

# HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

## School Attendance Policy



**Attendance is directly linked to achievement. We work to ensure all students reach their potential therefore intervention regarding concerns about attendance is integral to the work of the Student Support Team.**

## **Introduction**

Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if young people are to achieve their full potential.

HMS believe that regular school attendance is crucial to allowing young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We believe they are all entitled to an excellent education.

HMS values all students and believes they are entitled to an excellent education. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Early intervention will be a priority.

HMS believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community; our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and discipline and inclusion policies. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## **Principles**

HMS believe the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Students and parents/carers understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff, including governors, administrative and support staff understand the issues and procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- Clear procedures for supporting students to come to school.

Attendance issues are addressed in the curriculum, tutors and year team staff highlight the need for excellent attendance

- Parents/carers and students having the opportunity to raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns.
- Allocating resources e.g. time, people, space to support the policy including our dedicated attendance officer.
- Rewarding students who have good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance.
- Identifying patterns of absence and intervening early. Research shows patterns of attendance are established early in a school career. Children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on. HMS will work with the school partnership and HMS as part of our multi-academy trust using data to identify students of concern early. Our attendance officer will work with those of real concern throughout Year 8.
- Sanctions for failing to ensure regular attendance and authorising attendance is fully understood by the whole school community and parents/carers.

### **Rights/Roles/ Responsibilities**

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50% of school only 3% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including Maths and English.

HMS believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

#### **The Trust Board will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers.
- Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance (SAL) – at HMS this is Mark Stephenson, Assistant Headteacher, who oversees the work of the Student Standards and Support Team including the attendance officer, on attendance.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the Trust Board to lead on attendance matters, in a monitoring group.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Trust Board meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DFE as required and on time.
- Have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to develop strategies and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

#### **The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers.

- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Make staff aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with for example School Attendance – Departmental advice Oct 2014.
- Have a named senior manager (SAL) to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource. This is Mark Stephenson, Assistant Headteacher.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and DfE as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Trust Board.
- Ensure systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site, are implemented.
- Collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Involve Education Welfare and develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

**The Attendance Officer/Student Support Staff/Form Tutors and Curriculum Leaders will:**

- Inform parents/carers on the first day of absence via a text message/and or a phone call by 10:30am
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence. If attendance falls to a level which causes concern without due cause then a supportive intervention process will be triggered and parents/carers will be informed in writing and a home visit may take place.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families. The EWO shall be contacted following two letters of concern being sent to the parent/carer and if there are additional subsequent absences.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

**The attendance officer in addition will have the following responsibilities:**

- Ongoing monitoring of the attendance of students in Years 9–11.
- Undertake daily absence checks and make contact with home for targeted students.
- Identify students requiring support with their attendance.
- Raise attendance related issues with parent to support improvement.
- Deliver needs led attendance groups for students.
- Encourage links between parents and community groups e.g. Hexham Youth Initiative which could support parent and young people.
- Arrange and attend meetings with EWO as a representative of the school and liaise with relevant staff and outside agencies.
- Provide regular updates on attendance issues to Assistant Headteacher and SENDCo as required.

- Participate in the development of school reward systems in relation to attendance.
- Establish appropriate recording measurements and produce reports/statistics.
- Undertake home visits to establish relationships with parents/carers based on respect and trust.
- To include on occasions transporting a student to school using own car.
- Liaise with department staff to raise awareness of student need.
- Establish links with the federation to work with students/families of concern throughout Year 8.

#### **Parents/Carers will:**

- Talk to their child about school and their experiences whilst there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school before 9.00am if their child is absent, on each day of absence to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Understand that it is the school who will authorise absence or not as appropriate and not the parent/carer.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, going to bed at an appropriate time, doing homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. This will always be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances (determined by the school).

#### **Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **Categorising absence**

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and or evidence for the student's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence (before 9am) by ringing the absence line on (01434) 610310 and provide the school with an expected date of return. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

### **Illness**

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. or in some cases a doctor's note. Where attendance  $\leq 90\%$  we will request such evidence.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

### **Suspended (No alternative provision made)**

Suspension from school is counted as an authorised absence. The student's year head will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

**The guidance below reflects the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations which came into force in September 2013.**

All children of statutory school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. This guidance is in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which was reviewed and revised in September 2013.

