

Attendance Policy

The Hyde School 25/26

Document Control

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Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Values

1. Put children first

- a. We trust and value your professionalism
- b. We share the responsibility for the learning and welfare of all of our children
- c. Our purpose is to improve the lives of children

2. Be safe

- a. Don't assume that someone else will do it
- b. Look after yourself, your colleagues and all children
- c. We are all responsible for each other's safety and well being
- d. Discuss any concerns with an appropriate member of staff

3. Be kind & respect all

- a. People are allowed to be different as are you
- b. Kindness creates the positive environment we all need to flourish
- c. This kindness should extend to ourselves as well as to others

4. Be open

- a. If you can see a better way, suggest it
- b. If someone else suggests a better way to you, consider it
- c. We exist to nurture innovators and support those who take informed risks in the interests of children

5. Forgive

- a. We all make mistakes
- b. Admit them, learn from them and move on

6. Make a difference

- a. Making the world a better place starts with you
- b. Model the behaviour that you would like to see from others

Related Policies and Documents

[TEFAT Attendance Policy](#)

[TEFAT Safeguarding Policy](#) and [local safeguarding arrangements](#)

[TEFAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy](#)

[Guidance for Parents on School Attendance](#)

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know](#)

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

[DfE Working together to improve school attendance August 2024](#)

[DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance August 2024](#)

[DfE Children Missing Education \(CME\) guidance August 2024](#)

1. Introduction

Promoting good school attendance and reducing absence is vital to: ensure children's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding; ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education; ensure that pupils make good progress academically and personally and to ensure that pupils leave us with the best possible opportunities for their future.

This policy aims to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly; consequently they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

The policy outlines the **responsibilities for the school and parents** in ensuring that pupils' attendance at The Hyde School is the best it can be. It also describes the strategies used by the schools, alongside The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust and Barnet to support and improve attendance.

2. The importance of culture and curriculum

High standards of pastoral care, excellent teaching and learning and an **exciting and broad curriculum** motivate children to want to attend school. They also build confidence and trust with parents who may feel nervous or anxious about leaving their children at school.

At The Hyde, we recognise that school must be a place where children feel valued, safe, welcome, accepted and supported in order for them to want to attend. This culture is established and maintained through regular staff training, inductions for new staff and pupils, high expectations regarding conduct, and school systems such as behaviour recognition and rewards. This culture is supported by effective and regular communication between staff teams, as well as between teachers and parents. Pupil voice is used to measure our success in maintaining such an ethos.

The curriculum offered by the school helps children to maximise their academic success as well as developing their sense of self and their responsibilities to the wider community. We strive to broaden children's opportunities and experiences by introducing them to new and exciting topics through the taught curriculum, theatrical productions, off site visits, sporting competitions, public performances and opportunities to work alongside community leaders.

Our School Targets

The school has targets to maintain good attendance, and your child plays an important role in meeting these targets.

- The minimum expected level of attendance for this school is **96%**. We will keep you updated regularly about your child's progress toward this target.
- Our aim is to achieve better than this because good attendance is key to successful schooling, and we believe our students can be among the best in London.

First point of contact:

- School office for attendance and punctuality queries
- Senior Learning Mentor for advice or support

3. Attendance systems and procedures

3.1. Attendance Registers

Accurate and timely registers enable the school to safeguard children and to recognise and act upon concerning attendance patterns. Staff follow the School Register Protocol, which is reviewed and shared at least annually. Registers are taken at the start of every **morning and afternoon session**.

Morning:

- School gates open at **8:30am** and close at **8:50am**.
- Class teachers complete the morning register by **9:00am**.
- Pupils arriving after 9:00am but before 9:15am: **Code L – Late before the close of registration**
- Pupils arriving after 9:15am: **Code U – Unauthorised absence** (counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session and affects attendance percentage). This will affect your child's attendance percentage, as it signals they have missed a significant amount of learning time.

Afternoon:

The same process applies to afternoon registers, although there are different timings based on year group - Reception and KS1: **1:00pm** and KS2: **1:15pm**.

3.2. Attendance Codes

- **Present Marks (/ and \)**
 - / = present for the morning session
 - \ = present for the afternoon session
 - If a pupil leaves during a session (e.g., for a medical appointment), they are still counted as **present for that session for statistical purposes**.
- **Code L – Late before the close of registration**
 - Pupils arriving **within 30 minutes of registers opening** receive a **Code L**.
 - The exact **register close time** is defined in this **Attendance Policy**.
- **Code U – Arrived after registration closed**
 - Pupils arriving **after the register has closed but before the end of the session** will be recorded with a **Code U**.

3.3. Recording and responding to absence

During pupil inductions, parents are asked to contact school on the first day of a child's absence to explain the reason. If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to parents. Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (August 2024). This decision is based on the information provided by parents when a child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or not.

3.4. Welfare Calls/Home visits

Welfare calls are made daily, if we have had no notification as to why the child is not in school. We also make welfare calls to make contact with pupils who we have not been in school in line with our safeguarding procedures. Home visits are routinely carried out by senior leaders if no contact can be made by phone, further information is needed or to see how a child is. Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry their school ID and will expect to see the child in question, if only briefly, in order to ascertain how they are.

3.5. Monitoring and improving irregular attendance

Nisha Mehta (Deputy Head Teacher) monitors cases where attendance is below 95% fortnightly. For children whose absence has increased, actions are taken which aim to prevent children becoming or remaining a 'Persistent Absentee' (<90%).

These actions may include but are not limited to:

- Contacting parents and carers by telephone on the morning of their absence

- Meeting with parents and carers to offer support
- Analyse attendance data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Reporting absence patterns to the Trust.

Pupils who have been suspended or who are absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate support to return to school, build confidence and bridge gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil (providing they are able to understand the process).

3.6. Attendance and safeguarding

Concerns about any extended or persistent absence are referred to the appropriate team or staff member which is usually the Headteacher who is the DSL. It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires support (this includes but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, FGM, CCE, CSE or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

3.7. Children Missing from Education (CMfE) Referrals

Academies have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. If a child is absent and contact cannot be made with parents directly (by phone or home visit), and their whereabouts cannot be confirmed by any of the additional named contacts held by school, then the Local Authority's CMfE team is notified immediately and police are asked to carry out a safe and well check at the home address. The CMfE team is also notified if a child is known to have moved out of the area so is no longer attending, or if a parent enquiring about a school place states that their child is not currently attending a school.

3.8. Recognising and rewarding good attendance

To help children and their parents understand the importance of regular attendance and monitor their own and their class's attendance, it is discussed and celebrated in the following ways:

Every week the class with the highest attendance is rewarded with a certificate and they have one of the attendance 'bears' (BAS- Be At School or BEA - Be Excellent Attenders) for a week in their classroom to celebrate. This is also celebrated in the newsletter.

3.8. Lateness

Being on time is an important skill in life and it is also polite. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your daughter/ son misses the start of the day, they do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day and they are also at risk of missing work. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the

child, therefore encouraging absence.

Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents/ Carers of students who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping.

If lateness persists Parents/ Carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the School Attendance Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M', **IF** evidence is provided. Please be advised that where possible, appointments for doctors and dentists are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8:45am and we expect your child to be lined up in the school playground by this point.
- Registers are marked by 9:00am. Your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in their classrooms by this time.
- At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence.
- Parents/ Carers of students who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping.
- If lateness persists parents/ carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the School Attendance Officer or a member of the Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

4. Term-time leave of absence requests

A leave of absence request form **MUST** be completed in all circumstances, as far in advance as possible, and a minimum of 5 school days before the requested absence starts. Forms must be requested from and returned to the school office. One form must be completed per child and incomplete forms will not be considered.

The **Headteacher** will **only** authorise leave during term time in **exceptional circumstances, when absence during term time is absolutely unavoidable**. This decision is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion, based on the information provided by parents in writing, at the time the request is made.

Where a period of absence is authorised in exceptional circumstances, the number of days will be determined by the Headteacher. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that permission for leave is obtained *before* travel or accommodation are booked.

