



# HEATHSIDE SCHOOL

## HAMPSTEAD

### Attendance Policy

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## **Introduction and Aims**

Heathside School and its senior leaders are aware of their statutory obligations under the **School Attendance [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulations 2024**.

We are committed to ensuring that every child and young person is able to access a high-quality education programme appropriate to their needs, thereby meeting our duties under **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**.

Heathside School will actively promote good attendance to both pupils and their parents/carers, through good working relationships and ensuring that they understand the latest government legislation and the implications/impact of poor attendance.

At Heathside, excellent attendance is understood not only as a statutory expectation but as a key foundation of **High Performance Learning (HPL)**. We believe that every child is capable of high achievement, and consistent attendance enables pupils to develop the **Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAAs)** and **Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP)** characteristics that underpin this philosophy.

Regular attendance supports pupils to:

- **Develop Hard-working behaviours**, including perseverance, organisation and responsibility.
- **Strengthen Agile thinking**, as pupils adapt to new learning, routines and challenges each day.
- **Grow Empathetic skills**, forming positive relationships and contributing to a collaborative classroom culture.
- **Apply ACPs** such as linking, analysing, meta-thinking and creating through sustained, uninterrupted learning sequences.

We expect all pupils to attend school every day unless absence is unavoidable. High levels of attendance ensure that pupils can participate fully in the rich learning experiences that help them become confident, independent and high-performing learners. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all our pupils.

Poor attendance disadvantages children. Where attendance falls below expected levels, we work in partnership with families to identify barriers and provide support, ensuring every child can access the full curriculum and continue to develop the HPL competencies that enable lifelong success.

## **Legal Responsibilities**

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 7) to make sure that **children of compulsory school age** attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Parents not meeting this duty could result in legal action under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to our Local Education Authority if problems persist and cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the school. This policy has been developed taking into account the **statutory** requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE)

- (i) Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

- (ii) School Attendance [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulations 2024.

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- (iii) DfE statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools: Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Dec 2015.

[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK](#)

- (iv) Supports safeguarding as per Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep 2025) and the Children Missing Education statutory guidance.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

Through this policy, the school aims to:

- improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- encourage parents / carers to ensure that their child(ren) arrive(s) at school on time.
- make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers, the Headteacher and the board of Governors.

## **1. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Governors:**

The Governors recognise the importance of school attendance and will:

- Promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who have English as an additional language (EAL).
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on the attendance regulations and procedures to follow up on children who are absent from education.

### **Parents / Carers**

Parents/carers are:

- Expected to ensure their children attend school every day, arriving on time and communicate with the school if a child is unable to attend.
- Notify the school by 8:45 AM on day one of absence.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Only request term-time leave in exceptional circumstances.

- Support early intervention meetings and attendance contracts.

### **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher:

- have responsibility for attendance issues, reviewing the data and following up on any concerns.
- Ensure that attendance issues are reported termly to the board of Governors, who monitor the data and ensure that the school is fulfilling its statutory duties.
- Will make the final decision at their discretion as to whether any absence will be authorised or not and the way the absence is to be recorded in the register, which will be communicated to the parents in writing.
- To ensure the parents understand the disruption to learning and their child's potential disappointment if they miss lessons, a trip, or participation in any sports team or drama productions if they are not in school, when these special events occur.

### **Senior Attendance Champion**

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is a senior member of our Leadership team and our school's nominated *Attendance Champion*.

They are responsible for strategic oversight, data compliance, and audit functions with support, especially in terms of parent / carer liaison, from the Head Teacher.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) acts as the operational Attendance Champion, liaising with families and agencies, such as the Camden Education Welfare Services (EWS) when necessary.

They have a statutory duty to:

- Ensure that all staff accurately mark registers twice daily using the revised 2024 codes.
- Complete daily follow-up for absences with both staff, parents / carers and the pupils themselves if required.

### **Staff**

- Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school, including ensuring accurate attendance records are kept.
- All teaching staff understand that the register is a legal document and as such must be kept up to date and with no errors.
- Immediately report any non-attendance to the school office as soon as possible.
- Attend regular update training on attendance regulations.

## **2. School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Absent from Education**

A child who is absent from education for whatever reason is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions or fail to turn up on a regular basis, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (See Safeguarding policy).

### **Persistent Absence**

Schools have a statutory duty to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as **unauthorised** for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days as stated in The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. This will include those pupils who are absent from school due to holiday having been taken in term time. The school does not require parental permission to send attendance data on their child to the local authority.

The Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will work to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

The school will always endeavour to engage parents / carers in conversations to support their children to attend school.

### **3. Register Procedures**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

It is kept electronically for all year groups via iSAMS. Manual registers may also be used, if necessary, for example in the case of internet failure **or** when a group is on a trip or visit away from the school.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements under Data Protection Regulations, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

- The attendance register is taken electronically once between 8:30am and 9:00am at the start of the school day and again between 12:00pm - 2:00pm after lunchtime.
- The register is filled in by the teachers electronically via iSAMS, with a full audit trail recording all entries and amendments
- Registers are marked in accordance with the updated national codes from 19 August 2024, including K, Y6, Y7, C2, J1, etc. All codes are clearly annotated, and staff receive regular training on proper use.
- Every half a day of absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Head Teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher.
- The supervising teacher is required to:
  - Record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity using the appropriate code (**see Appendix 1**).