Amendments to the 2006 pupil regulations remove references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days (authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher).

The amendments make clear that:

*'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted'.*

Leave of absence during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not a parental right.

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

Parents should follow the guidance in the 'Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy for Leave of Absence during Term-Time' leaflet (a copy of this leaflet is available from the school office or can be viewed on our website) regarding any application for leave of absence. This leaflet also indicates the possible consequences of taking a child out of school without the Headteacher's permission.

### *Application Process*

HMS will follow this process:

- A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance (see Appendix 3).
- School will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.
- School will reply to all applications in writing stating their decision (see Appendix 4).
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, in addition to the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal to grant absence.
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school including possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.
- If a parent /carer remove their child from school without requesting leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parent will be informed in writing that a referral is being made to the Local Authority requesting a penalty notice is issued.

### **Religious Observance**

HMS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's/carer's religious body.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### **Study Leave**

School will offer in school study programmes/facilities for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations to reduce absence levels. Parents will be notified of when study leave should be taken.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Northumberland, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

HMS will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place at HMS will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

HMS can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

HMS will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

### **Late Arrival**

Registration begins at 8.45am; students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.25am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after registration (U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the main school office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late.



As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and have strategies in place to address lateness. Detentions are issued if a student is late to school and if the issue of lateness is a persistent concern further intervention will be offered. Awareness of the impact of lateness is regularly raised with students, staff and parents.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. It should be noted that the school is responsible for authorising absence not parents. Attendance interventions begin when attendance falls to between 93-96% (see attendance management plan Appendix 1). If a student's absence falls to  $\leq 90\%$  this will be of great concern and the school will discuss the issue with the Educational Welfare Officer. At this stage a student is regarded as persistently absent. School will not be able to authorise absence under this level. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for teacher training (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

### **Contact with Parents**

HMS runs a first day absence calling system if students are not in lessons by 9.30am. Safeguarding our students is of utmost importance to us.

The attendance officer may decide an additional telephone call or a home visit is required if no answer is found during the first attempt at contact. We require an explanation for all absences and will authorise if appropriate. The attendance officer/pastoral leaders will continue to contact parents/carers until an explanation is gained.

### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student

- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

HMS will follow Northumberland County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown. Monthly returns are made to the local authority.

### **Using Attendance Data**

An annual attendance Action Plan will be produced by the SAL – Mark Stephenson. Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Indicators next to a student's name will show if their attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention document (see Appendix 1 – Attendance Management Plan).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends at whole school and individual student levels. This will be used to inform whole school/federation strategies to improve attendance and attainment and will include analysis of attendance of specific groups e.g. Girls/Boys; Special Educational Needs (SEN), Disadvantaged Students (Free School Meals Ever 6); Children Looked After (CLA).

HMS will share attendance data with the DfE and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Action plans based on the data analysis will be produced half termly. The focus will be whole school issues and specific actions with groups of students.

### **Support Systems**

School recognise that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

HMS also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children. Data will be analysed for trends with specific groups of students.

The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance meetings with Attendance Officer/Year Teams/Attendance Agreement (see Appendix 1)
- Attendance reports
- Attendance group meetings
- Referrals to support agencies where we use inclusion support workers, behaviour support workers, school health, CYPS (Children and Young People's Service)
- Attendance Officer 1:1 meetings/small group work

- Student Voice Activities
- Working with friendship groups
- PSHE lessons
- Family learning/working with parents
- Reward systems e.g. postcards home, assembly, raffles
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Alternative Provision
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Use of our inclusion facilities – The Base, Restore
- Reintegration support packages
- Case loading to mentors

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, HMS will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions will be considered (see Appendix 1)

**Parenting Contracts** (Used in conjunction with Fast Track to Attendance) (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school, the parent/carer and the Local Authority (EWO). It can also be extended to include the child depending on age.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocol.

