

Attendance Policy

Horizon Education Alternative Learning (HEAL)



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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	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at 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
Y	School Closure / Transport	School Closure or no LA Transport
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	Covid 19	Pupil is absent due to testing positive for Covid
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause, the transport provided by the school, or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance, a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school