



Attendance and Registration

1 Aim

The Hemel Hempstead School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. It is our aim for students to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and reach their full potential.

2 Rationale

The Hemel Hempstead School will work closely with parents, the Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Improvement Officer and Children's Services in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all students making every effort to discover the underlying reason for unauthorised absence.

The factors which may contribute to poor attendance are many and complex and some of them are outside the control of the school. On others, however, teachers can have an influence. Such factors include:

- bullying
- alienation from the social life of the school
- perception of failure in academic subjects
- poor self-image and lack of confidence
- inadequate understanding by the school of a student's difficulties
- a curriculum which may appear to be designed for the competent and competitive

3 Guidelines – The School:

- The importance of regular attendance should be made clear to parents and to students. The school website contains links to Attendance Guidelines for parents and students and an Attendance Expectations letter will be sent home at the start of each academic year.
- The Hemel Hempstead School is responsible for supporting the attendance of students and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance, implementing strategies and targets for improving attendance.
- Registers will be taken at the start of the morning session between 8.40am and 9am and once during the afternoon at 12.35pm. Students who arrive after registration will be marked late. A student who arrives at school an hour after registers are closed will be marked unauthorised late.
- The School will closely monitor attendance, following up unexplained absences and lates. Unexplained absences will be followed up each week via email/text. A lack of response will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised. The School will keep absence letters and notes on file for the current academic year.
- Attendance data will be issued to form tutors weekly and to HOYs half termly. Students whose attendance is a concern (<96%) will be monitored and put on the School's internal Attendance Concern Procedure (see below).



- The School will work closely with parents and outside agencies to develop strategies to improve persistent absence. The HCC AIO will be consulted as necessary.
- The School will summarise attendance regularly to parents on Interim Reports.
- The School will request HCC to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if a student has continued or persistent unauthorised absence or if a leave of absence is taken in term time that has not been authorised and the absence exceeds 15 sessions in the current and/or previous term.
- A register should be taken by the subject teacher at the start of each lesson. Absences from the lesson should be checked against the previous registration mark, if there appears to be internal truancy, the ABI team must be informed.
- The school will reward excellent and improved attendance and will issue consequences for poor punctuality to school and lessons (as per the HHS Rewards and Consequences System).
- Students returning after a period of absence should be helped to settle back in and assisted with work which has been missed.
- In some cases, special arrangements can be made to support the reintegration and education of students who may be absent from school long term. This may include liaising with external agencies, including Gade Schools Family Support, Herts Attendance Team, ESTMA etc.
- Students with a poor attendance record at primary school should be identified during the secondary transfer process and supported when they arrive in the school.

4. Guidelines - Parents:

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. Parents should avoid taking their child out of school as this will seriously affect their learning and their potential.

Parents should:-

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed, equipped and ready to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually.
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance expectations of their children's school.
- Work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Provide medical evidence for prolonged or irregular absence due to illness or hospital admission.



5. Absence from school

The Headteacher and Assistant Heads are responsible for the decision to mark absences authorised or unauthorised

- **Authorised absences** include illness, medical appointments, opens days, interviews, educational trips or visits, religious observance, approved sporting activities, work experience, family bereavement, study leave, performing (with a performance license), traveller absence and exceptional circumstance approved by the School.
- **Unauthorised absences** include leave taken without prior permission, not returning to school on the agreed date following an authorised leave of absence, absences not supported by evidence, arriving an hour after AM registers are opened and those that are not considered exceptional circumstance by an Assistant Head or Headteacher.

Parents should:

- Notify the School by email absence@hemelschool.com or by answerphone (01442 390103) on each day of student absence before 8.30am. For prolonged absences due to illness or a hospital admission provide medical confirmation. If parents do not contact the School, ABI will contact them to ascertain the reason for unexplained absence
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours. If appointments are unavoidable, the school should be notified in advance via the absence email absence@hemelschool.com or by telephone (01442 390103). Notes (or appointment cards) should be presented to the ABI room when the student signs out before leaving School. Those who forget to bring letters or appointment cards will not be allowed to leave school during the school day until contact is made with the parent via telephone
- Avoid booking holidays during term time. Under the Education Act the Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should be put in writing to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks before the proposed leave of absence. The Headteacher will respond in writing to a request for a leave of absence during term time.
- Avoid taking their children out of school without requesting permission or taking absence that the Headteacher has not authorised. Continued absence from school without good reason, or the taking of a holiday in term time which leads to more than 15 unauthorised sessions in the current or previous term will lead to a Penalty Notice being initiated. This will be issued by the Local Authority and requires the parents to pay a fine; failure to do so may result in prosecution.

Guidance for Students:

Good attendance and punctuality will lead to greater achievement and will be rewarded. Students should monitor their own attendance and make changes to improve poor attendance or punctuality.

- If a student has been absent from school, it is their responsibility to catch up on missed work.
- If a student misses registration (AM or PM) or an assembly or is late to school they must sign in at the ABI room. They will be marked LATE and will be issued a C1 for lateness if no reasonable explanation is received from home. 2 lates in a week will result in a one hour after school detention.
- If a student arrives an hour after registration this will be marked as an unauthorised late. Without reasonable explanation from home this will result in a one hour after school detention.



6. Attendance Concern Procedure:

The School has a clear set of procedures in place to address persistent absence. Persistent absence will be monitored by the ABI coordinator who will work closely with the HOY to initiate the following escalating system once a student's attendance drops below 96%:

Letter 1 – Attendance & Punctuality concern (attendance < 96%)

Sent to notify parents of the School's concern over a student's attendance, inviting parents to contact school if there are any difficulties. Review to follow.

Following Review:

Letter 2a – Attendance & Punctuality no improvement (attendance < 90%)

Sent to parents if there has been no improvement. Parents invited into meeting with the AIO Co-ordinator and either the HOY or Assistant Head. Review to follow.

OR

Letter 2b – Attendance & Punctuality Improvement (No further action/review)

Following review:

Letter 3 – Unauthorising Absence (after no improvement)

Sent to parents if attendance does not improve following meeting or parents failed to attend meeting. Further absence will not be authorised and parents risk a Fixed Penalty Notice. (Further review required)

OR

Letter 2b – Attendance & Punctuality Improvement (No further action/review)

Following review:

Letter 4 – Penalty Notice Formal Warning (Legal Letter)

If the student's attendance has continued to be unauthorised and they have accrued over 15 sessions in this and/or current term this is sent to parents to notify them that the local authority may issue a Penalty Notice.

OR

Letter 2b – Attendance & Punctuality Improvement (extended version)
(Penalty Notice process will not be initiated).

Following review:

Letter 5 - Fixed Penalty Notice Application

No improvement in attendance after 15 days of Letter 5 will result in an Application to Herts County Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices:

If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day=1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has been denied, the Headteacher can apply for the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A fine of



£60 is issued if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution for the offence.

7. Absence from lessons

- Students attending an activity that will require them to be absent from a lesson (for a School visit, sports fixture) should be identified by the member of staff organising the activity. Visits are listed on the Staff Calendar on the intranet and participants made known to all staff at least 24 hours in advance of the activity taking place. The ABI team will update SIMS to notify teachers who will be absent from lessons. Completion of the yellow activity forms should ensure that there is no conflict with important in-school work (i.e. controlled assessment). Students are expected to find out what work they have missed and to make it up adequately.
- Instrumental lessons are given by peripatetic specialist teachers to students in individual or multiple groups on various days of the week. Lessons are operated on a rota basis. Private study periods are used as far as possible for Key Stage 5 students and priority for lunch-time, break and out-of-hours lessons is then given to remaining Key Stage 4 and 5 students, so as to minimise conflict with examination orientated classes. The remaining students are extracted from classes on a rota basis.
- A copy of lesson times is posted on the Music noticeboard in School. The School policy is that no child should be refused permission to attend a music lesson, but if there is a problem please contact the Music Department.
- Special Needs: All Year 7 students are tested and those who show that they would benefit from extra help in English and/or Maths are withdrawn from some lessons on the normal timetable, so that they can have individual or small group tuition.

