Policy: Attendance – Main School

Member of Staff Responsible   **T Milburn**

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Attendance

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1. Statement of Intent

Every student has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. The School aims to work together with parent/carers, teachers and outside agencies to ensure that all students, registered at the school, attend both regularly and punctually. We all share the responsibility of ensuring that attendance is maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are avoided. Our aim is to ensure that each student reaches his/her potential and in order to achieve this aim we promote high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality records. We are aware that a coherently formulated and consistently applied policy can help to increase levels of attendance and to reduce levels of unauthorised and unjustified absence.

- Students who do not attend school regularly may not be able to keep up with schoolwork and this will affect overall performance.
- In a busy school day, it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help the child catch up.
- It is not only the academic work but also the social side of school life which is missed during absence.
- Employers want to recruit people who are reliable and they always require comments on attendance records.
- Being on time is also vital, as lateness can be disruptive for the student, the teacher and for other students within the group. (DFE – Department Of Education).

2. Responsibilities

Parents/Carers are responsible, in law, for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. We ask them to familiarise themselves with the Attendance Matters leaflet (Appendix 1) and to work closely with the School to overcome any problems which may affect a student's attendance and welfare.

At Harrogate Grammar School we encourage and value high attendance rates. However, the School will recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents/ carers, the Attendance Manager and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The School will take a proactive approach in the promotion of good attendance, by defining expectations, with students and their parents/carers and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with the legal requirements.

2.1 Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities:

2.1(a) "*By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. Until the age of 18, a student must stay in full-time education for example at a school or college, start an apprenticeship or traineeship. As a parent you are responsible for making sure that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – the Local Authority may take legal action against you.*" (DFE)

2.1(b) Parents/Carers must ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration at 8.50 am.

2.1(c) Parents/Carers should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason, such as sickness, they must contact the school as soon

as possible, on the first morning of absence by phone or by email. The school should be made aware on a daily basis of any absence.

2.1(d) When the student returns from absence the parent/carer must send a letter stating the dates of absence and the reasons for absence.

2.1(e) Parents/Carers may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence; the school will record such absence as unauthorised.)

2.1(f) Parents/Carers must avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Taking holidays in term time means that students miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It is difficult for them to catch up on work at a later date. If this is absolutely unavoidable, parents/carers should complete a Request for Absence form, available from Reception or on the website and return this to the Attendance Officer at Reception, at least three weeks in advance of the period for which leave is to be requested. (Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances – as outlined in Section 3)

2.2 The School's Responsibilities:
2.2(a) The School will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to the student's educational progress.

2.2(b) Registers will be taken electronically at 8.50 am and at 1.45 pm. Students arriving after 8.50 am and 1.45 pm, without good reason, will be recorded as late for that session and will be given a negative on Classcharts. An electronic register is taken in all lessons. Should a student arrive late to the lesson without a good reason, the teacher will give the student a negative on Classcharts.

2.2(c) Registers will be completed in accordance with the DFE register codes and procedures, a copy of which is in the Register Folder.

2.2(d) The Attendance Office will monitor the attendance after the register has been taken for each session. Any unexplained absences noticed will be followed up immediately and parents/carers contacted by the Attendance Officer.

2.2(e) Should the student be absent, the Attendance Officer will enter the appropriate code on receipt of the absence note from the parent/carer. Should no explanation be received from the student's parent, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer directly.

2.2(f) Attendance and punctuality data are monitored on a weekly basis and a report issued to the Year Managers, Directors of Upper and Lower Schools, with responsibility for Key Stages 3 and 4 and the Headteacher. There is a weekly meeting of the Year Manager and Attendance Manager. At each of these meetings Attendance and Punctuality are main issues on the agenda. The Headteacher is kept informed of any concerns every half-term in a meeting with the Senior Leadership team.

2.2(g) Each year attendance targets are set for the school. A half-termly report is

prepared for Senior Staff and Governors which enables trends to be monitored and addressed.

2.2(h) The School employs a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance. It must be emphasised that constant vigilance over a continuous period of time is essential.

2.3 Celebrating Success:
- The School promotes good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, commendations and awards.
- The School offers praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.
- 100% Attendance Certificates are awarded to students on a yearly basis.
- Prizes are awarded to students who have 100% attendance during the five years at Harrogate Grammar School

2.4 Supporting Students:
- Support is available and put in place for those students who are unable to attend school and links are made via the Attendance Manager, Learning Support and the Year Manager. We also work with the relevant outside agencies to support the student.
- All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties are promptly investigated by the Year Managers and appropriate action taken
- Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a back to work interview with a Year Manager followed by a structured and individually tailored programme, as a short-term measure to ease the transition.
- The School has its own Attendance Manager and Attendance Officer who work closely with the Year Managers on attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Manager will contact parents/carers, make home visits and support both parents/carers and students on attendance and punctuality matters.
- Visits to feeder primary schools are made in order to ensure the fullest support for all pupils during secondary transfer and in order to help identify any students who may need special help.

2.5 Keeping Parents/Carers and Students informed:
If a child is absent from school:
- Parents/ Carers are informed by the Attendance Officer if a student has not been registered for a session and there has been no word of explanation from home or if the child absents himself or herself without permission.
- The Year Manager liaises with the Attendance Manager and the Attendance Officer if there is an attendance concern. Parents/ Carers are regularly and fully informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality via a phone call, e-mail or letter.
- The Year Managers, Assistant Headteacher, Attendance Manager and Attendance Officer communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters.
- Attendance information is given to the students in assemblies and to parents/carers via the school website or the school prospectus. Letters, emails and leaflets are sent to parents/carers if there are concerns. More serious concerns are discussed with parents/carers at meetings. A document

"Attendance Matters" (Appendix 2) has been produced by the School and this is available on the School's website. Parents/Carers are asked to familiarise themselves with this. The contents of this are advertised to students.

- Any issues of internal truancy are reported to parents/carers and dealt with seriously by the Year Manager and followed up with appropriate punishments according to the School's Positive Achievement System.
  We aim to reduce the likelihood of occasional non-attenders becoming persistent non-attenders.
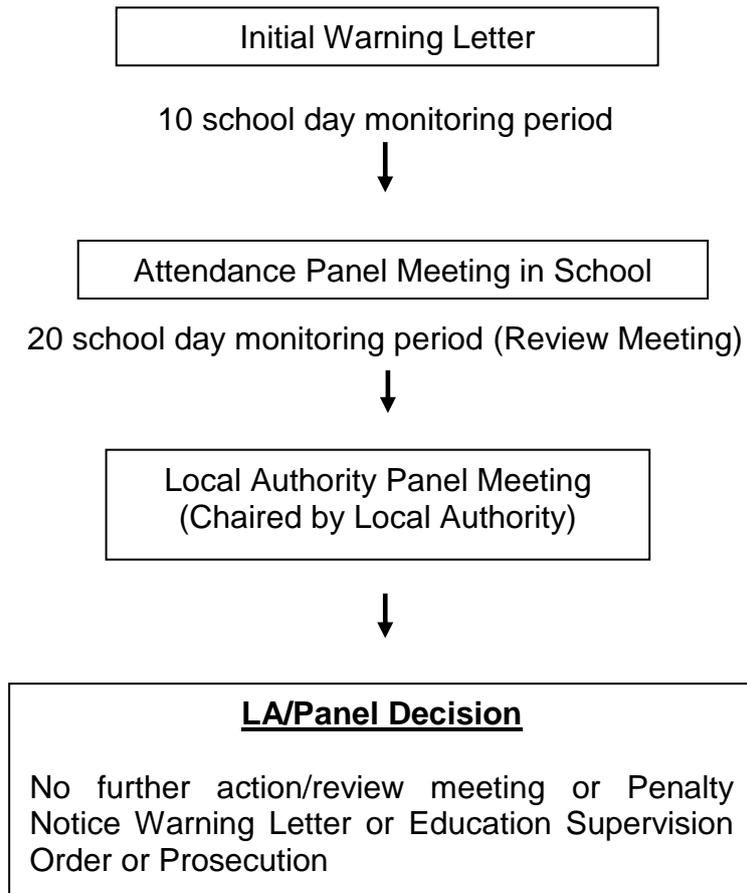
2.6   Monitoring Attendance
- The School focuses on and monitors those students who fall below the 90% attendance mark and takes further action when attendance falls below the 80% mark.
- Regular, structured meetings are held with the Attendance Manager and Year Manager in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance and punctuality are a source of concern. The importance of early identification and intervention cannot be overemphasised.
- As part of this process, persistent absentees are recorded. The Attendance Manager is informed and a student who give cause for serious concern is moved onto the School Attendance Pathway (See below)
- The School keeps a range of attendance data which is collected and analysed on a weekly, termly and annual basis.
- Termly reports are made by the Headteacher to the School's Governing Body, on the issue of attendance and punctuality