- o Pupils should only be marked present if they are in the room when the register is called or are confirmed to have been seen by a teacher (e.g. if in a music lesson)
  - o Spaces must not be left in the register – unknown absences to be recorded as “N”
  - o Children **arriving late** are marked with the appropriate code
- By 9:30 AM or 2:30 PM the reception/admin staff at that particular section of the school start the process of contacting first the Headteacher and / or Deputy Headteacher and then the parents of any unaccounted children.
  - If the child hasn't been located within an hour, the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead are consulted and authorities informed if no information about the whereabouts of the child can be ascertained.
  - Once the child has been accounted for, the 'N' register code is amended with the actual code. Eg. 'I' for illness (where parents have let the school know that the child is ill), 'M' medical appointment (if evidence has been shown), or 'O' absent without authorisation etc. This code (N) must be amended within one hour of the record first being made.
  - The register is printed out once a day by 9:30am in case a roll call is needed during an evacuation or fire drill. Any students leaving / arriving during the day will be noted on iSAMS as well as manually added / taken off the printed fire register.
  - Whenever children are taken off premises or on coach trips a printout of the day's attendance register is taken by a member of staff and a copy of the completed register is emailed or given to reception at the school as soon as possible.

### **Retention period**

All attendance and admission registers are retained for a minimum of six years.

Registration is recorded on the school management system; however, in accordance with the **School Attendance [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulations 2024** cited above, an additional back-up copy of the admission register and the attendance register is made not less than once a month in the form of an electronic, micro-fiche or printed copy and are retained for a period of three years after the end of that school year.

Monthly backups are performed and securely stored as per our **GDPR [Data Protection] Policy**.

Registers will be amended within 5 days, or the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

## **4. Working in partnership with parents / carers**

### **4.1 Absence:**

If a child is absent from school, parents / carers must contact the school on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence. If a child is absent without advance notice, the school will contact the parents / carers and if necessary, their emergency contact to establish the reason for that absence.

While the school tries to be as helpful as it may within reasonable limits, it is the school's policy that staff should not normally be obliged to prepare work for a child to complete during any authorised absences.

Nevertheless, the requirement for this in each case will be assessed on its individual merits and any potential offer of assistance determined by the Head Teacher.

Police officers do occasionally patrol ports and airports, during term time, to delay families with enquiries as to whether the child's absence has been authorised by its school. The school will work proactively with the police if the need arises.

#### **4.2 Illness / Sickness**

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' / carer's note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. Any child who is ill will be recorded as "I" on the register system.

In exceptional circumstances, or if the child's absence is for five consecutive days, further supporting evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

However, schools can challenge parents' / carer's statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance at any time.

If no reason for absence is received by the school, then the reason for the child's absence must be pursued by the school office. Any case where a parent refuses to give a reason for absence must be referred to the Head Teacher and may result in a referral to the local authority Educational Welfare Officer.

The school has clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there are specialist / on-going medical problems, and school may need evidence to seek additional specialist support / or adapt support to that child.

The school will be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They will work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

The school will provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

However, the school reserves the right to maintain a pupil's name on the local authority return.

The school takes into account the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-can-not-attend-school>

Parents must telephone the school office or use the Firefly Absence Form (link below) before 8:45 to inform school if their child is ill. The school contact details are:

- Heathside School Hampstead
- 020 3058 4011
- <https://heathsideschoolhampstead.fireflycloud.net/forms-page/absence-reporting-forms-2025-26>
- If that is not possible, absence can be reported by email on [schooladmin@heathsideschoolhampstead.com](mailto:schooladmin@heathsideschoolhampstead.com)

### **Medical appointments**

So as to avoid disruption to a child's education, wherever possible, medical or treatment appointments should be arranged to take place after school, at the weekends or during the school holidays, rather than during the school day.

Where appointments during the school day cannot be avoided, such appointments should still be arranged with a view that these should occasion the least possible disruption to the child's education.

Parents / carers must notify the school of any intended absence of their child for such a reason, again by using a Firefly Absence Form or telephone.

### **4.3 Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)**

Changes to statutory legislation by the DfE means that schools are no longer allowed to approve leave for holidays regardless of the reasons provided by parents / carers and their own employment circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances, special permission may be given for leave of absence to attend a family funeral, religious observance or visits and / or interviews at future schools.

Parents / carers must email the Head Teacher requesting permission in writing stating the dates likely to be absent, the reason for the absence and who will have the duty of care for the child(ren) while they are away from school.

The Head Teacher will consider exceptional leave of absence on a case-by-case basis.

### **4.4 Parents can support regular school attendance by:**

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents' evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

### **References for Future Schools**

Parents should also be made aware that future schools considering a candidate often ask for a history of attendance; a record of unauthorised absence may well prove unhelpful to a candidate and tip the balance against them when being considered through the future school's application process.

## **5. Late arrivals**

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

Morning registration will close at 09:00am for all children.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DfE compulsory attendance codes).

We reserve the right to refuse a child arriving later than this, for example if the class are at an off-site activity.

## **6. Attendance Monitoring**

The office staff will check the registers daily to ensure they are completed correctly. The Head Teacher alongside the DSL will monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual level.

Additional monitoring may be carried out if concerns are raised. The DSL will analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts who need additional support with their attendance and will use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.

The DSL will also look at historic and emerging patterns / trends of absence, then develop strategies alongside the senior leadership team (SLT) to address these patterns.

Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be closely monitored and further action considered, including regular communication to their parents / carers.

The UK school attendance rate for academic year 2024/2025 was **93.2%**

School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents / carers who give a low priority to attendance.

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and investigation will take place to identify the underlying reasons for this. If appropriate, an action plan will be put in place to address the reasons for the absence level.

The school will hold regular meetings with the parents / carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. The school will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **7. Promoting Attendance / Punctuality**

The school has an attendance champion, currently the DSL, who works with school staff to regularly promote to pupils and parents the value and importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Staff will set a good example by being punctual.

Parents will be kept fully informed of any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Individual cases where pupils experience attendance or punctuality difficulties will be investigated by the form teacher and, where appropriate, referred to the Head teacher.

## **8. Deletion from and Additions to the School's Admissions Register**

We will notify the local authority when a **pupil's name** is to be deleted from the admission register (after 20 school days of no contact following exhaustive enquiries) under any of the 15 grounds set out in regulation 8(1) of the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006* as amended. This will also include any of the five grounds set out in regulation 8(3) if the pupil is not of compulsory school age, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

This duty does not apply where the pupil has completed their final year, unless the local authority requests such information is provided.

Children missing education raises a safeguarding issue particularly when a child leaves with no known destination. For this reason, although the legal requirement under the registration regulations is met by the school reporting to its 'own' local authority, the school may in some circumstances also contact the local authority where the child is normally resident.

We will inform the Local Authority within 5 days of any mid-year admissions or deletions per regulation – these are known as leavers and joiners at non-transition times.

This applies whether the pupil is transferring to another school, moving to home education or for any other reasons for deletion, e.g travelling family or in extreme circumstances death of a child on the school roll.

## **9. Permanent Exclusion**

The school will notify the local authority within 24 hours if a child has left the school due to a permanent exclusion.

### Attendance Codes

Code	Reason	Comments
/ or \	Present	Morning and afternoon registrations at school
L	Late	Pupil is absent from the school when the register is being taken but then attends
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Alternative provision as part of the pupil's learning.
V	Visit / trip	Authorised by the school
P	Sports event.	Pupil is competing in – not attending an event.
W	Work exp	As part of the pupil's learning, checked by the school.
B	Education off site – any other educational activity.	Authorised and known by the school.

### Authorised Absence Codes

R	Religious event	Can be authorised by the school for one day only
I	Illness / sickness of pupil.	School follows up with parent and may require evidence from a medical professional.
M	Medical or dental appointment	Unavoidable due to lack of appointment availability outside of school hours / weekends.
J1	Interview for employment or admission to another school.	Authorised by the school
E	Suspension or <b>exclusion</b>	Authorised by the school.
S	Study leave	Authorised by the school as part of a pupil's learning.
T	Parent travel	School must be contacted if pupil unable to return to school when required due to parent travel arrangements.
W	Work exp	As part of the pupil's learning, checked by the school.
<b>C#</b>	<b>Extenuating circumstances</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance	Regulated performance could be performing in a London Stage Show etc.
C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupils subject to a part-time timetable	On a temporary basis only.
Y	<b>Unable to attend – unavoidable absence</b>	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided	

	to and from the school not being available	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Due to a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being closed <b>unexpectedly.</b>	This is different to planned closures by the school.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	
Y6	Absent in accordance with public health guidance or law	Local public health warning may apply or guidance from a professional external agency regarding reducing risk of disease transmission in the school and local populations.
Y7	Unable to attend because of other unavoidable cause	
	<b>Other reasons</b>	
D	Dual registered – attending another school.	Pupil may be attending at another education establishment where they are also registered on their roll. This is not the same as alternative provision where pupil is only registered on their main school roll / admissions system.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements.	School required to log evidence of this / including communications with parents / professionals.
T	Mobile child – part of a travelling community – absent due to travelling.	Authorised by the school.
X	Absent as attending part time nursery	Pupil is not of compulsory school age and therefore is not required to attend school.
Z	Pupil not on school roll.	
	<b>Unauthorised Absence Codes</b>	
G	Absent without leave for holiday	
N	Circumstances for absence have not yet been established	The school will endeavour to obtain reasons where feasibly possible.
O	None of the codes in these tables apply	
U	Unauthorised Lateness after registration has closed.	<b>Must be followed up</b>