religious observance, or exceptional circumstances.

5.2 **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence where no acceptable reason is provided or evidence is insufficient.

5.3 **Persistent Absence**

Attendance below 90% or a pattern of repeated absence requiring targeted intervention.

5.4 **Looked-After Children (LAC)**

Students under the care of the Local Authority, whose attendance is reported to Virtual School.

6. **PROCEDURES**

6.1 **Reporting Absences**

6.1.1 Parents/carers must notify HWE before the child's session starts, providing a reason for the absence.

6.1.2 Notification can be made via phone or email.

6.1.3 If no contact is received:

- First-day contact will be attempted by telephone.
- A same-day safeguarding check will be recorded.

6.1.4 Alternative communication methods and reasonable adjustments will be used where required.

6.2 **Authorising Absences**

6.2.1 The CEO or designated staff member will determine whether an absence is authorised. Evidence may be requested where appropriate.

6.2.2 Acceptable reasons include:

- (a) illness or medical appointments;
- (b) religious observances; and
- (c) family emergencies.

6.2.3 Holidays during term time are generally unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

6.3 **Attendance Recording and Reporting**

6.3.1 All attendance is recorded through Essex County Council's (ECC) Different Class system.

6.3.2 For students who remain on-roll at another school, their attendance data is also shared with their on-roll school daily.

6.3.3 For Looked-After Children (LAC), attendance is reported to Virtual School.

6.3.4 Data is analysed weekly to identify trends and vulnerable groups.

Records are retained securely in line with data protection requirements.

7. **EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT**

Where attendance concerns arise, HWE will:

- (a) Explore barriers with learner and family.
- (b) Implement support strategies or reasonable adjustments.
- (c) Engage external agencies where appropriate.

Support may include flexible timetabling, pastoral intervention, or SEND support planning.

8. **SAFEGUARDING AND ATTENDANCE CONCERNS**

8.1 **Escalation of Attendance Concerns**

8.1.1 If a parent/carer does not notify HWE of a child's absence, this will be logged as a safeguarding concern and raised with the Local Authority on the same day.

8.1.2 If no contact is made with the family, HWE will escalate concerns following safeguarding protocols, including:

- (a) conducting a home welfare check if required;
- (b) notifying relevant agencies if the child is at risk; and
- (c) escalating concerns to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team for further intervention.

Children Missing Education procedures will be followed where applicable.

9. **EQUALITY, SEND AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

HWE will ensure attendance processes are accessible and inclusive.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- (a) Alternative reporting arrangements
- (b) Adjusted timetables
- (c) Transport or engagement support
- (d) Advocacy or parental involvement

Attendance expectations will be applied fairly and proportionately.

10. **MONITORING, RECORDING AND GOVERNANCE**

Attendance data is reviewed weekly by senior leaders.

Trends are reported to the Board of Directors.

Records are retained for a minimum of three years.

Findings inform quality improvement planning.

11. **COMMUNICATION**

Expectations are shared during induction and within learner handbooks.

Parents/carers receive regular attendance updates

Staff receive training on attendance, safeguarding, and inclusive practice.

12. **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated in line with any changes in legislation or guidance.