

# Attendance Policy

## Horizon Education Alternative Learning (HEAL)



|                            |                       |                             |
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| <b>Reviewed by:</b>        | Headteacher           | <b>Date:</b> September 2024 |
| <b>Approved by:</b>        | MD Education Services | <b>Date:</b> September 2024 |
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### 1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to education.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Providing a broad and exciting curriculum that endeavors to utilise an individual's strengths and interests so that they engage with education.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend HEAL sessions regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Heal's provision is not school based, and many students are taught in their own homes or community settings. Attendance can be closely monitored and followed up easily/

### 2. Legislation and guidance

Although HEAL is not a school, 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 are drawn from 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.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 Directors

Directors are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for HEAL on at least a termly basis. They also hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The Head of HEAL**

The Head is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring attendance data across HEAL and at an individual pupil level.
- Monitoring provision-level absence data and reporting it to directors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Works with education welfare officers, where applicable, to tackle persistent absence.
- Report weekly to local authorities' attendance and absences.

### **3.3 HEAL Teachers**

HEAL Teachers

- Report concerns about attendance to the head of HEAL.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Report daily on Engage all absences.
- Report weekly to parents/ carers/ social workers on the Weekly report.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register on ENGAGE and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each teaching session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Late (More than 10 minutes after the start of the session)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the relevant HEAL teacher, or the Head Teacher, on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless we have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we 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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If we are not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents / carers will be notified of this in advance.

If an absence continues for more than one day, the pupil's parent / carer must notify the relevant HEAL teacher on a day-by-day basis of whether the pupil will be returning to school.

Tutors who attend the home of a child who fails to attend will be able to identify the reason for absence easily.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as 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 education hours where possible.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences HEAL can authorise.

#### **4.4 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend HEAL sessions does not attend, or stops attending, HEAL will:

- › Follow up on their absence with their parent / carer/ home to ascertain the reason, by calling or sending an email. As students are often taught in their own homes' conversations can be had very easily with caregivers and strategies can be discussed to improve attendance
- › Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- › Produce an attendance support plan when applicable.
- › Reconsider incentives to increase attendance.

#### **4.5 Reporting to parents**

Attendance is reported to parents termly via a written report as well as on a weekly report which outlines attendance percentages.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The head of HEAL will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the head's discretion.

HEAL considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a

Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

A child's absence becomes persistent when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year. Any child whose attendance has reached this threshold will be given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance which may involve referrals to other agencies and meetings between staff and parents / carers.
- Where parents / carers fail to co-operate with support offered by HEAL, further advice will be sought from the Local Authority and advice on Fixed Penalty Notices may be sought.
- Consideration will always be given to the individual needs of the pupil when considering the circumstances around persistent absence.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or special educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Regular contact made with parents / carers / social workers.
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the Local Authority and other agencies to allocate appropriate provisions which may not be within our school.
- Attendance is linked to rewards and as such rewards may be reduced for poor attendance.
- Reward certificates will be rewarded to those with high levels of attendance (over 95%)
- Incentives may also be discussed at PEP meetings and further incentives can be agreed linked to education provision.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The HEAL administrator monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent / carer is expected to call HEAL in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent/carer is expected to call HEAL each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days, HEAL will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

We collect and store attendance data in weekly reports to the directors. It may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

## 8. Approval

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the head of HEAL. At every review, the policy will be approved by directors.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

### [Appendix 1: attendance codes](#)

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code  | Full name                          | Description  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| The student is counted as present.                                      |                                    |  |
| / or \  | Present am or pm                   | Present in school during registration.   |
| L   | Late                               | Late arrival before the register has closed  |
| The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity. |                                    |  |
| B   | Educated off Site                  | The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.  |
| K   | Education provision provided by LA | Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school  |
| P   | Sporting Activity (Approved)       | Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. |
| V   | Educational trip                   | A residential trip organised by the school, or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.          |
| W   | Work Experience                    | A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.   |
| The student is counted as absent, authorised.                           |                                    |  |
| C   | Other Authorised Absence           | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance  |

|   |                             |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| C1  | Other Authorised Absence    | Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad   |
| C2  | Other Authorised Absence    | Pupils on part-time timetables   |
| J1  | Interview                   | Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution   |
| E   | Excluded                    | If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.  |
| M   | Medical/Dental Appointments | The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.   |
| R   | Religious Observance        | The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.  |
| S   | Study Leave                 | Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.   |
| T   | Traveller Absence           | Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school. |
| I   | Illness                     | This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.  |
| I01   | Illness                     | This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.                                      |
| I02   | Confirmed case of Covid-19  | This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.  |
| The student is counted as absent, unauthorised. |                             |  |
| G   | Family Holiday (Not Agreed) | The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.   |

|  |                                  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| N  | No Reason                        | The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.   |
| O  | Unauthorised Absence             | If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.   |
| U  | Late (After Register Closes)     | Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.  |
| These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures. |                                  |   |
| D  | Dual Registration                | The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school. |
| X  | Non-statutory school age absence | Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.         |
| Y1   | Unable to attend                 | Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.   |
| Y2   | Unable to attend                 | Widespread disruption to travel   |
| Y3   | Unable to attend                 | Part of school closed.  |
| Y4   | Unable to attend                 | Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).  |
| Y5   | Unable to attend                 | Pupils in the criminal justice system.  |
| Y6   | Unable to attend                 | Absence due to public health guidance or law.   |
| Y7   | Unable to attend                 | Any other unavoidable cause.  |
| Z  | Pupil Not On Roll                | This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.  |
| #  | School Closed To Pupils          | This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.  |