Howden School Attendance Policy

Effective Date:	1 May 2021
Review Committee	The Governing Body
Minuted Approval	Amendment 20.09.24
Review Date	01 May 2025
Reviewed	26 June 2024
Owner	Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour and Attendance)

1. Aims

Howden School is committed to ensuring all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities and achievement for all. For students to gain the most from their time at Howden School, it is vital that they maintain excellent attendance and punctuality and we are committed to supporting students and their parents/carers in sustaining this throughout their time at school. In doing so, we will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students

- Ensure that all students access full-time education which meets their needs and allows them to reach their potential.

- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring and safe environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered

- Promote good attendance and punctuality and discourage unjustified absence

- Act early to address patterns of absence

- Commit to building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

- Continue to emphasise that it is everyone's responsibility to improve attendance and punctuality

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Expectations

3.1 What you can expect from our school

Our school will:

- Adopt a whole school approach 'attendance is everyone's business'

- Promote good attendance and punctuality and investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence

- Encourage students to attend school regularly through the provision of engaging learning opportunities that are appropriate to their needs

- Support students to secure good attendance and punctuality

- Recognise and reward students for good attendance

- Work hard to build supportive relationships with students and their parents/carers

- Provide parents/carers with a clear statement of attendance on student's reports

- Work closely with parents/carers where student absence is a cause for concern

- Support students returning to school following prolonged absence

- Work closely with the LA Education Welfare Service and relevant external agencies

- Only remove a student from the school roll when they have legally left

- Inform the Governing Body of attendance levels as part of each KPI report

- Where required, provide information for the prosecution of parents/carers whose children do not attend school and who do not have a substantive reason

3.2 What we expect of our students

- Students will be expected to attend school every day.

- The school expects all students to attend lessons punctually.

- If leaving during the school day, students will be expected to report any absence immediately to the Attendance and Welfare Manager in the School Main Office or to reception in their absence.

3.3 What we expect of our Parents/Carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time

- Call the school 01430 430448 (attendance option), email attendance@howdenschool.net or send a message via ARBOR to report their child's absence before 8.30am, on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Work with the school where support to improve their child's attendance is being offered

4. Specific roles and responsibilities

4.1 Form tutors

- Building supportive relationships with students in their tutor, discussing with students the reasons for absence when returning to school

- Ensuring that all students update weekly attendance records in their planners.

- Using ACE period to regularly discuss the importance of attendance and punctuality.

- Accurately recording AM registers for all students.

- Informing the wider safeguarding team where concerns or patterns of attendance are identified.

4.2 Subject teachers

- Welcoming every student on returning to school and ensuring they are supported and given the opportunity to catch up with missed work

- Recording accurate details of attendance at the beginning of each session.

- Marking students who arrive late to lessons so accurate data can be sent to parents

4.3 Wider Pastoral Support Team

- Monitoring attendance levels of all students

- Meeting on a regular basis with the Attendance and Welfare Officer and the Senior Leadership Link to discuss students with under 95% attendance, including reporting on persistent absence patterns and Student Premium attendance

- Sharing information with wider school staff as appropriate

- In conjunction with the Attendance and Welfare Officer, ensure absence e-mails/notes are being provided and phone calls/emails from parents are logged.

- Liaising with parents or carers to identify any barriers which may be affecting attendance and offer support if appropriate to parents or carers and students

- Supporting students with difficulties in school

- Making home visits if appropriate to meet with parents or carers

- Informing parents or carers of legal responsibility for regular attendance and possible sanctions – via standardised letters where attendance has become a concern, penalty fines and prosecution

- Following up with the EWO's line manager where a decision is made to take action against parents/careers for the non-attendance of a student

- Arranging for work to be sent home If a student is likely to be absent for a known period of time

- Developing a support package, including the consideration of a phased return, where a student is returning after a long absence from school

- Ensuring that students are recognised and rewarded for good attendance

- Providing 100% attendance letters to parents/carers

4.4 School Attendance and Welfare Officer

- Monitoring the attendance levels of all students

- Attending the accountability meetings on a regular basis with the DHT to identify patterns of absence

- Attending the welfare meetings to discuss students below the 90% and 50% threshold

- Reporting of persistent absentee and pupil premium attendance data

- Feeding back to staff as appropriate

- Liaising with parents/carers to identify any barriers which may be affecting attendance and offer support if appropriate to parents/carers and students

- Making home visits – announced or unannounced, students with a social worker will receive a visit on first day absence if no reason for absence is given, all other students will receive a visit within 3 days for absence with no reason

- Creating intervention and/or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers

- Informing parents/carers of legal responsibility for regular attendance and possible sanctions – via standardised letters where attendance has become a concern, penalty fines and prosecution

- Adopting a multi-agency working practice to support families with attendance

- Attending CP conferences/core group meetings under the direction of Social Care or SLT

- Using a wide range of strategies to monitor and improve attendance of all students, for example:

  o Attendance Action plans

  o Reintegration plan

  o Attendance Contracts

  o Penalties

  o Prosecution

4.5 School Attendance administrative staff

- Ensure registers are being completed and inform School Leaders (where there are persistent concerns)

- Clear and enter absence notes, (ensuring correct codes are used) absence emails and phone calls re absence

- Update and maintain students' personal data/contact details

- Make necessary amendments to ARBOR data

- Provide data to class teachers as required

- Provide data for the LA and DFE returns

- Provide individual attendance reports

- Provide data to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher as required

- Report any hardware difficulties to ICT systems managers

- Provide tracking data for attendance and punctuality as required

4.6 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

- Leading attendance across the school 'Attendance is everyone's business'

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance/punctuality identified through data

- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

- Provide attendance data which can be discussed in ACE period

- Lead on recognition and reward programme related to attendance

4.7 Headteacher

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Where necessary, issuing fixed-penalty notices

4.8 The local governing body

- Promoting the importance of school attendance

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the school

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

To support them in their role, governors receive information about school attendance and absence rates at each local governing body meeting

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session in the afternoon. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am by calling, emailing the school attendance@howdenschool.net or ARBOR message

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carer will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Absence procedures

An ARBOR alert will be sent to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. This will be supported with a phone call where no response is received.