This is in line with DfE guidance which states that:

37. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context

behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

38. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (August 2024)

After submitting a request for term time leave to be authorised, parents will be informed of the Headteacher's decision in writing within five school days.

Periods of unauthorised leave are escalated to the Barnet Attendance Officer.

5. Formal and legal interventions

The Hyde School will always seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or when those with parental responsibility for the child do not engage with this support, then the academy will work with the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Service to address poor attendance.

The first step would be to set up a formal attendance contract between parents and the school.

5.1. Attendance contract

- A formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Are not legally binding but allow a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.
- They are not a punitive tool, they are intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- Aim for the parent(s), and the pupil where they are old enough, the school and the Local Authority to work in partnership.
- Attendance contracts contain:
 - Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
 - A statement from the school and/or Local Authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
 - A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.
 - The period it will be in place for (most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed).

If an attendance contract is not effective at improving a child's attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress as far as needed through the following, hierarchical legal interventions;

- **Education Supervision Orders (ESO)** - non compliance can lead to prosecution and a fine of up to £1000

- **Attendance prosecutions** - if found guilty, depending on the circumstances parents can be sentenced to a community order, a parenting order, a fine of up to £2500 or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- **Parenting orders** - breaches can lead to a fine of up to £1000

Where safeguarding concerns exist, the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services may decide that either a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan is a more appropriate form of support.

5.2. Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make considerations in line with DfE statutory guidance to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

In addition:

- can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a Local Authority officer or the police
- can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences
- can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school
- there is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice
- Barnet Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Informing the academy on the first day of non-attendance by telephoning the school office.
- Ensuring that medical appointments are booked outside school time wherever possible.
- Speak to the Senior Learning Mentor to seek support for any issues that may be preventing their child from wanting to attend school.
- Understanding and accepting that absences for family holidays or visits and special occasions will not normally be permitted. Approval will only be granted in truly exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal.
- Working alongside the school to address and improve any patterns of poor attendance.
- Complying with the DfE statutory guidance on school attendance.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/ carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

6.2. Pupils, when developmentally ready to take some responsibility for their learning, are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive on time, ready to learn.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might lead to absence.

6.3. All staff are responsible for promoting good attendance. Those with specific responsibilities include:

- The member of SLT appointed as **Attendance Lead / Attendance Champion** is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance taken by the school.
- The Attendance lead checks absence after each register period, carries out first day calling and home visits and supports parents with improving their child's attendance. They also monitor attendance data for individuals and groups and work with the Attendance Lead to decide on and implement actions in response to patterns shown in data.
- **Class teachers and support staff** discuss attendance daily, refer concerns to the ASP and award weekly 100% stickers.
- The **Principal** or **Executive Principal** decides whether term time leave applications are approved or not (see 'Term time leave of absence requests', above).
- The **Wellbeing Team and SENDCos** work with children who face attendance barriers and families who need support.

Our school is supported to improving pupil attendance by the following partners:

- **The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust** Regional Director, DSL for the Trust and Legal, SEND and Governance Director.

Appendix 1

Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

1. **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, interviews or tests which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.
2. **Unauthorised Absence** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent/ carer's request. This would be because the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parents/ carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Please be aware that when a parent/ carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. The reasons taken into account for deciding whether an absence is automatically authorised are:

- Whether the child is considered a vulnerable child
- Whether the child is a persistent absentee
- Historical absence patterns
- Time of the year (i.e last day of term)
- Reason for the absence being outside of general sickness or pre-booked appointments.
- Your child's current and previous school attendance will also be taken into consideration.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold on a regular basis is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent / carer to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/ carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored routinely.

Appendix 2

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us **at the start of any period of absence** before 9am;
- If your child is off, or likely to be off, for a sustained period of time, you will be required to keep in regular contact with the school. You may be asked to produce medical or other supporting evidence for the absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you if we have not heard from you by 9:30am in the morning or for part time students at the agreed time.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Admission & Attendance Officer/ Senior Learning Mentor or a member of our Senior Leadership Team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to an Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 95%.

