



HONLEY HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Honley Partnership is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students. It recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting regular school attendance and excellent punctuality so that all young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Excellent progress depends on excellent attendance.

2. Aim

To promote a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality is a fundamental expectation of all learners, and in which schools and families work together to ensure that attendance.

3. Objectives

To have systems and procedures in place that:

- Encourage attendance and punctuality to school and lessons
- Inform parents/carers of absences and involve them in any attendance concerns for their children
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- To promote effective partnerships with all relevant services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

4. Attendance guidance for parents and carers

4.1 Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities to promote regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, students and all members of school staff. Collaboration and effective communication is essential.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parent/carers regularly, throughout the academic year, on their child's attendance and punctuality
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously
- Celebrate good attendance
- Make sure parents/carers have access to attendance data
- Recognise good or improving attendance

4.3 Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (**not by the parents**) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance may also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school issuing sanctions and/or initiating legal proceedings through the Local Authority. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not adequately explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Any absence not approved by the school

4.4 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10% or more** school time across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level does considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' 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 parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully. PA students and their parents may be subject to a Support Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support such as (but not exclusively) through a morning 'meet and greet', time with a learning mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in-group activities around raising attendance.

4.5 Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence detailing why the student is absent
- Report reason for continued absence

If a child is absent without explanation, school will:

- Contact parents/carers in the most appropriate manner on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them e.g. phone call / home visit
- If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan; Child in Need or Looked After Child, their Social Worker will also be informed of their absence
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with our pastoral staff and/or a senior member of staff if absences persist

If a child is missing, or goes missing, from school contact will be made with the police especially if:

- a) It is considered that there is an immediate and real risk that the child will suffer significant harm or cause significant harm to another person if they are not found; or
- b) All parents, carers and other family contacts are unavailable for contact

4.7 Telephone numbers and email addresses

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about many things, including absence, so we need to have current contact numbers and emails at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers and email addresses throughout the year.

4.8 Lateness

- Poor punctuality is **not acceptable**. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence
- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in registration on time
- All children arriving after the registration period will be required to sign in at the front office. The reason for lateness must also be recorded
- If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked into school to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time

4.9 School Actions

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the class teacher and Senior Leaders in resolving any problem together. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance and unauthorised absences persist, Senior Leaders may apply to the Local Authority to impose sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

The table below is a guide to indicate what may happen when a student's attendance falls below a certain percentage. Previous attendance history and the time of the year will be taken into consideration.

First day absence	Phone call home and/or home visit
90-97% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher to contact parent / carer in first instance • SLT monitors: continued absence may result in a letter home • SLT monitors: continued absence may result in parental interview with Attendance Officer involvement and possible Attendance Support Plan being introduced
Below 90% attendance (Persistent Absentee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further letter home • Further parental interview • Further Attendance Officer involvement • Use of Attendance Support Plan including 4 weekly review • Use of Attendance Panel • Use of Attendance Contract • Warning letter from Attendance Officer • Fixed Penalty Notice

5.0 Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote excellent attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

5.1 Term Time Absence

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child's or young person's future prospects. Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority for all schools within the Honley High School partnership. Reflecting national concerns around attendance, the Department for Education issued revised guidance in November 2016 strengthening the view that, in general, children should not be taken out of school:

"Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday."

Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the Ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.

These might include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the student's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

All requests from parents for absence must be made in writing to the school in advance of any travel arrangements being made (see the flow chart overleaf) and at least two weeks prior to the absence, using the leave of absence form which is available from the school office/website. The request should be sent for the attention of the Headteacher and outline the specific reasons why the request meets the requirements of "special circumstances".

The school will **not** authorise absences which are requested for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term

The Headteacher will determine if the request is reasonable. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the school will not approve any absence:

- Any student in full time education where current attendance is less than 95%
- Statutory exam periods
- In the month of September

Where family holidays or extended holidays are taken without proper authorisation, the schools may respond as follows:

- The absence will be treated as unauthorised and recorded on the child's Record of Achievement
- Parents may be given a Kirklees Penalty Notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence
- In certain circumstances, the school may delete students from the register who fail to return on the date they were expected back from extended leave
- Parents who repeatedly take their children on unauthorised leave of absences may be directly prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty, a parent will have a criminal record and face a fine of up to £1,000

Penalty Notices

A direct prosecution may be instigated:

- If parents have not sought permission from the head teacher before taking their child out of school for a leave of absence in term time.
- If the head teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway.
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date and no satisfactory explanation has been offered.

AND

- Where the individual absence has been recorded by the school as an unauthorised leave of absence in the attendance register on at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days).
- The parents have been issued with at least two previous penalty notices for leaves of absence for that same child.

Where parents continue to take unauthorised leave of absences in term time, despite having previously been issued with a Penalty Notice, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution under s444 Education Act 1996.

Failure to pay the penalty fine may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record.

Non-payment of penalty notices

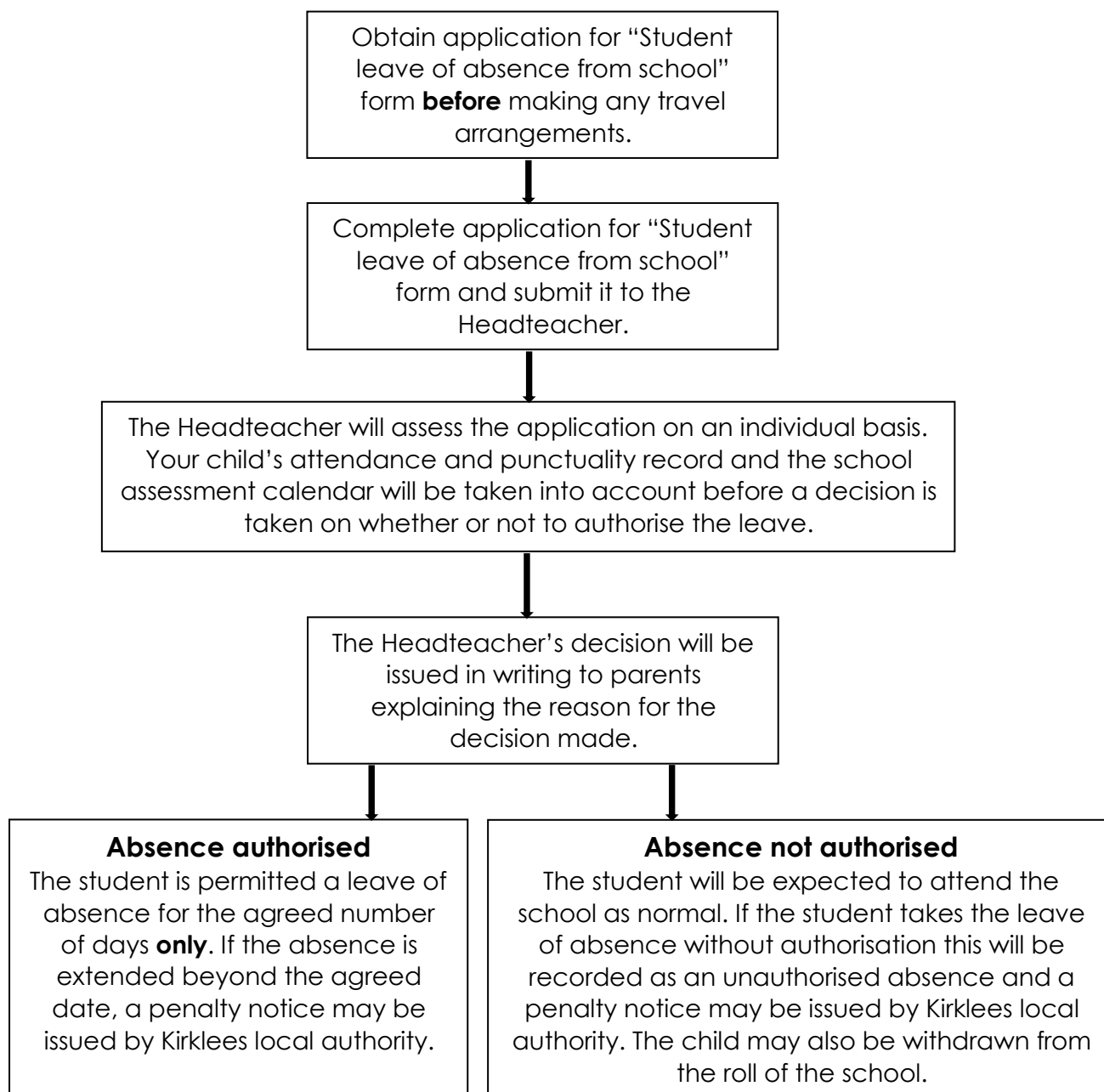
If after 28 days the notice remains unpaid, the Education Safeguarding Service will inform the parent/carer of subsequent action being taken.

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will normally trigger a prosecution (under the provisions of s444 Education Act 1996 or under the provisions of s103 Education and Inspections Act 2006). The prosecution can only be for the original offence of failing to ensure a child's regular school attendance and not for the non-payment of the penalty notice.

Should a penalty notice be issued for a second offence and there has been a failure to pay a previous notice, this fact may be used in evidence and will be deemed to be an aggravating feature of the offence.

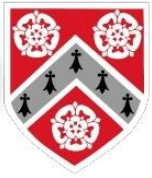
5.2 Summary of the application process for student leave of absence

(Due to exceptional circumstances in term-time)



Penalty notices:

- Are issued to **each individual parent** of **each child** not in school;
- Are £60 provided they are paid within 21 days of issue;
- Increase to £120 if they are not paid within 21 days of issue but before 28 days have expired;
- Failure to comply with a penalty notice may result in formal legal action by Kirklees Children & Young People's Service (if upheld this may result in a fine of up to 2500 for each parent of each child in school).



Appendix A – Application for Pupil Leave of absence from school

The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education) and the LA (Local Authority). Each request can only be judged on a case-by-case basis, you will receive a reply from the school in writing.

Student Name		Class	
Name(s) of other school age children		School(s)	
Absent from school date		Back at school date	
Total number of days absent from school			
Does the absence overlap with beginning or end of term?		Yes	No
Please state your reason for the absence			
Signature of Parent/Carer			
Name of Parent			
Date			
<p>The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child's attendance history (above or below 95%) 2. The time of year (Controlled Tests, Exams or September) 3. The length and purpose of the absence <p>Penalty Notice: Where the Headteacher decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct or there is a possibility that your child may be taken off the school roll.</p>			
OFFICE USE ONLY			
Current attendance %			
Number of late marks			
Number of days requested			
Would attendance fall below 95% if this request were granted?		Yes	No
Headteacher's Signature		Authorised	
Date		Unauthorised	

Reasons: