

Helsby High School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2023/24

'Achieving success, valuing others' (Helsby High School Ethos)

'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate' (Ofsted, 'Securing Good Attendance', Feb 2022)

The name of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is:

Mrs Warburton (swarburton@helsbyhigh.org) – Senior Deputy Headteacher

The name of the member of the school extended leadership team responsible for operational oversight of attendance in school is:

Mr Howe (phowe@helsbyhigh.org) - Student Support & Inclusion Lead

Approved by: The Full Governing body			Date: 17 July 2023
Next review due by:	15 July 2024		
ast review date: July 2023 (Full (1	If you want to go straight to our 1-page Attendance Summary, it's on page 13

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Introduction and Aim

There are a lot of words in this policy, but our key message in school to our students is really simple:

- ✓ Attend regularly
- ✓ Attend punctually
- ✓ Attend prepared to learn

Helsby High School recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact it has on student's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school. Good attendance helps a young person to realise their potential and ensure they are motivated, confident and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences. This matches our school ethos of achieving success. Our school policy promotes good attendance, which is recognised and rewarded as an achievement. The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. We recognise that whole school preventative and proactive approaches are key to promoting wellbeing and attendance. We will support, but will also challenge, as per Ofsted findings for success. A young person must attend school every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance applies.

This policy is accessible to leaders, staff, students, and parents, and is published on our school website. It will be sent to Parents with any initial information when students join the school and reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated. As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so going forwards, we will seek the views of students and parents. The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

1. Legislation

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".
- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence".
- Section 576 Education Act 1996 Meaning of "parent"

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

all biological parents, whether they are married or not

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

2. Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.

'Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6) Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).

On each occasion they must record whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
- Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.

The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'Working together to improve School Attendance Guidance' (for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file /1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf (See appendix 3.)

3. Procedure

Young people are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a student absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its students. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the **first day of absence** and each following day of absence, stating the reason. They should contact Mrs Black:

Mrs Black (Attendance & Welfare Officer) using <u>Attendance@helsbyhigh.org</u>

To discuss any specific or wider attendance concerns and possible support parents/carers should contact:

Mrs Briscoe (Student Support Co-ordinator for Attendance) using wbriscoe@helsbyhigh.org

The school will make contact with home when a child is absent, and the parent/carer has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

4. What parents/carers can do to help, and working in partnership with Parents/ Carers

Let the school know straight away why your child is absent. Home/school communication is extremely important in supporting your child to achieve and feel settled in school. Try to make any dental/GP type appointments outside of school time.

It is important that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child / young person's attendance and wellbeing. If, despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

As a school we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for young people. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting and recognising good and improved attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

All parents will be formally advised by school in writing of their son/daughter's attendance figure at least twice each academic year; at the mid-year interim assessment point, and at the end of year summative assessment point.

5. Attendance Monitoring and Promotion

School monitors attendance on an hourly, daily and weekly basis. Data is analysed promptly to identify and address possible concerns and allow for early interventions to support the child/family's underlying needs. This will include –

- Weekly attendance code analysis
- Specific cohort and group monitoring particularly for vulnerable groups i.e. children with a social worker
- Monitoring of lesson attendance across all subjects
- 'Welcome back' conversations for all students that have been absent for 5 days to check wellbeing and ensure there are no ongoing needs that will impact on attendance

Good attendance is promoted and recognised across the school.

- Weekly attendance messages are sent home to recognise any student with full attendance.
- Form tutors are provided with weekly attendance data for their form and one tutor period per week has a dedicated attendance update element.
- Electronic screens and corridor notices flag up weekly attendance figures by form group and year group.

- Good attendance is promoted at school events such as in-person parent consultation evenings, and open evenings. This promotion and celebration also happens via the school website and social media accounts.
- Year assemblies make regular reference to attendance data, and
- Half termly/termly assemblies include tombola prize draws recognising students with exemplary attendance and improved attendance.
- Other recognition events may take place in school or out. The exact nature will depend on logistics and 'student voice' feedback, but activities such as pizza/film events in school, or external trips visits have taken place previously.
- Staff briefings also feature regular attendance updates for all school staff.
- Staff training is provided, for new staff, and refresher opportunities for existing staff, with regard to the mechanics of register completion. This is then monitored both randomly and specifically on a regular basis through the academic year.
- Written communication from school flagging up full attendance, improved attendance, and attendance concerns, also take place on a termly basis.

