



# Attendance Policy

Date approved:	March 2021
Approved by:	New Generation Schools Trust Board
Next Review date:	March 2022

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Our Aim for Attendance:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 97%
- Maintain parents and pupil's awareness of the importance of regular attendance

At Hope Community School, we believe that good attendance is essential to effective learning. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will affect their attainment and social integration with their peers. Pupils who attend regularly achieve more highly. Punctuality is equally as important. If children are late for school, they miss out on the regular morning routines and disrupt the class teaching and the learning of other children. Pupils with regular attendance and good punctuality have an easier transfer into secondary school. It will also aid pupils when they reach the work place.

### **Our Mission:**

We want every child to enjoy and achieve to their full potential at school. Whatever ability, ethnicity or background, each child will thrive and prosper throughout their time with us at Hope.

### **Absence**

We monitor attendance regularly and therefore expect excellent attendance from every child. If you have concerns with attendance, the school can provide support to help you to improve the attendance of your child.

### **Reporting absence:**

- All matters relating to absence must be reported to the school office before 9.15am on the first day of absence giving the reason why he or she is not in school.
- It is the responsibility of the school to check absences by telephone if we do not hear from the parents or carers. If no explanation has been received within 5 school days then a written reminder is sent to the parents. If there is still no communication from the parents after a further 2 days then the absence will be unauthorised.
- If a child is absent or taken out of school during the day due to a medical appointment, parents should notify the school by providing a note/appointment card or contacting the school office in advance.

### **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences." For example: if a child is ill, death of a close relative, religious observance.

We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences.” Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going out for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in late after a night out
- Unapproved holidays
- Parental sickness or sibling’s sickness
- Caring for a sick relative
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or when the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

### **Punctuality**

Children are recorded as late if they arrive to school after 9.00am, unless for a notified reason, such as medical appointment.

Children are recorded as ‘late after the register has closed’ after 9.15am. This will result in an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Late marks in the register are monitored regularly by the school and the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents who continually fail to bring their children to school on time will be contacted by the school.

The school is not responsible for children after the end of the school day. In exceptional circumstances where a parent is delayed, they should contact the school immediately. Failures to contact the school or persistent late collections will result in the Principal making a referral to the EWO or in extreme circumstances, contacting Social Services.

### **Holidays**

All unnecessary absences within term time are disruptive to a child’s education and the Principal will not authorise these absences. Holidays are **not** allowed during term time and the Principal will only approve absence in during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, taking into account the nature of the event, the frequency of the request, whether the parent has given notice in advance, the pupil’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

If an unauthorised absence is taken during term time, the Principal, Governors and EWO will consider requesting a penalty charge notice to each parent for each child that is taken out of school.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- To ensure their child attends school and arrives on time before 9.00am
- To keep medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible
- To ensure that holidays are taken outside of term time
- To keep contact details, correct and up to date
- To contact the school on the first day of absence and give a reason
- Provide a note or copy of the medical appointment card for absences during school hours.
- To support the school's aim of 97% (+) attendance

### **School Responsibilities**

- To improve the overall attendance target to 97%
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To celebrate pupils who achieved at least 97% over the year and to highlight those who have achieved 100% over a term and over the year.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- When attendance is less than 95% (after the first half-term) a letter is sent to the parents together with a copy of their child's registration certificate.
- When attendance fails to improve the Principal / Family Liaison Officer will contact the parents to attend a meeting to discuss the issue and offer support to improve attendance.
- Where no improvements in attendance have been made, a formal referral is made to EWO. This could lead to the EWO issuing a penalty charge notice or taking further action.

### **Leavers**

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date if known and reasons for moving.
- Confirm the school has your current mobile number.
- Give the new school Hope's contact details so that files can be transferred.
- Let us know when you moved.

### **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local

Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Southampton Social Care, the Police and other agencies to try and track and locate your child.

### **Trustees**

It is a legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate attendance in their schools. This function has been delegated to the school's Local Council. Attendance figures are presented to the Local Councils on a termly basis.

We value your support in helping us maintain very high standards.

### **Attendance Timeline**

Parents / Carers to inform school on first day of absence and each morning of absence thereafter.

If Parents / Carers do not contact the school – the school will contact the parents / carers on that first day of absence. If parents / carers cannot be contacted, the school will try other emergency contacts.

If no contact has been received from parents / carers after 2 days, the school will conduct a home-visit.

If no contact is made with the family after 5 days Social Services will be notified.

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance by letter every half-term.

If your child's attendance is unacceptable and not improving a meeting between parents, Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and Principal is arranged. At this meeting an action plan is put in place. Any action plans are reviewed weekly by the Principal and FLO.

If attendance does not improve this could result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

If your child's attendance falls below **90%** it is regarded as a Safeguarding concern and could be referred to Social Services.

### **Penalty Notices:**

As a school we have a legal authority to request Penalty Notices to parents who do not ensure their child is attending school. You will be issued a fine for the following:

- Your child has unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions (a session is a morning or afternoon) over the course of 8 weeks, these do not need to be consecutive days.
- You take your child on holiday during term time for 10 or more sessions.
- Your child arrives late after 9:15 on 10 occasions over an 8-week period.

# Attendance Matters

The school gate opens at 8:30am, registers are taken at 9am. Children who arrive after this time must report to the office. This will then be recorded and added to SIMS.

You must notify the office before 9:15am about your child's absence, if your child arrives late after 9:15 this will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Parents/carers will be contacted via telephone or email at 9:30 if no contact has made.

The attendance of each child is monitored and reviewed weekly by the Principal and Family Liaison Officer. A letter with your child's attendance will be sent home every half term colour coded. Please see Triangle on other side of sheet.

If your child's attendance is **94.99%** or below a meeting will be arranged with parents, Principal and Family Liaison Officer. At this meeting an **Action Plan is agreed and put in place.**

If the attendance has not improved, a formal referral could be made to the Educational Welfare Service.

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