

HAZELWICK

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was updated in September 2020

The policy will next be reviewed in: September 2022

Introduction

Hazelwick School strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Hazelwick School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all students to realise their true potential.

Hazelwick School recognises that punctuality and regular school attendance are essential to social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning and academic progress.

Students with no absence are 3.1 times more likely to achieve a Level 5 or above than students who missed 10 – 15% of all sessions.

Students with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs grades 9 – 4 including English and Math, than students who missed 15% - 20% of KS4 lessons. Of students with absence of 50%, only 3% managed to achieve 5 or more GCSE grades 9 – 4, including English and Maths.

All school staff work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school has established a system which recognises students with good attendance, acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To continue to meet these objectives Hazelwick School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Hazelwick Attendance Policy aims:

1. To encourage and support high rates of attendance for all students at Hazelwick
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- maintain a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
- maintain a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- maintain a system of publicising and recognising good attendance and punctuality and apply appropriate sanctions where necessary
- maintain a system which monitors, reviews and improves student attendance
- promote effective partnerships with the West Sussex Pupil Entitlement: Investigation team and with other services and agencies
- recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

Parents'/Carers' Duty

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. The only reasons why a child may, legitimately, be absent from school are:

- Ill health
- Religious observance (see below)
- Where leave of absence has been granted by the Headteacher (see below)
- Where absence has been authorised through the use of the school 'Exeat' procedure (Appendix 2)
- Where transport should be provided by the local authority but is unavailable
- Following Government guidance on Covid-19 related matters

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their son/daughter leaves for school on time
- Provide a detailed written explanation for absences on the first day of their child's return to school
- Ring or email school on the first day of absence and on following days, where appropriate (see below)
- Contact the school (Head of Year) when concerned over issues relating to the child's attendance
- Encourage and support participation in extra-curricular activities
- Support the school in its aims to improve attendance

Students are expected to:

- Arrive at school by 8.25am and be ready to register in the form room at 8.30am
- Be in the classroom ready to be registered for the statutory afternoon school session at 12.25pm.
- Move purposefully between lessons and arrive in class on time
- Ensure parents/carers provide a note explaining absence and pass the note to the Form Teacher on the first day of return
- Bring in a letter from home when requiring release from school for medical appointments, etc. Fill in the details of the request in the Planner and present it to the Head of Year, in advance of the day concerned where possible (The 'Exeat' system) – see below and Appendix 2
- Play a full and active part in the wider life of the school

Leave of absence

- Parents/Carers should be aware that they **do not have the right** to take their child out of school during term time. Only the Headteacher or nominated representative can authorise absence
- Parents/carers must always request permission in advance for their child to miss school
- Holidays during school time will **not** be authorised
- Absence taken when not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and will be subject for consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme (see details below)
- To apply for permission for their child to be absent from school, parents/carers must complete the *Request for Leave of Absence* form and return it to school for consideration at least 10 school days (where possible) in advance of the proposed leave of absence. See Appendix 1

Parents/carers need to be aware of our policy and procedures with regard to the following issues:

- *Medical appointments:*
 - Such appointments count as absence. Where possible, these should be arranged for out of school hours. Requests for students to attend such appointments during school hours should be made in advance, where this is known, using the 'Exeat' system.
- *Day of Religious Observance:*
 - This counts as an absence. We will authorise a maximum of **one** day for each relevant religious festival. This is provided that a request is made in advance of the absence. Time taken in excess of one day will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.

- *Holiday:*
 - Holidays taken during school time will **not** be authorised.
- *Leave of Absence:*
 - Requests for leave of absence will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Such requests will only be granted 'in exceptional circumstances'.
 - Where a request for leave of absence is granted, it will be recorded as an 'authorised absence'.
- *Unauthorised absence and the 'Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme':*
 - Absence taken when not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and will be subject for consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The 'Exeat' system

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise unavoidable absences for reasons including:

- medical/dental appointments
- interviews for employment/further or higher education
- agreed external tests e.g. music grades, driving test etc.
- compassionate grounds e.g. bereavement

This is usually managed through the school's 'Exeat' system. The exception to this is when the request is made on compassionate grounds in which case appropriate liaison/communication is made between school and home.

Notifying Absences

The school uses the InTouch system to communicate with parents/carers whose child is not in school on the first day of an absence and any subsequent days. The school expects a response from the parent/carer via the InTouch system or alternative. If no response or other communication is received, the school will follow up their initial contact with a phone call.

Medical Appointments – information for parents

Parents/Carers are asked to make all but emergency medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. If this is not possible, please give as much notice as possible of the intended appointment. Requests for absence in this case are managed through the Exeat system. See Appendix 2. If you need to collect your child from school for an appointment, he/she must sign out at Reception and back in again when they return. If your child must attend a series of appointments during the school day, please ensure, where possible that the times and days of appointments are varied to avoid the same lesson being interrupted each time.