## **Legal Sanctions**

### **Prosecution**

Where intervention by school and the Education Welfare Officer fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide Education Welfare/Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

## Penalty Notices

(Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocols.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Application for Fixed Penalty Notices for Absence from School** **Extract from NCC Leave of Absence in Term Time Guidance for Schools September 2016:**

It is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a case should be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to be issued.

Northumberland County Council will consider applications for FPNs in accordance with its code of conduct on the grounds that an unauthorised LOA (holiday) is capable of being irregular attendance and could possibly trigger an FPN. **However**, before making any application for an FPN, attendance in the wider context should be considered, including attendance in a previous academic year if appropriate. Taking this into account, if the Headteacher believes that the threshold (see below) has been met, a request with all accompanying information can be made to the Local Authority to issue an FPN. The parents/carer must be informed in writing that a request has been made to the Local Authority to issue an FPN.

The current threshold as set out in the current Northumberland County Council code of conduct for fixed penalty notices is:

"a minimum absence of ten sessions (five school days) which are unauthorised must be recorded against the pupils named within a 6 to 12 school week period" (see Appendix 3).

### **Children Missing From Education**

School puts in place measures to safeguard children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

School tries, wherever possible, to hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This provides school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

---

## **HLT Attendance Contract**

<b>Attendance 100% - 96%</b>
<p>Tutor monitoring and feedback to students</p> <p>Recognition of good attendance through Year Group Assemblies</p>
<b>Attendance 96% - 93%</b>
<p>Form tutor may contact home</p> <p>Head of Key Stage check to offer support</p>
<b>Attendance below 93%</b>
<p>Attendance Officer referral</p> <p>Home visit conducted to establish barriers to attendance</p> <p>Support steps put in place</p> <p>First concern letter issued medical evidence required for all absences</p>
<b>Attendance continues to fall</b>
<p>Attendance review meeting with Head of Key Stage, Attendance Officer, student &amp; parent/carers</p> <p>Second concern letter issued. Referral to be made to EWO if not further improvement.</p> <p>Support plan agreed</p> <p>Specific attendance targets set</p>
<b>Attendance fails to improve</b>
<p>Referral to Education Welfare Officer</p> <p>Attendance review meeting with Head of Key Stage, Attendance Officer, student &amp; parent/carers &amp; EWO</p> <p>Attendance monitoring period</p>
<b>Continued poor attendance</b>
<p>Case open to Education Welfare</p> <p>Penalty notice may be issued</p>

## **Attendance Contract**

### **Personal details**

Pupil's Name:

Parents' Names:

School's Name:

Name: Stephen Hodgson

Position: Attendance Officer

Contact details:

### **Background to Contract**

Following a meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_\_\_ and Stephen Hodgson, we have all agreed that we want to work together to help \_\_\_\_\_ to attend school more regularly.  
's attendance is currently \_\_\_\_ %.

### **What has been agreed**

#### **The School's Promise**

- Contact parent if pupil is absent from school without an explanation.
- Be available as a named person for parents to contact in school regarding attendance.
- Provide pupil with a named member of staff to enable support if needed.
- Respond to any problems reported that could affect attendance and generate an attendance support plan
- Make referrals to other agencies for example the attendance service or school health.
- Be point of contact in school for student.

#### **Parent's Promise**

- To supply details of their full names, address and telephone number and notify school immediately of any changes.
- To contact school on the first day of absence regarding the reason for absence and give an estimated day of return.
- To inform school of any problem affecting attendance.
- To work with other agencies to resolve any issues affecting attendance.
- To bring or arrange for someone to bring their child into school.
- Attend parenting classes or support groups if needed.
- Provide supporting medical evidence if their child is sick.

#### **Student's Promise**

- **To prioritise coming to school**
- **To engage with support offered**
- **To communicate about any potential barriers to attendance**

**Review**

We will meet again if required to discuss how things are going and whether this agreement needs to be changed in any way.

Anyone can ask for a meeting at any time to discuss the agreement further or to discuss any difficulties or problems.

**Important dates**

We will next meet if required.

**Other important dates are:**

We will review this agreement if required.

We will end this agreement on

**Agreement :**

**We will do what we have agreed in this attendance contract and will work together to help \*\*\*\*\* attend school regularly.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Parent)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_(Student)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_(School)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complaints procedure**

Any complaints will be dealt with using the school's complaints procedure.

## HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE OF CHILD FROM SCHOOL

A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance. Please ensure all sections of the form are completed before returning it to Mr G Atkins, Executive Headteacher. Forms can also be returned by email to [admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk). The school will reply to all applications in writing stating the Headteacher's decision.

#### Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations explain clearly that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

<b>Student's name:</b>		<b>Date of birth:</b>	
<b>Tutor/Year group:</b>		<b>Contact number(s):</b>	
<b>Student's home address:</b>			

I request permission for my child to be granted leave of absence from school between

<b>First day of absence:</b>		<b>Date of return to school:</b>		<b>Total number of school days missed:</b>	
------------------------------	--	----------------------------------	--	--	--

If you are also submitting a request for absence for a child at another school in the Hexham Partnership of Schools please provide the name of the school(s), child(ren)'s name(s) and year group(s). <i>Please note you must complete a leave of absence request for each individual school and return it to them.</i>	<b>School</b>	<b>Child(ren)'s Name &amp; Year Group(s)</b>

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the leave of absence you would like the Head of School to consider. (*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary*). Please refer to the Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy for leave of absence during term time which is available on our website [www.hexhammiddle.co.uk](http://www.hexhammiddle.co.uk) or call 01434 610300 to request a copy; it is the decision of the Head of School as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances. Each request for any term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of exceptional circumstance would be:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Evidence provided by an employer that states leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

#### **Declaration**

I have read and understood the information in the Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head of School.

**Parent/Carer Name (please print):** .....

**Signature:**..... **Date:** .....



## **REQUEST FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

As I am sure you are aware, the government has high expectations for local authorities and schools to deliver quality education to the nation's children and it is therefore of the utmost importance that all children attend school regularly and punctually.

There will be occasions when a child has to miss school, for example, if she or he is unwell and parents/carers are expected to exercise their judgement on whether their child is fit to attend school if there are signs and symptoms of illness. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday.

Government regulations from September 2013 state that a headteacher 'may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'. The Hexham Partnership of Schools discourage parents/carers from arranging any events during term time and will, as a rule, state that leave of absence will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances that might justify it.

In exceptional circumstances where leave of absence is granted, the student's attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling will be the primary consideration. The secondary consideration will be the student's current attendance. The headteacher will examine the child's attendance record and should he or she have any concerns, for example should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that any authorised absence will be given. If your child's attendance falls below 90% it is of great concern to us and we have to discuss the issue with our Educational Welfare Officer. We will not be able to authorise absence under this level. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital. We would remind parents/carers that in all cases where students cannot attend school it remains the responsibility of the school to authorise absence, not parents/carers.

### **Important Information for Parents/Carers**

- The Education Act (1996) requires parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. The Law does however allow headteachers to consider individual requests to authorise a Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstance(s).
- The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parents/carers' responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances.
- The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the headteacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.
- If the headteacher authorises the Leave of Absence it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.
- If the headteacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.
- A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.
- Where there is more than one child, each parent/carer may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.
- Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. When children are absent from school, they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when they are away, but are also less prepared for the lessons that follow which build on prior knowledge and teaching. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Please support your child in achieving and attaining at school by ensuring that his/her attendance is not affected by avoidable absence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mr G Atkins

Executive Headteacher

## Appendix 4

### Authorised

Dear <home salutation>

I note your request to take <student name> out of school during term time from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (<no. school days>).

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- The headteacher or person authorised by the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided to **authorise** your request for absence as I am satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met.

Yours sincerely

Mr G Atkins  
Executive Headteacher

Copied to: Head of Key Stage (2/3)

## Unauthorised

Dear <home salutation>

I note your request to take <student Name> out of school during term time from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (<no. of school days>).

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- The headteacher or person authorised by the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided **not to authorise** your request for absence as I am not satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met.

The reason for this is the circumstances detailed in your application cannot be considered as exceptional. Examples of exceptional circumstance would be

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Evidence provided by an employer that states leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence

<student name> is expected in school on these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.

Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mr G Atkins  
Executive Headteacher

Copied to: Head of Key Stage (2/3)