Unexplained/ Implausible Absence Guidance

Any actions and communication regarding unexplained or implausible attendance should be recorded on My Concern.

Schools should have a designated school mobile/s for attendance and safe and well checks. What's App can be used to conduct video calls to see and hear children that are absent. There should be two staff present when video and voice calls are conducted for staff safety. A record of the call should be recorded on My Concern, including which staff were present.

DAY ONE Unexplained/implausible absence

Child Protection/CIN or *Vulnerable Pupil

- Call parents/carers as a priority to seek reason for absence - reason given. Inform relevant services if necessary e.g. Virtual School, Social Worker, Family Support Worker etc
- If no answer - school to text (via Arbor) or leave a message stating there will be a safe and well check. School to use own professional judgement regarding notification of the safe and well check, there may be circumstances where this is not advisable.
- Call the allocated social worker as a priority in both above scenarios - follow up in an email and record on My Concern.
- School to conduct a safe and well check. Do not wait for a social care response.
- If there is no response at the property, school to call Police to conduct the check.
- If there is an allocated social worker or family support worker conducting safe and well checks ensure there is written or telephone confirmation that these have taken place and this is recorded on My Concern. Ideally, school and social care will share the safe and well check oversight and ownership through clear communication to avoid repeat visits.
- If the social worker does not agree to conduct regular safe and well checks in communication with the school, escalate to the social worker's team manager via email on the same day, stating school are requesting coordinated safe and well checks. Do not wait for the social worker's 'permission' or response to conduct your own safe and well checks. Ensure an email is sent to the social worker to share the outcome of any checks conducted.
- Ensure staff safety for all safe and well checks - ensure the [TEFAT risk assessment](#) for Safe and Well Checks is completed and regularly reviewed.
- If there is a known risk at the address e.g violent parent call Police to conduct the safe and well check or escort school staff.

In addition to the above, consider:

- Speaking to siblings if in school to triangulate reasons given and to gather pupil voice
- Contacting pre school and/or secondary provision to check on siblings attendance and share information with safeguarding teams
- If illness and doctor's advice is given for the reason, contacting the safeguarding lead at the allocated surgery and share concerns. Whilst they will be unable to share medical information they can confirm if the child has been seen to validate/ disprove the narrative.

*Vulnerable Pupil

May be defined as:

- Child in care (CLA) or post CLA
- Medical condition
- EHCP/SEND
- Early Help
- Young carer
- Previous/historic social care involvement
- Prior unexplained/implausible absence
- Persistently absent
- Severely absent
- Known risk factors e.g. relocation

- Team Around the Family
- Parental disputes/court orders
- School's own 'watch list'

If a plausible reason is given and there are NO other concerns. A member of the safeguarding team phones the family and explains they will need a safe and well check on day 3 of absence. Family Support Worker informed if they have one and the response must be recorded on My Concern.

School to conduct a safe and well check this can be done in person or via What's App video call and recorded on My Concern.

If the reason is implausible, the school to carry out welfare check through a home visit on day 1.
No answer. The safeguarding team texts or video calls and emails to state a safe and well check will be conducted, carries out a home visit, leaving a letter if there is no answer. Social care/ Family Support Worker etc informed if they have one.

Child unknown to safeguarding team/ no previous concerns:

- Follow usual school processes, first day call - text to prompt a call stating a safe and well check will need to be carried out if contact is not made.

If no contact:

- Day 3 safe and well check conducted **unless absence is after a holiday then the check should be conducted on Day 2 as this is a prolonged absence.**

Child has not returned after holiday at the start of term/ no previous concerns:

- Attempt contact with parents/carers, send text message, email and leave phone message to say a safe and well check will be conducted if there is no contact made day 1
- School will try and call any other named contacts on the child's emergency contact list
- Conduct safe and well check on day 2
- Social care referral if there are concerns at the address and no contact made.
- Ongoing safe and well checks are conducted in person or via video call on What's App every 3 days, if contact is made e.g. on holiday.
- All information to be recorded on My Concern.

If the school has reason to believe the child is at risk of significant harm:

- Call the Police immediately.