Punctuality

The school day begins promptly at 8.30am. Students will be reminded of this on the first occasion they arrive late at school followed by a verbal warning the second time they are late. The third late arrival will result in a detention. Further sanctions will be applied if required for repeat offenders. Parents have access to daily updates regarding their child's punctuality via the InSight system. Periodic formal punctuality checks are carried out and letters are sent to the parents of any student identified through this process.

Monitoring

All student attendance is monitored and tracked closely. If a student's attendance falls below 95% , it is a cause for concern. Depending on the reasons and the extent of the non-attendance, parents/carers may be contacted in order to discuss the matter with a view to seeing how we can work in partnership to improve the situation. In cases where a student's attendance falls below 92%, more formal measures may be required. Where attendance does not improve and falls below 90%, or in circumstances of unauthorised absence, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority.

Habitual lateness is also a cause for concern. The definition of late is where a student arrives to registration after the register has been taken. The attendance record will be coded with 'L' for late. Students are expected to be in registration for 8.30am. The afternoon registration closes 10 minutes after the start of Lesson 4. Students will be marked late (L) if they have not registered by this time. Sanctions for late arrivals are detailed under punctuality.

If a student arrives after 8.50am (morning registration) or the close of afternoon registration their attendance record will be coded with a 'U' which carries an unauthorised absence for the entire session. Students who accumulate lates in the 'U' category may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine). See details regarding the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Scheme below and in Appendices 1 and 4.

Poor attendance and lateness after the registers close will result in referral to the West Sussex Pupil Entitlement: Investigation. This could lead to legal proceedings being initiated including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice (see below). The school has a statutory obligation to inform the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend regularly or has had ten or more sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence.

Recognising and Celebrating Excellent Attendance

Each Year team recognises the excellence of the attendance figures for their year group, for example, through assemblies. The importance of good attendance is reinforced at these times. Lists of students who have exceptional attendance figures are displayed. Prizes for exceptional attendance are awarded in each of the end of year Awards Evenings. Attendance is a key criterion for Congratulations trips.

Support

The school offers a variety of different support to students and their families where attendance is an issue. This may include support from a form teacher, a mentor, a school counsellor, the pastoral team, the SENDCO, senior staff and the Hazelwick EWO/IWO. Where necessary the school will enlist the support of the West Sussex Pupil Entitlement: Investigation and/or other agencies as appropriate.

Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines)

Unauthorised absence and the 'Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme':

- Absence taken when not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and will be subject for consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Scheme – information for parents/carers

Regular and punctual attendance at school is vital if students are to maximise their opportunities to achieve success across a broad range of activities. Securing such attendance outcomes is also a legal requirement and a responsibility that is placed upon parents.

The Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme for unsatisfactory school attendance is in use in West Sussex. A Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine given for 'unauthorised' absence from school. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school.

Absences which are not 'authorised' by the school are subject to consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme. This Notice, issued by the Local Authority (West Sussex) dealt with by the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team, requires the payment of a fine of £120 per parent per child. Each case will be looked at individually, initially within the school and then by the Local Authority (West Sussex).

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are generally issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10-week school period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria.

For 'unauthorised' holidays in term time, no warning period is given since parents will be aware of the consequences.

Please note: should a period of unauthorised absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, an FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead, the matter may be brought directly before the Court.

Non-Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120, and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty. If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days, the amount payable is reduced to £60.

The circumstances in which the school can issue a fixed penalty notice (fine) are determined by the Local Authority. Up to two fixed penalty notices may be issued per child per year. Notices will be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school in the following circumstances:

- early intervention to address unauthorised absence (where that unauthorised absence would meet the criteria for a prosecution under s444, 1996 Education Act)
- unauthorised holidays in term time
- unwarranted delayed return from an authorised absence (without school agreement)
- persistent late arrival after the register has closed



Request for Leave of Absence

Parents/Carers should be aware that they **do not have the right** to take their child out of school during term time.

They must always request permission in advance for their child to miss school. Holidays during school time will **not** be authorised.

Absence taken when not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and will be subject for consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme (see extracts from the school's Attendance Policy overleaf). The final day of each term contains the two statutory registration sessions and therefore counts as a full school day, despite the slightly earlier finish.

To apply for permission for their child to be absent from school, parents/carers must complete this form and return it to school for consideration at least 10 school days (where possible) in advance of the proposed leave of absence.