6. Early Identification and Intervention:

Every young person has a right to a full-time education and Helsby High School sets high attendance expectations for all students. At Helsby we will consider the individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance and will consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For any young person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All our staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school work in collaboration, in combination as and when necessary to consider and identify the needs of the young person and to overcome barriers to attendance. We will work with students and parents/carers in this regard, including with reference to Emotionally Based School Non-attendance, as appropriate.

Our materials now refer to an aspirational target for each individual student of 'Full attendance' rather than '100% attendance'. This is in recognition that for some students, there may be occasions when a level of absence is unavoidable (for example a hospital visit for treatment due to a long-standing health condition). As such, there are cases where recognition should not be based on students with a 100% statistic, but on the best attendance that individual student can achieve. School recognition should also focus on improved as well as high attendance.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, school (and parents/carers) may seek further advice and support from external services.

Regular data analysis and attendance review meetings take place in school, and plans for individual students can be amended, to recognise and celebrate improvements and successes with students and parents, and to look for new/further ways to support if that has not happened.

In school, the attendance of our young people may supported by a range of staff:

- Our dedicated attendance staff (Mrs Black, Mrs Briscoe)
- Form Tutors

- Student Support Co-ordinators linked to each year group (the SSCs)
- Progress & Pastoral Leaders linked to each year group (the PPLs)
- Our ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)
- Our TAF (Team Around the Family) SSC
- Our team of Teaching Assistants (TAs) and the SEND staff in school

We also work with linked professionals who will come into school to talk to students, and may also contact parents at home. These may include:

- IAG (Independent Advice & Guidance) careers advisors
- Our externally commissioned school counsellor
- PSCOs working in our local communities
- Our school nurse and other health workers

In addition, there may be occasions where, school (and parents) contact other agencies as part of a wider plan which may include supporting improved or sustained attendance. This can include working with and alongside, and/or liaising with agencies such as:

- The Education Welfare Service
- Education Access Team at the local authority
- Early Help & Intervention teams at the local authority
- CWAC Children's Social Services
- Local CAMHS teams (Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service) and other health specialists as well as local GP surgeries.
- Our partner local primary schools
- Local alternative provision providers
- Education & Welfare colleagues at other secondary schools in the local area
- The Safeguarding Children in Education team in our local area (SCIE)

7. Medical Absence

Absence due to sickness should be reported to the school by phone (01928 723551) or using <u>attendance@helsbyhigh.org</u> on the first day of absence. The school should be kept informed during longer periods of absence. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received.

Any medical absences in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received, then the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. The school will work with all families on an individual basis if medical absences exceed the maximum threshold.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then we will offer support in accordance with the school's policies and statutory guidance relating to Children with health needs. <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-students-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3</u>. As a school we need to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the school must also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet child's Educational Needs.

For children who have a medical condition and cannot attend school, the school will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team.

https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needsservice/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf

Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the student's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:

- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist
- consultant child psychiatrist
- hospital consultant

Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.

8. Lateness and Punctuality

School begins **8.40***am* and all students are expected to be in school for registration at that time.

- Register taken at 8.45am
- Registers close 9.30am

Form time 8.40am – 9am is essential time for the students. They have valuable pastoral input from assemblies, to group activities, to vital messages about a range of topics; from exams, to sports to music, drama, extra-curricular clubs, thoughts for the day and talking points from the news, and literacy and numeracy support. It is an essential building block for all students to feel part of the school community and absorb the culture of the school.

Any child who arrives after the gates are closed must enter the school by the main entrance and to sign in. If students are not in form class when the register is taken, they will be coded as 'L'. Any late arrivals **after** *9.30am* will be coded as 'U' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that 'session' (i.e. an absence for the whole of the morning/ half a day of schooling).