2.7   The School Attendance Pathway
If the School has serious concerns about a student's attendance, the parent/carer will be informed by letter of those concerns and a period of two weeks' detailed monitoring established. If there is no improvement or the attendance rate is 80% or less at the end of a two week monitoring programme, the School may elect to begin the School Attendance Pathway. This procedure has been recently set up by North Yorkshire County Council and replaces Fast Track to Attendance.

School Attendance Procedure – Time Restricted

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Initial Warning Letter        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

        10 school day monitoring period
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Attendance Panel Meeting in School │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

    20 school day monitoring period (Review Meeting)
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Local Authority Panel Meeting     │
│      (Chaired by Local Authority)     │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          LA/Panel Decision            │
│                                       │
│  No further action/review meeting or  │
│  Penalty Notice Warning Letter or     │
│  Education Supervision Order or        │
│  Prosecution                          │
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If at any stage in the above procedure your child's attendance improves significantly, the school will not proceed to the following stage. (Normally 95% (school target) and above during the monitoring period). This could be negotiated.

However, your child's attendance will continue to be monitored by Harrogate Grammar School and should there, at any time in the future, be any further concerns, the above procedure will be continued onto the next stage or recommenced from the first stage, depending on the situation.

3. **Types of Absence**

The School appreciates that there may be times when the student has to miss school, because he or she is ill. **Authorised Absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away, or where an explanation, offered afterwards, has been accepted as a justification for absence. Only schools can authorise absence. Should the school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine or acceptable; the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Examples of reasons for authorised absence:
* Illness, medical or dental appointments (although we do ask parents/carers to organise routine appointments outside the school day)
* Days of religious observance
* Study leave
* Exclusion
* Traveller child travelling

- Family bereavement
- Involvement in a public performance
- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- 'Special occasions' (the nature of such special occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)
- Lateness (when the student arrives after the register has closed.)

Any absence is damaging to the continuity of learning; we therefore only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances after careful consideration, where students have a history of regular attendance.

Absence in term time
Parents/carers must get permission from the Head Teacher if they want to take their child out of school during term time and this must be for no more than ten school days.

A Planned Absence form must be completed at least three weeks in advance of the requested absence and there must be exceptional circumstances.

The Head Teacher will make the final decision regarding the authorisation of the absence.

A parent/carer can be fined for taking a child on holiday during term time without the School's permission.

If a request is declined, and the child is absent from school during that period, the household could receive a warning letter or be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child taken out of school.

North Yorkshire County Council will be issuing all Penalty Notices requested by schools in the area which meet the criteria of ten or more unauthorised sessions leave (in a block or accumulatively over a four month period) taken without the permission of the school, and where the reason given does not meet any criteria for exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered, by the school, to be unacceptable.

Appendix 1

SEPTEMBER 2020 UPDATE BASED ON DFE GUIDANCE
1. Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

• parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly
• schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
• the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices

New category of non-attendance 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus'

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

• contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
• prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus

2. Codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, **schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak**, in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus':

• pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
• schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Examples of code X are:

• Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

>   o **If a pupil tests negative** and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to COVID-19:
>
>   ▪ they can **stop self-isolating and return to school**.
>   ▪ If the **pupil remains unwell** following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. *(Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result).*
>
>   **o If a pupil tests positive**
>
>   ▪ they should **continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days** from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia

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can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. **Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.**

• If someone in the **pupil's household has symptoms**, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

  o If the member of the household tests negative

  ▪ the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.
  ▪ Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

  o If the household member tests positive

  ▪ the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

  o In all cases of self-isolation, **schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test.** Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

• Pupils who are **required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus**

  o Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus.

  o The NHS test and trace guidance states that **a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.**

  ▪ In the event of a **confirmed coronavirus case** in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

• Pupils who are **required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

  o As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

  o If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

• Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

> o Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that children can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

> o If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be **contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.** Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that **parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.**

> o Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. *Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.*

3. Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.