PARENTAL SECTION

Surname of child:		First name of child:			
Date of birth:		Form Group:			
Surname of parent/carer:		First name of parent/carer:			
Address of requesting parent/carer:					
Relationship of requesting parent/carer:		Is this the child's home address?	Yes	No	
Reason for requested leave of absence:					
Length of absence requested (school days):					
Date(s) of absence requested:					
Would your child miss any examinations?			Yes	No	
Is his/her attendance already below 94% or a previously agreed individual target?			Yes	No	
Has your child already had approved leave of absence during this school year?			Yes	No	
If so, state the number of days previously agreed:					
Have you had a previous request for leave of absence declined during this school year?			Yes	No	
Does your child have siblings in other schools for whom you are also requesting leave of absence?			Yes	No	
If so, state which schools your other child(ren) attend:					

Signature parent/carer:		Date:	
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FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Signature of Head of Year:		Leave of Absence approved?	Yes	No
Signature of Headteacher:				

Extracts from the Hazelwick School Attendance Policy

Parents need to be aware of our policy and procedures with regard to the following issues:

- *Medical appointment:*
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- *Day of Religious Observance:*
 - This counts as an absence. We will authorise a maximum of **one** day for each relevant religious festival. This is provided that a request is made in advance of the absence. Time taken in excess of one day will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.
- *Holiday:*
 - Holidays taken during school time will **not** be authorised.
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 - Where a request for leave of absence is granted, it will be recorded as an 'authorised absence'.
- *Unauthorised absence and the 'Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme':*
 - Absence taken when not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and will be subject for consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Scheme – for your information

Regular and punctual attendance at school is vital if students are to maximise their opportunities to achieve success across a broad range of activities. Securing such attendance outcomes is also a legal requirement and a responsibility that is placed upon parents.

The Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme for unsatisfactory school attendance is in use in West Sussex. A Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine given for 'unauthorised' absence from school. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school.

Absences which are not 'authorised' by the school are subject to consideration under the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme. This Notice, issued by the West Sussex Education Welfare Service, requires the payment of a fine of £120 per parent per child. Each case will be looked at individually, initially within the school and then by the Local Authority (West Sussex).

When a student has reached a figure of 10 school sessions (within a recorded 10-week school period) missed without 'authorisation' by the school, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

For 'unauthorised' holidays in term time, no warning period is given since parents will be aware of the consequences.

Non-Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120, and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty. If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days, the amount payable is reduced to £60.

Appendix 2

The 'Exeat' system

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise unavoidable absences during a school day for reasons including, for example:

- medical/dental appointments
- interviews for employment/further or higher education
- agreed attainment tests e.g. music grades, driving test etc.
- compassionate grounds e.g. bereavement

This is usually managed through the schools' 'Exeat' system. The exception to this is when the request is made on compassionate grounds in which case appropriate liaison/communication is made between school and home.

An Exeat page is within the Student Planner (see below). Parents should communicate the reason for the request for absence to the relevant Year Team(s) and then complete the Exeat form. Students must present the planner to the Head of Year for signature. The student must then present the planner to the relevant class teacher either by way of explaining their late arrival to lesson or explaining the need to leave early. Students should always sign out/in at the main reception when using the Exeat system and, again present the relevant page of the Planner to the receptionist. If collecting their child for an appointment parents/carers should report to the main school reception.

EXEAT PAGE

Late to School or Leaving school

Date:.....Time:.....

Reason :(please circle) Medical / Dental / Other

Parent/Carer signature.....

Head of Year signature.....

Appendix 3 - Extracts from 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2020

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Sections 444 Education Act 1996

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

This leaflet offers you a brief summary about the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) scheme and what it could mean for you.

What is a FPN?

It is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school, rather than the matter being brought before the courts. It is issued per parent, per child. Please note **only** a Head Teacher can authorise absence from school.

Who issues them?

In West Sussex the Local Authority issues them through the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

When are they used?

When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM.

This includes; any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher. The Government has directed Head Teachers may only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

FPNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Please note

If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days; Pupil Entitlement: Investigation may consider a FPN is not appropriate.

In these instances the matter may instead be brought directly before the Courts.

Appendix 4 – Guidance leaflet from West Sussex (Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team) contd.

How much is the FPN?

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty.

If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

How do I pay?

The information on how to pay is included on the FPN. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay within the 28 days the Authority will consider instigating a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence of poor school attendance. If proven this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child and/or a parenting order or a community service order and also costs.

Can I appeal?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Fixed Penalty Notice?

You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the Fixed Penalty Notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

REMEMBER

School staff would much rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Fixed Penalty Notices or Court

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

Fixed Penalty Notice Team
West Sussex County Council
2nd Floor Centenary House
Worthing
West Sussex
BN13 2QB

Email:

FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

Advice Line:

03302 228200