In accordance with the 'Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if a student arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. School attendance staff will monitor lateness, and talk to students in to try and find out why this is happening and how it can be solved. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

Parents/carers may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

9. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a student arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.30am

Parents/carers should be aware that Helsby High School may contact the Local Authority if a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court (see appendix 1).

10.Application for Exceptional Circumstances

In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'.

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form available from the school website (search 'Absence') or the school office, at least 4 weeks in advance. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A young person's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

11.Religious Observance

We recognise that some students may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify the school in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

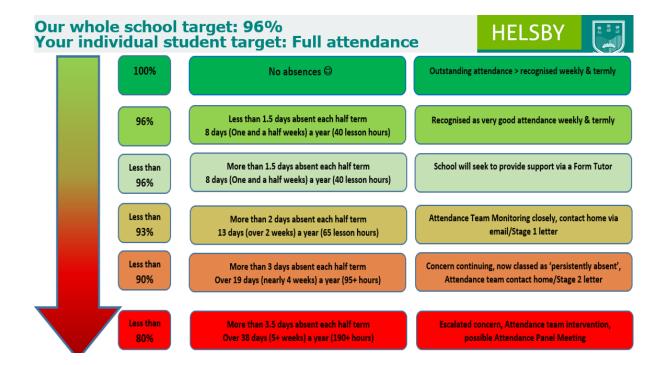
12.Enforced School Closure

If Helsby High School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is students will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

13. Impact

All students will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all students, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Students will leave Helsby High School ready for a successful transition to the next stage of their learning pathway.

The table below sets out the attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child's attendance.



Appendices to this policy:

See appendix 1 for Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) information

See appendix 2 for further breakdown of missed sessions

See appendix 3 for summary of support and sequence of escalation for formalised support SEE APPENDIX 4 FOR OUR 'POLICY ON A PAGE' SUMMARY

See appendix 5 for further details on roles and responsibilities of staff, parents – and students themselves

See appendix 6 for official Department for Education attendance and absence register code

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

2. A maximum of two FPNs may be issued in an academic year and these FPNs may be issued against each parent/carer of a child. Once two FPNs have been issued, should there be further unauthorised absences, the Local Authority are able to move to prosecution immediately.

3. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.

4. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:

- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
- Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
- For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during a school term. These do not need to be consecutive.
- For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrival at school in a term. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion.

6. The school must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.

7. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account any exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

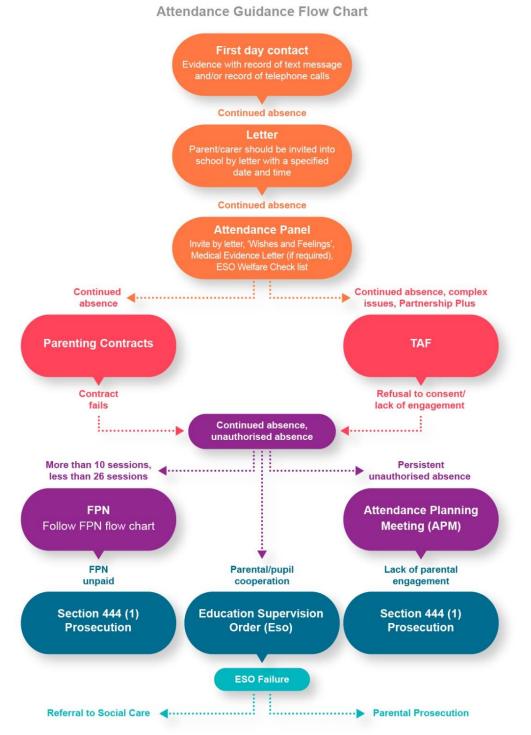
Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those students who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.).

The school will be specifically targeting this cohort of students, in an effort to improve their attendance in the future. The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
96%	8 Days	16 Sessions	1.6 Weeks	40 Hours of lessons
90%	20 Days	40 Sessions	4 Weeks	100 Hours Lessons

Appendix 3:

Support and Escalation Guidance



Second Offences and severe offences can go to Section 444 (1a) prosecution and will be PACE interviewed.