A home visit will be conducted when we have concerns regarding absence or the student has not been in school for 3 days. This is a supportive measure designed to safeguard all students.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.

- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.

- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

- The school will inform the LA of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have 10 unauthorised absence sessions (5 school days) during a 10-week period.

- If a student's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance and welfare officer and Pastoral Manager will track the young person's attendance, and formal contact will be made with the parents/carers.

- Where a student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the student from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

5.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. As stated above supporting evidence will be required.

- Parents/Carers should notify the school of any planned absence using the same email address as above.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Absence of vulnerable young people

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that an accurate list of more vulnerable students is identified and held by the Attendance team; this might include those known to the Safeguarding and Social Care.

- The year group Pastoral Mangers (wider safeguarding team) will check the attendance of this group as soon as the register closes. The Attendance and Welfare Manager will contact Pastoral Managers to confirm the whereabouts of the young person.

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, we may contact relevant agencies

- A home visit will be conducted by the school or agency involvement

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues the school will again make a home visit to the students address.

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer

- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance

- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged, consider further action as detailed in section 6.2 below

5.6 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will receive a mark to show that they are on site but will count as absent.

5.7 Truancy

Truancy means any active decision to not attend school/lessons.

- Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting.

- If truancy is suspected, the Deputy Headteacher, Behaviour and attendance and the Safeguarding Lead will be notified and they will contact the child's parents / carers, to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school/lessons.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- Parents / carers will be contacted informing them of the truancy

- In internal truancy students will be removed from circulation and parents/carers will be informed of an after-school detention

5.8 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This information will be included in the formal reports which are sent to parents during the year. Where a child's attendance is causing concern, the school will contact parents/carers to make them aware of the attendance level and offer support to improve attendance.

Parents/Carers will receive weekly communication regarding their child's number of lessons late and the accumulative minutes. Parents/Carers can access all statutory attendance information on the parental ARBOR app.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Please note this is not an entitlement and a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, at least 10 school days before the absence. An 'Exceptional Absence Request Form' which can be requested from the attendance team attendance@howdenschool.net and should be returned to the same email address. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Physical or mental illness and medical/dental appointments with supporting evidence

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

Headteachers cannot and will not authorise school absence for the reason of a family holiday.

6.2 Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local authorities and schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay the local authority £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the local authority will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution.

In line with statutory guidance (working together to improve school attendance) headteachers will decide whether it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice for any student where their attendance meets the national threshold for issuing a penalty notice

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

As stated at the start of this policy, the school is committed to building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school. With this in mind the headteacher will not issue penalty notices where they are of the view that:

- The parent/carer is working proactively with the school to improve their child's attendance

- Issuing a fine would be counterproductive.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

To support high levels of attendance, the school will continually monitor and act to improve attendance. This will follow a staged approach as outlined below. Attendance data will be analysed by the Attendance and Welfare Officer/Wider Safeguarding team to identify trends in key groups, including vulnerable students, year groups and individual students. Following thorough data analysis, the following staged approach will be followed:

Attendance	Approach
Stage 1 Excellent Attendance	100% weekly acknowledgements - Record in planners 100% attendance letters each half term - Recognition and Rewards
Stage 2 Good Attendance	- Parents/Carers informed if students are at risk of falling below 95% - Record in planners - If attendance fall below 95% move to stage 3
Stage 3 Monitoring	- Parents/Carers are informed that student's attendance has fallen below 95% - Student attendance will be monitored for 20 school days - Invitation to attendance support meeting if further absence - Attendance Plan Action Plan will be discussed - DSR initiated The attendance support meeting will always be minuted when attended or not (Letter 3) - If improved extend and review for a further 20 school days then VPC/Action Plan will be closed and students attendance will be monitored
Stage 4 Concern	- Parents/Carers will be informed that due to further absence student attendance will be reviewed as part of an Action Plan - Student attendance will be monitored for 20 school days and a review day will be organised - If improved extend and review for a further 20 school days then Action Plan will be closed

	and student attendance will be monitored
Stage 5 Serious Concern	• Parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting with the senior leader of attendance to discuss further targets for the Action Plan. Monitor over 10 days • The wider safeguarding team will make home visits where appropriate • Discussion with Education Welfare officer
Stage 6 Critical	• Education Welfare officer involvement • DSR will be completed • The wider safeguarding team will make home visits where appropriate

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the local governing body.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors/classroom teachers/curriculum leaders, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy

- SEND policy

Appendix 1: Key School Contacts

Name	Role	Email
Jennie Doyle	Deputy Headteacher	jdoyle@howdenschool.net
Rachel Southorn	Designated Safeguarding Lead	rsouthorn@howdenschool.net
Jeanette Stevenson	Attendance and Welfare Officer	attendance@howdenschool.net
KS3 Learning Manager	Cheryl Roberts	hs-ks3pastoral@howdenschool.net
KS4 Learning Manager	Charlotte Scott	hs-ks4pastoral@howdenschool.net
KS3 Pastoral Manger	Year 7- Debra Taylor Year 8- Donna Markham Year 9- Jo Lewis	hs-ks3pastoral@howdenschool.net
KS4 Pastoral Manger	Year 10- Vicky Crisell Year 11- Sarah Donaldson	hs-ks4pastoral@howdenschool.net

Appendix 2: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available

Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays