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1. Introduction

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

It is the duty of parents*/ carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly (Education Act 1996 Section 7) with consideration of legal action against parents and carers who fail in this regard. Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. It is the responsibility of schools to actively encourage pupil attendance and put in place robust processes to tackle unjustified absence and truancy. The Education Welfare Service will provide support and guidance to both students, parents/ carers and schools in facilitating optimum pupil attendance.

2. *Definition of a parent

A parent means:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

3. Aims

- For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Impact Schools aim to create an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming ethos in which students feel valued and are stimulated to grow in self-esteem and experience success.
- We aim to encourage the educational development of all students by promoting the importance of school attendance. This will be supported by systems that recognise and reward high attendance.
- All staff aim to contribute to giving student attendance a high profile with clear procedures and expectations
- This policy will contain within it the procedures that each school will use to meet its attendance targets
- Our schools aim to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of individual students and positively encourages them to attend
- We aim to work in partnership with governors, parents and carers, the Education Welfare Service and other professionals to support students in achieving optimum attendance at school.

4. Students will be:

- Encouraged to attend school regularly.
- Rewarded for excellent attendance through our rewards system.
• Expected to inform a teacher or parent if there is a reason which may lead to their absence from school.
• Expected to bring written notification that explains any absence from school.
• Given a late mark and attend detention if they arrive late for school.

5. **Parents/Carers will be asked to:**

• Encourage their child to attend school regularly.
• Arrange for routine visits to doctors, opticians etc. to be organised outside of school hours.
• Inform the school in writing of the reason for an absence which should be presented to their child’s tutor upon their return to school.
• Discuss unavoidable absences well in advance of the event. A holiday/leave of absence request form should be completed. These are available from the school office.

**However, the planning of holidays in term time will not be authorised.**

6. **Attendance codes**

6.1 **Authorised Absences**

Absence will be authorised for:

• Genuine sickness (accepted by the Headteacher/Principal
• Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (whenever possible made outside school hours)
• Days of religious observation
• Exceptional family circumstances
• Formal exclusion from school

6.2 **Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will not be authorised for:

• Truancy
• Arrival (without justified reason) after registration period has closed
• Shopping
• Looking after family members (except in exceptional circumstances)
• Minding the house
• Birthdays or other similar events
• Any work (paid or unpaid) undertaken during school hours
• Family holidays during term time

6.3 **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

3.4 Continuing absence
If there has still been no contact from parents/carers after three days, the school will attempt to contact parents, and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed. The EWO will be informed of the actions the school has already taken.

According to the Education Act, any pupil who has unauthorised absence for 20 consecutive school days can be removed from the school roll under certain conditions. The school reserves the right to remove a student from the school roll when we, and the EWO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where a student is. If this action is to be taken, parents will be notified in writing, and the Local Authority will be informed. Responsibility for good attendance and punctuality remains that of the parents/carers.

6.4 Penalty Notices
Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used where the pupil’s absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.

6.5 Attendance Target
Impact school attendance target for each academic year will be 96%+

6.6 Punctuality
Morning registration will take place at the start of school.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as ‘late’. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. The acceptability of this reason is determined by the school. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will also require punctual attendance.

6.7 Implementing and monitoring this policy
Each school will be responsible for developing systems and procedures that ensure this policy is effectively implemented. These will be appendices to this policy and will be communicated to all parents, carers, staff and students. The school leadership and Governors will regularly review the implementation and impact of this policy and the school’s systems and procedures and take action where required to ensure it is effectively fulling the policy’s aims. This will then be reported to the CEO and the Trust Directors.
7. APPENDIX 1: CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

This should be read in accordance with our Attendance Policy and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

The law states every child should be receiving education. All professionals working with children have a responsibility to ensure a child’s wellbeing and to remain vigilant to their safety and welfare both inside and outside school. Children missing from education can be especially vulnerable.

2 DEFINITION

The Department for Education defines Children Missing Education as:

‘all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)’

This definition is adopted in this Children Missing Education Procedure.

3 WORKING TOGETHER

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. Schools within Impact Multi Academy Trust will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our children and young people are participating in education.

4 CHILDREN AT RISK

There are certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, and the most common reasons for this include:

- Children not registered by parents/carers at school when they achieve statutory school age
- Children not registered at school for the start of high school (Year 7)
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges
- Family breakdown
- Parents “withdrawing” children from school
- Schools off-rolling pupils without the correct checks and procedures being followed
- Exclusion (official and unofficial)
- Children being “home educated” but not officially recognised as such.

Certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include:

- Children in Public Care (Looked After Children)
- Children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Gypsy, Roma and Travelling families
- Children who have experienced domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances
Children with special educational needs
- Migrant families
- Children who have had attendance difficulties

The cost to children missing out on education can be very high – to themselves, their families and society as a whole. Children who do not engage in education are unlikely to gain any formal qualifications, and a fragmented educational history can result in low levels of functional literacy and numeracy in adult life.

Missing out on learning is also linked to other problems in later life including:
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Criminal and anti-social behaviour
- Involvement in prostitution and the sex trade
- Substance abuse
- Teenage parenthood
- Mental health and self-esteem issues
- Physical health issues (including those linked to poverty)
- Forced marriage

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify children and young people of compulsory school age missing education in their area. There is a Children Missing Education (CME) named point of contact in every Local Authority. Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education.

5.1 THE DUTY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local authorities have a duty under s436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving some other form of suitable education. Bromley Local Authority therefore must identify all children within the area and ensure that they are either registered pupils at a maintained, non-maintained or independent school, or that they are receiving another form of suitable education. Part of this duty therefore requires them to have details of those pupils registered at all schools who are ordinarily resident within Bromley.

5.2 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL

5.2.1 Children joining the school

When a child is expected to join school and does not arrive, we will initially try to contact the parents/carers by telephone or letter to find out why. If, after one week this has not been successful, the school will contact the Admissions Department at London Borough of Bromley to establish if the child has been registered elsewhere.
If the child is not found to be on roll elsewhere, the school will report this to the Education Welfare Officer and Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Officer.

After four school weeks (28 days) if the child has not attended the child will be removed from roll.

5.2.2 Children absent from school for a prolonged period of time

If a child is absent from school for a prolonged period, or fails to return from an agreed holiday, the school will follow normal procedures for investigating the absence. If this is not successful, a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made.

If a child is absent from school because they are believed to have moved away, and parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, the school will make a referral to Education Welfare Officer.

When the Education Welfare Officer has investigated, but not located the child, the school will report the child to the CME officer at the Local Authority.

If there is a concern regarding the immediate safety of the child a referral to Social Care will be made. Dependent on the level of concern, the Local Authority Designated Officer can also be consulted via the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.

It is the decision of the Headteacher/Principal as to when to remove a child from roll; however deletions from a school roll can usually be made after four school weeks (28 days) continuous absence where all reasonable attempts have been made to trace a child and the CME officer has been notified.

6. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

If a parent wishes to Electively Home Educate (EHE) his/her child, the school will deregister the child at the point written notification is received from the parent expressing their intention to do so. Deletion from the admissions register will take place as soon as notification is received.

The school will inform the Local Authority and send a copy of the letter received from parents to the EHE officer. Once this has been received, the child will be registered EHE and the parents will be contacted by them and arrangements made to monitor the provision.

8. APPENDIX 2 – Attendance procedures (Hayes School)

Hayes School will ensure that:

- Students on roll are registered accurately and efficiently using the SIMs electronic registration system. Registers will be taken punctually at 8.30am and 2.40 pm.
- A student arriving late to school will be registered in the student reception. If there is no legitimate reason for lateness they will be set a Senior Leadership Late Detention during that week.
- A student who arrives after 9.30 am will be registered as late after the register has closed and a note or telephone call will be required. Parents /carers will be notified by truancy call of any lateness where a note or explanation has not been provided. A Principal's Saturday Detention may be set if the reason for the lateness is not legitimate.
- If a student fails to register they will marked as an unauthorised absentee.
• Attendance targets are set for the school, year groups and individual students.
• Attendance and punctuality are monitored and sanctions imposed where appropriate.
• Attendance at lessons is recorded using lesson monitor through SIMs and feedback from subject teachers to form tutor ensures a rapid response to absence.
• Parents or guardians are contacted promptly when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised. Truancy call will be used everyday.
• The pastoral team monitors individual student attendance patterns. This is particularly important in KS4 and KS5 as it has implications for GCSE and A level assessment and may ultimately affect subject examination entries. **Students may not be entered for external exams if they have not produced Non Examination Assessment (NEA) and where non-attendance has disrupted study patterns and prevented completion of the course.**
• School attendance and individual student attendance statistics are published.
• In the Sixth Form, registration is compulsory except where study leave has been granted.

**Example of letter sent to all parents and carers**

Dear Parents and Carers

Hayes School always strives to maintain the highest standards in all areas. Ensuring high levels of attendance is no exception.

The evidence shows that students who attend regularly are more successful, gain better qualifications and higher grades. Good attendance is a habit that is life-long and an essential employment requirement. Parents and teachers have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure children attend school. With this in mind we are writing to you to ask you to help us in making sure your child gets the best education possible whilst they attend Hayes School.

All schools are expected to closely monitor the attendance and punctuality of students. At Hayes, form tutors, achievement co-ordinators and our attendance officer have responsibility for monitoring attendance and working with students and parents to raise, and maintain, high levels of attendance. We publish attendance data with each termly review/annual report.

Every child should aim to have attendance of at least 96%. Whether 96% is reachable or not in the short term, it must always remain a long term goal for all students. We understand that some students will have genuine reasons for a period of short-term or prolonged absence for medical reasons and these are commonly known to the school and will not result in the school taking any action other than to provide ongoing support. However, should a concern arise with frequent repeated instances of absence from school or persistent absence then we have to notify the Local Authority and may arrange a meeting with parents.

**Step 1:**
A letter will be issued to inform you of the school’s concern over your child’s attendance. This will be sent if your child’s attendance figure is below 96% in any term during an academic year. There may be legitimate reasons for this absence (unauthorised holiday and/or a period of illness). Should the letter not lead to an improvement in attendance in the subsequent term then the school will move on to Step 2.

**Step 2:**
You will be contacted by your child’s Achievement Coordinator or tutor to discuss the reasons for the regular absence of your child. This discussion will aim to agree a way forward and an attendance improvement plan will be devised to ensure your child is in school on time and as much as possible. Should this not lead to an improvement then the school will move on to Step 3.
Step 3:
A meeting will be called involving the Principal or his representative, parents and the Education Welfare Officer from WPA. During this meeting a Common Assessment Framework Form may be completed indicating that there are concerns over your child’s education due to poor attendance or late arrival. The Education Welfare Officer, together with the school, will then regularly monitor any improvement in the attendance or punctuality of your child.

The school has a qualified First Aider, so should your child feel unwell they will be looked after and sent home with your agreement if necessary. Some children wake up in the morning feeling a little unwell. Please send them in because most young people feel better once they are in school. We understand that there will be occasions when your child is unable to attend school and would ask you to report their absence from school on a daily basis to the attendance officer by calling the school on **020 8462 2767** before 9.00am.

The steps outlined in this letter are those to reduce persistent absenteeism and to improve the attendance of those students, for whom this is a concern. We are sure that you will appreciate that the school must do everything to ensure that students receive the education they are entitled to at all times possible in the interests of their achievement, welfare and future economic wellbeing.

Thank you in advance for your support
Yours sincerely

S Whittle
Principal