8. Registration Procedure

- Registration **MUST** take place online on computer or laptop as a matter of procedure. Only present 'P', Late 'L' or unexplained absent marks 'N' must be recorded online. The Attendance Officer will record a code for all absences that are known in advance. The Form Tutor **must not** overwrite any codes already recorded. If the Form Tutor knows the reason for a student's absence they should speak to, or send a message to the ABI team who will record the correct code for the absence. When manual registration is necessary Form Tutors **MUST** use the Manual Registration sheet in their register.
- A student must **not** be marked present or late unless he/she has actually been seen during registration by the Form Tutor. If a student arrives late, after registration, he/she should sign in at the ABI Room (Sixth Formers should sign in at the Sixth Form Centre). If arrival is after 8.40am for morning registration the student should be given a late mark 'L' and the minutes late are recorded. If a student signs in/arrives at school after 9.40am they should be marked as an unauthorised late 'U' if no valid reason is provided. If a student signs in late having attended a music lesson, organised sporting activity or for some other reason when he/she is in school but **prevented** from attending registration, the ABI team will mark present/late having received confirmation from member of staff in charge of activity.



- Official Class Registers from SIMS, manual registers (used for assemblies or covered registrations) Fire Drill registers and absence notes are filed in the ABI Office.
- Any extraordinary letters (e.g. outlining a family problem, stating a recurring medical condition etc) should be handed to 'ABI'. Any letters relating to change of contact details must be passed to Student Services (via register or by hand).
- The ABI Team must be notified in advance of ALL school activities requiring students to miss formal registration – this will avoid calling parents unnecessarily.

Absence Line messages and replies to First Day Response calls will be noted and absences cleared by the Attendance Officer.

Records of Lates, signing in and out will be kept by the ABI Team.

Registers are collected from the table outside the staffroom by Form Tutors each morning and afternoon. They must be returned to the staffroom corridor **promptly** on completion.

In order for there to be an accurate flow of information to and from the Form Tutor it is very important for you to keep the register wallet free of unnecessary paperwork.

FINALLY – no money should be sent to Student Services via the register.

9. Recording attendance of students educated elsewhere

- **ESTMA: Contact: Sue Bramley sue.bramley@hertfordshire.gov.uk**
The ABI assistant emails our contact every Friday morning to have the weekly attendance of our student's attending ESTMA confirmed. The student's record is then updated on SIMS.
- **DESC: Contact: Judith Coulson jcoulson@desc.herts.sch.uk**
The ABI assistant emails our contact every Friday morning to confirm the weekly attendance of our student's attending DESC. The student's record is then updated on SIMS.

10. Children Missing in Education

- See Appendix 1 for further details.

Appendix 1

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Definition

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Threat

Children missing education are at significant risk of

- Underachieving
- Being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation
- Becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The Hemel Hempstead School is responsible for:

- Entering students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity
- Recording and maintaining accurate information on the admission register – this involves recording changes of address and dates from which the student will live at that address
- Holding at least two emergency contact numbers for each student
- Monitoring students' attendance through the daily register
- Contacting parents via text and email on the first day of absence, where no contact from home has been received.
- If no contact has been received on second day of absence, a phone call is made to all contacts if necessary to establish student whereabouts
- Unexplained absences are followed up fortnightly by email
- Deciding whether the absence is an authorised or unauthorised
- Investigating any unexplained absences (see below)
- Informing the local authority of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission
- Addressing poor or irregular attendance
- Making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a student who has not returned to school following a requested absence
- Making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a student who has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days (according to Hertfordshire Attendance guidelines)
- Notifying the local authority CME department when all reasonable enquiries to establish a student's whereabouts have failed
- Arranging full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion
- Recording the name of the student's new school and the starting date if a student moves school
- Notifying the local authority when a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil

Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the student's name is removed from the register

When a student's name is to be deleted, the school will provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the student
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the student lives
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the student lives
- the full name and address of the parent who the student is going to live with, and the date the student is expected to start living there, if applicable
- the name of the student's other or future school and the student's start date or expected start date there, if applicable
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Investigating absence

When the whereabouts of a student is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the school (often in conjunction with the local authority) will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- conduct a home visit on the 4th day of absence for those students who are vulnerable or persistent absentees or where contact with parents/carers has been challenging;
- check local databases within the local authority;
- check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
- follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
- check with agencies known to be involved with family;
- check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
- check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
- check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
- in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
- home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.