



## Attendance Policy

### Statement of Intent

The Hoddesdon School Trust works closely together in partnership with parents and external agencies in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all students. We recognise the link between attendance and achievement and thus the educational damage poor attendance can have on a young person.

### Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have. Parents will fulfil this responsibility when they register their child at our school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

We place great value on the relationship between home and school, and know that education is greatly enhanced when parents are fully involved with schools through taking an active interest, praising and encourage and attending events such as parents' evenings.

Parents will:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and resourced, and in a condition fit to learn. Those students that arrive after the school's designated start time are deemed as late;
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- ensure that they are aware of the Attendance Policy for The Hoddesdon School Trust;
- notify the school if the student is absent. This should be done on a daily basis and as early as possible on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence.;
- make every effort not to arrange medical/dental appointments during school hours and be aware that such appointments will affect the overall attendance;
- not book holidays during term time and seek guidance from the school if this is impossible.



Below is an illustration of how absence adversely affects learning:

<b>Attendance during one school year</b>	<b>Equates to days absent</b>	<b>Which is approximately</b>
<b>94%</b>	10 days	2 weeks
<b>90%</b>	19 days	4 weeks
<b>85%</b>	29 days	6 weeks
<b>80%</b>	38 days	8 weeks
<b>75%</b>	48 days	10 weeks
<b>70%</b>	57 days	11.5 weeks
<b>65%</b>	67 days	13.5 weeks

## Parental Responsibility and the Law

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring regular attendance at school or alternative provision: if a registered pupil is absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996; if the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause them to do so, they are guilty of an offence under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Parenting contracts were introduced by section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. Parenting contracts can be used in case of irregular attendance at school or at alternative provision. Parenting contracts are useful tools in identifying and focusing the problems behind non-attendance.

A parenting contract, in this case, is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school and should contain a statement by the parent that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are specified in the contract.

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary. The parent cannot be compelled to enter into a parenting contract and there is no obligation on any school within the Trust to offer one.

The school will engage with students and parents at all levels in relation to attendance concerns. In very rare circumstances where attendance reaches exceptional low levels and other intervention strategies have failed, the school will provide case evidence to the Local Authority who will consider whether it is necessary to pursue legal proceedings.

## Responsibilities – The Hoddesdon School Trust

- Wherever possible, we will support the attendance of students and deal with problems that may lead to non-attendance.
- We will call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session. We will also record whether students are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.
- For students of compulsory school age, we are required to differentiate in the school registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised. Therefore, relevant codes and comments will be applied to a student's register.

### **The Hoddesdon School Trust will:**

Consider the maximising of attendance rates, both in relation to individual students and for the student body as a whole, as one of their key tasks.

Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance.

Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and reflect this in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. The Trust will recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. We will also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come to school.

We will operate an Attendance Policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents.

### **In practice means that all schools within The Hoddesdon School Trust will:**

- ensure that legal requirements are met;
- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality;
- identify clear channels of communication with parents;
- ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available to all interested parties;
- identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence;
- make provision for first-day of absence contact;
- operate clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence;
- devise and enact interventions in a timely fashion, including liaising with external agencies if required, in a manner which is sensitive to the needs of individual students and families with a view to improving attendance;
- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness, and develop practice where required;
- maintain registers in accordance with the principles and procedures outlined in this policy;
- make it clear to parents that it is the school, not the parent, which authorises an absence. Authorisation for absence should be granted or withheld according to the criteria outlined in this Policy and in the individual school's attendance procedures.
- notify the Local Authority of any student of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This may lead to a pupil being removed from the school in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Section 8.
- make available and/or include in the annual report a student's attendance;
- put measures in place to ensure curriculum continuity in the event of prolonged absence.

## **The School Day**

The school day timings for each school within the Trust can be found on their websites.

Students who arrive to school after the register is closed will be marked as late and the relevant sanctions will be applied. The register will remain open for 10 minutes.

## **Attendance Registers**

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers will be taken at the beginning of each morning and at the start of the afternoon session. We will endeavour to ensure that students can be accounted for in an emergency and that a student who leaves the school premises during the day does not go unnoticed.

Registers will record whether each student is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a student of compulsory school age who is absent, the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school. Procedures for the operation of attendance registers may vary from school to school within the Trust, however these procedures will be published on the respective school's websites.

All absences for which a reason has not been established will be marked as unauthorised, with corrections made as soon as an explanation has been forthcoming.

We will ensure that in the event of a fire drill or other emergency evacuation that we are able to carry out an immediate headcount as to the number of students physically present on site.

## Punctuality

The Hoddesdon School Trust expects those attending its schools to arrive punctually to all educational sessions. Lateness will be monitored and addressed in accordance with the individual schools' Behaviour Policies.

When a student arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a student arrives after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation and the school accepts the explanation, he/she should be marked as an authorised absence for that session. If no reasonable explanation is provided then the register may be marked with a 'U' code which will allocate one session of unauthorised absence.

When a student arrives late having missed registration, his/her absence on site will be recorded for the purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Parents/carers of students who are late will be notified. Students who are late without offering a genuine reason will receive appropriate school sanctions.

## Authorising Absence and Approved Educational Activity

Only The Hoddesdon School Trust can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept it. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered, or when no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Where a parent/carer is seeking time off school for their child, they need to follow the absence request procedures as set out for the individual schools within the Trust.

Absence will be authorised if:

- the student is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school');
- the student is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent belongs;
- the school at which the child is a registered student is not within walking distance of the child's home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for any of the following, when it is the responsibility of the Local authority to do so:
  - the child's transport to and from school;
  - boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school;
  - enabling the child to become a registered student at a school nearer to his/her home.

- the student is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving evidence and reasonable indication of their intention to return. In such cases work will be provided to complete whilst they are away;
- the student is taking part in an approved public performance;
- there is a family bereavement;
- a Year 11 student is granted study leave;
- the student is involved in an *exceptional* special occasion. In authorising such absences the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance should be considered and up to a maximum of two days only may be granted;
- in exceptional circumstances a child has to look after a sick parent or sibling. (Such leave should be granted sparingly);
- leave of absence will not be granted by the school for a family holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances and evidence has been provided along with the request. If there are exceptional circumstances behind a request for leave of absence then the school will only authorise a maximum of two days; all other time taken will be marked as unauthorised. Absence will be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation. Unauthorised absences could lead to fines or legal action taken against the parent/carer.

In all cases above, **evidence must be provided** before the school can approve any leave of absence.

### **Approved Educational Activities**

The key features of an approved educational activity are:

- educational and directly linked to the school's programme;
- approved by the school;
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school.

### **Offsite Educational Activities**

Students who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as being at an approved educational activity. For statistical purposes such students may be counted as present even though they are physically absent. A student should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is on:

- an approved work experience placement;
- a field trip or educational visit;
- an approved sporting activity involving participation or taking part in a production;
- a link course;
- the student is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or for a place at University, College, or a place at another school;
- receiving special tuition at another school (or at an Education Support Centre (ESC)).

If a student is attending an ESC under dual registration procedures, The Hoddesdon School Trust will confirm that he/she has actually attended the ESC before marking him/her as 'approved educational activity'. Also we will only mark the student as such on those days when he/she is due to attend the ESC; on days when he/she is not due to attend the ESC he/she (unless attending one of The Hoddesdon School Trust Schools) should be marked as 'authorised absent'.

## Sixth Form Students

For students in the Sixth Form at any school in The Hoddesdon School Trust, attendance expectations and procedures are set out separately and will be set out on the school's website.

## Persistent Absence

A child with an attendance record of under 90% is deemed by law to be persistently absent from school. Attendance is monitored by the Head of Year and Head of School on a weekly basis. Attendance clinics are run to offer support to absent parents.

Where a student's attendance percentage is showing a cause for concern, then attendance procedure outlined on the school's website will be followed. The Trust's Attendance Officer may be involved in supporting the family and school to improve attendance.

## Truancy

All forms of truancy will be dealt with by the schools in line with their attendance and behaviour procedures. Truancy can be categorised as:

<b>Parentally condoned truancy</b>	Parents know that their child is not in school and have not taken sufficient measures to get them in.
<b>Parentally condemned truancy</b>	Parents know that their child is not in school and have been unable to get them in.
<b>Specific lesson truancy</b>	Students pick and choose which lessons they will attend.

## Categorisation of Attendance Rates

The Trust expects a minimum of 95% attendance in all of its schools.

Attendance below 90% is categorised by the Department for Education as "persistent absenteeism". This will always result in intervention by schools in the Trust.

Those with attendance between 90% and 95% should be striving to raise their attendance.

## Prosecutions by Local Authorities

The Local Authority issue penalty notices to parents if their child has missed school without permission. The school generally requests this.

### When the Local Authority might issue a penalty notice

- The pupil must have at least 15 half days of unauthorised absence in the current and / or previous term.
- The school must have sent you a formal warning.
- The school, academy, police or attendance improvement officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could stop any more absences.
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any legal action being taken.

### Cost of a penalty notice

£60 – if paid within 21 days.

£120 – if paid between 21 and 28 days.

If you don't pay the penalty notice in the given time, then the Local Authority will prosecute you (if they haven't withdrawn the notice).

Penalty notices apply to each child individually. If you get a penalty notice for more than one child, you have to pay each penalty.

If the offence is about one child and both parents are sent penalty notices, each parent needs to pay the penalty. For example, two lots of £60 if paid within 21 days.

## Attendance Procedures

Attendance Procedures for students of compulsory school age at each of the Trust's schools are included as appendices to this policy on their websites

# Appendix A

## Attendance Procedures for students of compulsory school age at The John Warner School

Updated : February 2020

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1. Students need to be in school at 08:50 for morning registration. Any student arriving after this time will be deemed as Late and the register will be marked with the late code (L). Reasons for a student's lateness will be recorded on their register and sanctions may be given. For those students whose lateness becomes a cause for concern (more than 10 sessions), the (U) code may be used if they arrive after the end of registration. The (U) code will issue the student with one session of unauthorised absence each time it is applied.
2. Registers will be taken twice daily during morning registration and afternoon registration. The school will make every attempt to take a register for each lesson during the day. If a student is not present at registration then the teacher will mark the register with the code for not present (N).
3. A school administrator will send an email to the parent/carer(s) before 10:30 (morning registration) and after 14:30 (afternoon registration) if a register is not showing a relevant absence code; this email will be for safeguarding purposes whilst the administrative staff attempt to locate the student on the school site.
  - a. Parent/carer(s) should be aware that the email may be sent if their child(ren) has missed registration or in some instances can be sent due to an administrative error.
  - b. If we are unable to find a student then phone calls will be made to all those who have parental responsibility.
  - c. If we do not receive a response to the email and/or phone calls, then the student's register will be marked with the O code and a comment explaining the steps that have been taken to try and locate the student's whereabouts. This will allocate one session of unauthorised absence to your child's attendance register, or two if it is for the whole day.
4. Regular attendance meetings will take place with the pastoral team to ascertain those students whose attendance is showing a cause for concern. All those whose attendance is below 95% will be flagged up during these meetings:
  - a. **Attendance concern letter (AC1)** - this will outline our initial concerns regarding your child's attendance
  - b. **Attendance contract (AC1C)** - this contract will be made with the student and form tutor and a copy will be emailed home to the parent/carer(s).
  - c. **Attendance concern letter (AC2)** - this letter will invite you to a meeting and your child will be added to our unauthorised absence list
  - d. **Breach letter (AC3)** - this will be a final warning that we may now ask the Local Authority to issue you with a penalty notice
  - e. **Home Visit** - you may receive a home visit from our Family Support Worker at any time
  - f. **Contracts** - we may ask you or your child to enter into a contract with us to try and help improve their attendance
  - g. **Referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team** - if we have been unable to resolve concerns in relation to your child's attendance, we will refer your case on to the Local Authority Attendance Officers at Hertfordshire County Council who have a responsibility for ensuring that parents fulfill their legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. If they move forward with legal proceedings, then parents will receive a summons to appear at the Magistrates' Court. If convicted they can be fined up to £2,500 each and/or sent to prison for 3 months. They may also apply for an Education Supervision Order.

- h. Penalties will only be issued as a last resort and only where all other attempts to improve attendance have failed. The one exception to this rule will be for those that take family holidays during term time without permission.
  - i. Parent/Carer(s) who take their children out of school during term time for family holidays that have not been approved by the school, may receive the AC3 letter with a penalty being issued on their next absence.
5. Parents who wish to remove their child(ren) from The John Warner School must complete the “Leaver Notification Form” which can be downloaded from the school’s website. A child may not be taken off role and no information may be passed on to other schools until we have this information.
  6. The John Warner School must inform the Local Authority when they remove a child from the school register.
  7. Any absences approved will be in line with The Trust’s Attendance Policy.
  8. Evidence for exceptional circumstances must be provided before any such absences can be approved.
  9. The school will aim to respond to absence requests **that they are unable to authorise** within 48 hours of receipt during the normal school working week. During weekends and school holidays, a response will be sent as soon as is possible.
  10. Notification of absence responses that have been declined will be sent via email to all parents with parental responsibility who have requested correspondence. You will not receive an email, other than your submission confirmation, for absences that are approved.
  11. The register will be marked with the appropriate code along with a comprehensive comment as to why the absence request has either been approved or declined. This comment will include the staff initials and the date it was made.
  12. If the school requests that you provide medical evidence for absences, then this should be in one of the following forms:
    - a. An appointment card or text appointment message for the doctors, hospital etc;
    - b. A copy of a prescription;
    - c. A receipt from the pharmacy clearly showing the date that medication was purchased;
    - d. A compliment slip or letterhead from the doctor’s reception showing the date and time of the student’s visit;
    - e. If you are unable to provide medical evidence when requested, then the school may without notice send the Family Support Work to undertake a home visit should the student be absent.

*Please note that we do not recommend that you make a doctor’s appointment for minor ailments such as colds, headaches etc.*
  13. You may at any time request a copy of your child’s attendance register along with all the comments that have been made regarding their attendance.

# Reporting Absences

## For a planned appointment or exceptional leave of absence

If you wish to request exceptional leave of absence, for example a funeral, holiday, interview, family wedding etc or a planned medical appointment:

1. Complete the online absence request form in advance of the appointment/event <http://www.johnwarner.herts.sch.uk/forms/absence-request-form> and attach a copy of your appointment card/text or proof of exceptional circumstances;
2. The student should report to reception on exit and return so that the register can be updated.

## For unexplained illness or an exceptional event

1. Telephone the school's absence line each day that the student is absent first thing in the morning by:
  - a. Telephoning 01992 462889 (option 1)
  - b. Emailing [absence@johnwarner.herts.sch.uk](mailto:absence@johnwarner.herts.sch.uk)
  - c. Replying back to the email you receive from the school asking why your child is absent on the day of absence itself

**These procedures will be regularly reviewed and may be subject to change and revision through the school year.**

# Appendix B

## Attendance Procedures for Sixth Form Students at The John Warner School

**Date: June 2017**

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All Sixth Form Students will sign a Sixth Form Contract at the start of each academic year, part of which sets out the attendance expectation of students in The John Warner Sixth Form.

1. Year 12 students will register in their form room with their form tutor. Year 13 students will register in the Sixth Form Study Centre using the biometric thumb print scanners.
2. Students need to be in school at 08:50 for morning registration. Any student arriving after this time will be deemed as Late and the register will be marked with the late code (L). Reasons for a student's lateness will be recorded on their register and sanctions may be given.
3. Registers will be taken twice daily during morning registration and afternoon registration. The school will make every attempt to take a register for each lesson during the day. If a student is not present at registration then the teacher will mark the register with the code for not present (N).
4. A school administrator will send an email to the parent/carer(s) before 10:30 (morning registration) and after 14:30 (afternoon registration) if a register is not showing a relevant absence code; this email will be for safeguarding purposes whilst the reason for the student's absence is investigated.
  - a. Parent/carer(s) should be aware that the email may be sent if their child(ren) has missed registration or in some instances can be sent due to an administrative error.
  - b. It may also be necessary for phone calls to be made to all those who have parental responsibility so that the reason for a student's absence can be ascertained.
  - c. Once we have ascertained the reason for the student's absence from school, then the student's register will be marked with the appropriate code and a comment explaining why the absence has occurred.
5. Monthly attendance meetings will take place within the Sixth Form Leadership Team to ascertain those students whose attendance is showing a cause for concern. All those who have 10 or more absent sessions (five days) will be flagged up during these meetings. Students who create a cause for concern regarding their attendance will be subject to the following steps:
  - a. Phone call home from Head of Sixth Form outlining attendance concerns and potential further sanctions if attendance does not improve;
  - b. Formal letter outlining attendance concerns and potential further sanctions if attendance does not improve;
  - c. Second formal letter home explaining that attendance concerns still remain and outlining the next steps if attendance does not improve;
  - d. Parental meeting to discuss attendance concerns leading to student being placed on a Sixth Form Behaviour Contract;
  - e. Following continual support over an extended period of time, a student with consistently low attendance may have the place within the Sixth Form withdrawn.
6. Parents who wish to remove their child(ren) from The John Warner School must complete the "Leaver Notification Form" which can be downloaded from the school's website. A child may not be taken off role and no information may be passed on to other schools, colleges or employees until we have this information.
7. All requests for absence must be received using the "Absence Request Form" which can be accessed from the school's website (paper copies are available from reception).
  - a. Sixth Form absences will be considered in line with The Trust's Attendance Policy.

- b. Evidence for exceptional circumstances should be provided along with your request.
  - c. The school will aim to respond to absence requests within 24 hours of receipt during the normal school working week. During weekends and school holidays, a response will be sent as soon as is possible.
  - d. Absence responses will be sent via email to all parents whom have requested correspondence.
  - e. The register will be marked with the appropriate code along with a comprehensive comment as to the action taken. This comment will include the staff initials and the date it was made.
8. You may at any time request a copy of your child's attendance register along with all the comments that have been made regarding their attendance.

**These procedures will be regularly reviewed and may be subject to change and revision through the school year.**

# Appendix C

## Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfEs guidance on school attendance.

Attended	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	N/A
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Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	A Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma or Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling and has been agreed by the school
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code will be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with the O code if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reasons for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrives after the register has closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend (Sixth Form)
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local or national emergency or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term, bank holiday or inset day