Appendix 4 - Attendance Policy Summary: Policy on a page

Our whole school target: 96%

Your individual student target: Full attendance



What will happen if I attend well?	 We will recognise your achievement: Weekly recognition > in form time * text home Half termly recognition > different recognitions each half term Termly recognition > celebration, assemblies, rewards We will also recognise your form group and year group attendance Every year we will also ask you and your parents/carers for your views about our attendance policy and our recognitions 	
What will happen if my attendance drops?	 You will get support to help you improve: Conversations with pastoral staff to listen to you, and to find out what school can do to help Staff contacting home to find out what your parents/carers say Agreeing a support plan with you/your parents/carers Monitoring your attendance progress Celebrating your improvements: ^(C) If things haven't got better, seeing what else can be done, and inviting you and your parents to meet attendance staff in school and find out if there is further help or support from outside school needed > setting a new target for monitoring 	

Our Attendance Lead (Senior Leadership): Mrs Warburton <u>swarburton@helsbyhigh.org</u> Our Attendance Lead (Extended Leadership): Mr Howe <u>phowe@helsbyhigh.org</u> Our School Attendance & Welfare Officer: Mrs Black <u>kblack@helsbyhigh.org</u> Our Student Support Co-ordinator for Attendance: Mrs Briscoe <u>wbriscoe@helsbyhigh.org</u> Our Attendance email address (priority way of communicating): <u>attendance@helsbyhigh.org</u> Our Attendance phone number: 01928 723551

Our students should arrive on site by: 8.35am

Our afternoon attendance register is taken at: 1.10pm

Our morning attendance register opens at: 8.40am (and closes at 9.30am)

Our school day ends at: 3.10pm

NOTES: Persistent absence classed as below 90%. All students are supported on an individual basis, but the core principle is to approach every case from a supportive angle. In persistent, prolonged and severe cases, school will liaise with the local authority for advice. In rare cases, once other options have been explored, schools and local authorities are expected to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and Prosecution. In these cases, parents are always advised in writing beforehand. FPNs for holidays in term time may and can be processed when an absence of 5 or more days occurs.

Roles and responsibilities:

1 The Helsby High School governing board

The Governing body is responsible for:

- > Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- > Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- > Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- > Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- > Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- > Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- > Our Attendance Link governor plays a key role in these processes

2 The Helsby High School Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- > Implementation of this policy at the school
- > Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- > Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- > Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- > Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader – along with the designated member of the school's extended leadership team - is responsible for the following:

- > Leading attendance across the school
- > Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- > Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- > Having an oversight of data analysis
- > Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- > Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. S Warburton and can be contacted via 01928 723551 swarburton@helsbyhigh.org

The designated extended team leader responsible for attendance is Mr. P Howe and can be contacted via 01928 723551 phowe@helsbyhigh.org

4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- > Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- > Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated leaders responsible for attendance
- Working with education welfare officers (external) and pastoral staff (internal) to tackle persistent absence
- > Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance and Welfare officer is Mrs. K. Black and can be contacted via 01928 723551 kblack@helsbyhigh.org

5 Form tutors and subject teachers

These staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on to the school SIMS data recording system.

6 School attendance staff

School attendance staff will:

- > Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Where necessary transfer calls from parents to the pastoral staff in order for more detailed support on attendance to be provided.

7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- > Make sure their child attends every day/session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.35am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return.
- > Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- > Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

8 Students

Students are expected to:

> Attend every timetabled session on time

Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register.

Code I	Illness	Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, OR if there have been a number of different occasions of illness reported over a school year.	
Code M	Medical or dental appointments	Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.	
Code C	Other circumstances	This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, e.g. – the date of a close family funeral	
Code D	Dual Registered	This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.	
Code J	Interview	This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam	
Code P	Approved sporting activity	This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.	
Code R	Religious Observation	This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day absence for religious events.	
Code V	Educational visits and trips		
Code W	Work Experience		
Code G	Family holiday not authorised by the school		
Code U	Arrived late to school after 9.30am (classed as absent for half day)		
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided		
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation		
Code X	Not required to be in school (not compulsory school age)		