



## **HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE**

# **WHOLE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Date/date Reviewed: December 2017**

**Previous: September 2016**

**Next Review due: December 2019**

This policy is available in pdf format from the College website

[www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk](http://www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk)

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### **Inclusion & Diversity**

The College aims to establish an inclusive community where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexuality, gender orientation, appearance and ability.

### **Rationale**

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Hunterhouse College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages excellent attendance and where each student will feel valued and secure.

The College recognises both the pastoral and academic benefits of students achieving the highest levels of attendance and is committed to ensuring that all students and parents/carers understand the absolute importance of this. The strong link between attendance and academic attainment underpins the College's policy on attendance and all students and parents/carers are informed about this link regularly.

In order for each student to achieve the highest possible attendance, all members of the College community have an important contribution to make and a strong partnership between home and school is vital. It is also understood that the strategies outlined in this policy and the accompanying documentation are only part of the College's approach to improving attendance. Whole-college issues such as providing effective pastoral support, the provision of relevant and appropriate curricula and effective and stimulating teaching and learning will also have a direct impact on attendance levels.

### **Aims**

- Continue to seek the highest possible attendance at an individual student and whole College level
- Continue to seek the lowest possible level of persistent absenteeism (attendance below 85%)
- Set an annual attendance target – 97% for 2017-18
- Continue to develop and embed a programme for rewarding good and improved attendance at an individual, Form Group, Year Group and whole school level
- Raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for all staff, students and parents/carers
- Ensure that all students, parents/carers and staff are aware of the strong link between attendance and academic achievement
- Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for all
- Develop clear procedures for maintaining accurate attendance data and for the monitoring of individual and group attendance and the setting of associated targets
- Develop a framework within which all staff can work to provide a consistent approach to raising levels of attendance throughout the school

### **Links to Other Policies**

Pastoral Care Policy

Behaviour Policy

Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Policy

Safeguarding Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Pregnancy & Parenthood Policy  
Young Carers Policy

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Class Teachers**

Ensure that all students within lessons are able to access their learning through a range of teaching and learning strategies.

Ensure that underachieving students within each class are identified and inform their Head of Department (HOD) and appropriate Head of Year (HOY)/Head of Sixth Form. This will enable Heads of Year/Head of Sixth Form to identify those with the potential to become poor attendees.

Ensure that the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) Lesson Monitor registration of **all** students is completed accurately in **every** lesson **using the codes /, L or N only**. Inform Pupil Reception immediately if there is a problem with the system. If for any reason Lesson Monitor cannot be completed a note should be sent to Pupil Reception listing those students who are absent from the lesson. If Pupil Reception is closed then information should be passed to the Office.

**It is vital that accurate attendance records are kept so that the Pastoral Team can manage issues effectively. In particular, AM and PM registrations are legal documents and must be accurately and promptly completed.**

Identify, within each lesson, any students who clearly should be present in the lesson but are not. Inform Pupil Reception either by e-mail, by telephone or by note within the first ten minutes. Pupil Reception/Office staff will then notify pastoral staff as appropriate.

Monitor carefully the attendance of individuals within a class and alert their HOD and appropriate HOY where patterns of non-attendance are detected. This data can be accessed using the Class Register Report (CRR) in SIMS.

Ensure that appropriate catch-up work is set and marked for students who are absent for more than 5 days so that the return to College is made as easy as possible.

Ensure that those who return from long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access learning and catch up on work which they have missed.

### **Head of Department**

Monitor, alongside the teachers within their department, the attendance of students within their subject area. Identify those students for whom poor attendance is impacting on academic attainment.

Liaise with Form Tutors and/or Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form as appropriate to ensure that contact with home either by phone call or letter is made if required.

Ensure that catch-up work is provided for students who are absent for more than 5 days and that work is set regularly for long term absentees.

**Form Tutors**

Ensure that registers are completed for form time using SIMS Lesson Monitor. If for any reason Lesson Monitor cannot be completed a note should be sent to Pupil Reception listing those students who are absent from the lesson. If Pupil Reception is closed then information should be passed to the Office.

Ensure that absence notes are collected from returning students and those named on the lists provided. Pass all absence notes to the HOY/Head of Sixth Form for signing and then return using the Form Folder, ensuring that reasons for absence are provided in writing within 5 days of the student's return to the College.

Undertake absence phone calls for students in the form on or before the third day of absence or as directed by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form.

Meet with students returning from absences of up to five days on their return and ensure that there is a plan in place to enable the student to catch up on missed work.

Use the weekly attendance data provided by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form to praise and reward good and improved attendance and to identify students with attendance below 97% as directed by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form.

Use form time as directed by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form to act on and monitor attendance and punctuality issues with their form group.

**Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form**

Monitor carefully the attendance of students within the year group, taking note of any patterns amongst students from particular groups, particular times of the week or particular subject areas. Liaise with the Vice Principal (Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form) and/or Pastoral Co-ordinator (Key Stage 3) as appropriate.

Where a student's attendance is below 97% the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form will review the student's attendance pattern and may trigger a letter home to the parent/carer informing them of the College's concerns as appropriate. The Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form may also contact the parent/carer and request a meeting to discuss their child's attendance, if appropriate. Further action will be identified as appropriate aimed at improving the student's attendance rate.

Where a student's attendance is below 90% a referral will be made to the Pastoral Coordinator (Key Stage 3) or Vice Principal (Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form) who will review the student's attendance pattern and advise the Head of Year to request a meeting with parents/carers and the student to discuss attendance and agree actions for improving it through an Attendance Action Plan, if appropriate. Any further action will be identified as appropriate. The student may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service at this stage.

Ensure that there is a clear message given to all students and parents/carers about the link between attendance and academic attainment through phone calls, meetings, letters home, parent/carer evenings and community events within the College.

Ensure that a positive attitude to attendance is embedded within the year group through assemblies and constant reinforcement with students. Encourage a spirit of healthy competition between forms and individuals and ensure that good and improved attendance are regularly rewarded.

Meet with students returning from absences of more than five days on their return and ensure that there is a plan in place to enable the student to catch up on missed work.

Liaise with subject teachers and HODs to ensure that appropriate work is set for long-term absentees and that there is regular contact between home and school, usually on a weekly basis.

Analyse weekly attendance reports provided by Pupil Reception for 100% attendance and attendance under 97% and direct Form Tutors as appropriate, ensuring that excellent and improved attendance are regularly rewarded.

Distribute monthly individual attendance summaries and direct Form Tutors to take appropriate action.

Ensure that there is a monitoring and evaluation process in place of reasons for student absence through the monitoring of student absence notes via the Form Tutor.

Work with the Pastoral Co-ordinator and Vice Principal to identify and develop a range of strategies through which long-term absentees can be reintegrated, to ensure that there is a robust system for recognising and rewarding excellent and improved attendance and that there is a consistent approach to contacting parents/carers with regards to attendance in all year groups.

Implement sanctions where there have been instances of truancy, whether from individual lessons or whole days.

Keep Form Tutors informed of action taken in relation to particular students.

Ensure that parents/carers who wish to take students out of school during term-time are contacted and the potential consequences explained, e.g. negative impact on learning / examination preparation and that holidays taken in term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

#### **Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Vice Principal**

Support the work of all Form Tutors and Heads of Year/Head of sixth Form in maintaining high levels of attendance and achieving the College's attendance target of 97%.

Ensure that referrals to outside agencies are made as appropriate.

Ensure that HOYs/Head of Sixth Form are provided with weekly attendance reports for their year group, detailing 100% attendance and attendance below 97% and that monthly missing notes, punctuality and individual attendance reports are provided to HOYs/Head of Sixth Form.

Ensure that attendance, and in particular students with attendance below 85%, is a standing item at fortnightly link meetings.

Ensure that there is a consistent approach to attendance across all year groups.

Where a student's attendance is below 85% or there is a concern about a pattern of absence, ensure that a referral to the EWS is made.

Ensure that Social Services are informed of the absence of any student on the Child Protection register by the second day.

Liaise on all attendance issues and, in particular, the half-termly summaries for Governors.

### **Office – Attendance Administrator/Pupil Reception**

Check that all lesson registers have been completed in Lesson Monitor, that absence codes have been used correctly and that missing records are followed up as appropriate.

Add information from parental phone calls and notes to the Comments section of Lesson Monitor regarding absence and students leaving during the school day.

Send out letters regarding outstanding absence notes at the end of each calendar month.

Produce for HOYs/Head of Sixth Form and Form Tutors, at the end of each calendar month, a list showing outstanding absence notes.

Produce for HOYs/Head of Sixth Form and Form Tutors, at the end of each calendar month, a list showing the number of lates for each student.

Produce for HOYs/Head of Sixth Form, the Pastoral Co-ordinator, the Vice Principal and the Principal, at the end of each calendar month, attendance figures for each year group by Form.

Produce for HOYs/Head of Sixth Form, the Pastoral Co-ordinator, the Vice Principal and the Principal, at the end of each week, reports for each year group detailing 100% attendance and attendance below 97%.

Send out cause for concern attendance letters as requested by the HOY team/Head of Sixth Form.

Produce additional data and information for Form Tutors, HoYs and Senior Team as required.

### **Recording and Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **Recording Attendance**

Classroom Teachers and Form Tutors **must** register attendance for their classes on SIMS Lesson Monitor **using the codes /, N or L only**, within the first 30 minutes of every lesson.

**In particular, AM and PM registrations are legal documents and must be accurately and promptly completed.**

All students who arrive to the College after 8:45am should sign in at Pupil Reception before going to their lesson. Once a student has arrived to that lesson the class teacher should alter the register code from N to L and enter the number of minutes late. Pupil Reception will enter the reason for lateness.

#### **Monitoring attendance**

Attendance will be formally monitored by year group weekly via the production of reports for HOYs/The Head of Sixth Form, the Pastoral Co-ordinator and the Vice Principal detailing students with 100% attendance and students with attendance below 97%.

At the end of each month, figures will be provided to HOYs/The Head of Sixth Form via the Office/Pupil Reception for outstanding absence letters, lateness and attendance by Form which will be actioned by HOYs/The Head of Sixth Form and Form Tutors.

The monitoring process will involve the celebration of good and improved attendance as well as the development of strategies to enable all students to attend as often as possible and to reach their potential.

Student absence will be monitored as follows:

97-100%           by Form Tutor  
90-97% by Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form  
85-90% by Head of Year and Pastoral Co-ordinator/VP  
Below 85%       by Pastoral Co-ordinator/VP, EWS and other agencies as appropriate

All parents/carers will be informed of their child's attendance formally through the reports process. In addition, where there are concerns about attendance, parents/carers will be contacted by the pastoral team as detailed above.

### **Recording Punctuality**

All students who sign in late automatically receive a late mark unless there are exceptional circumstances where a late mark may be waived at the discretion of the HOY/Head of Sixth Form.

Students who arrive to the College after 8:45am MUST sign in at Pupil Reception before going to their lesson.

### **Monitoring Punctuality:**

Lists of students with late marks will be printed out by the Office/Pupil Reception at the end of each month and supplied to all Form Tutors and HOYs/Head of Sixth Form.

Form Tutors should discuss punctuality with their tutor group as soon as there is cause for concern and as directed by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form.

Students with **three late marks** in a half term for which there is no acceptable reason will be placed in school detention by the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form.

Students who are persistently late without good reason should be referred to the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form for further action.

## **Procedures for Addressing Low Levels of Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Attendance**

#### **Attendance 97 - 100%**

- Form Tutor should review the attendance figures and pattern and discuss any concerns/issues arising with the student as directed by the HOY/Head of Sixth Form.

- If there is a pattern to the absences the Form Tutor should inform the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form who may interview the student and/or send a letter home

#### Attendance <97%

- Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form will review the student's attendance pattern and send a letter home informing them of current percentage of attendance and stating the potential impact this might have on the student if it continues to fall. Parent/carer will be informed that if attendance continues to fall their child will be referred to the EWS.
- The HOY/Head of Sixth Form may also contact the parent/carer by phone and request a meeting to discuss their child's attendance, if appropriate.
- The HOY/Head of Sixth Form will meet with the student to establish reasons for absence and to ascertain if there any concerns or support that can be provided to raise attendance.
- Further action will be identified by Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form as appropriate aimed at improving the student's attendance rate.

#### Attendance <90%

- Pastoral Coordinator/VP will review the student's attendance pattern with the HOY/Head of Sixth Form and invite the parent/carer to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance.
- Pastoral Coordinator/VP will inform any other agencies involved with the student of attendance concerns
- Further action will be identified as appropriate aimed at improving the student's attendance.
- The student will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service for all attendance below 85%. Parents/carers will be notified of this in all instances

#### **Procedure for reporting to parents/carers on attendance/contacting parents regarding unsatisfactory attendance:**

Letters home regarding attendance which is a cause for concern will be triggered by Heads of Year at the end of every month. Attendance will also be formally reported as part of students' short and full reports.

#### **Punctuality**

Students with **three late marks** in a half term for which there is no acceptable reason will be placed in detention by the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form. Students who are persistently late without good reason should be referred to the Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form.

#### **Communication with Parents/Carers**

The College recognises the guidance from DENI (2015/02) which states that:

- 'parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered'
- 'missing school at any time is detrimental to a child's education therefore family holidays or other appointments e.g. doctor or dentist should be arranged, where possible, outside school hours'
- 'holidays during term time can have a significant impact on pupils' learning and family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence'

The home-school relationship is vital in ensuring that all students are able to achieve their potential. Attendance and academic achievement are inextricably linked and we would urge parents/carers to contact the College if they are aware of any concerns their child may have about attending school.



Parents/carers are expected to contact the College on the first day of all student absence. Lines of communication are:

- Telephone call to the College Office leaving a message stating reason for absence and anticipated return date
- Leaving a message on the College answering machine if outside hours (8.30 am – 4.30 pm)
- Email via [info@hunterhouse.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@hunterhouse.belfast.ni.sch.uk), entering attendance as the subject
- Via parentmail

Parents/carers are expected to contact the College again after three days of absence, otherwise the Form Tutor or Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form will make contact to enquire about the student and find out if it is appropriate to send work home.

Students should provide their Form Tutor with a written explanation confirming the reason for their absence on the first day of their return to school either via an absence letter or using the form in the student planner. **This can also be done via parentmail.**

The table below illustrates the impact on learning at different levels of absence and the grading that the College will use when formally reporting to parents/carers on attendance:

100% attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
97% attendance	5 days of absence 1 week of learning missed	Good
95% attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very Poor
Below 85% attendance	More than one month of absence	Unsatisfactory