

Hope Academy

A joint Catholic & Church of England Academy

Attendance Policy



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Rationale

The aim is for all students to have an attendance rate of above 97%. High standards of attendance and punctuality demonstrate a commitment to education and are a good preparation for the world of work. Research outlines that missing out on lessons, leaves children feeling vulnerable to falling behind both academically and socially and studies show children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in all phases of education. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – students, parents/carers and all members of staff.

Rights and Responsibilities

School

- Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all students and will lead through personal example
- Register attendance and punctuality accurately in line with Health and Safety Regulations and all safeguarding procedures
- Report on attendance and punctuality in each student's regular academic report
- Contact parents if the level of an individual's attendance and/or punctuality gives a cause for concern
- Follow the attendance procedure flow chart as shown below.
- Refer to and follow the statutory guidance on 'Working together to improve attendance' from the DfE.
- Follow Hope Academy's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Students

- Students are expected to attend regularly and to arrive on time with a positive mind set for learning
- Students are encouraged to achieve and maintain good attendance through assemblies, collective worship, Inspire Programme, incentives, rewards and graduation.

Parents/carers

- Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, in correct uniform, equipped and with a positive mind set for learning
- Parents/carers are responsible for informing Hope Academy, before 9am on a day of absence, of the reason why their child is absent by phone call or personal visit
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences
- Parents/carers should avoid routine medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours
- Parents/carers should inform school before an appointment and a copy of documentation should be shown to an attendance officer
- Parents/carers are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Holidays should not be booked during term time
- A signed parental letter confirming absence is expected on return to school
- Contact Hope Academy directly when a student is required to leave site. Parents should not contact the student.

Punctuality

We expect our students to be punctual to school. Inspire time begins at 8.35am for all years. If students arrive after this time then they will be marked late and will receive a break or lunch time detention. Parents of children who arrive late to school on a regular basis will be invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child and to ascertain any support needed from school. Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at Reception.

Signing out procedures

A student who is required to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter or an appointment card from their parent/carer and show it to their Year Team. They will receive a pink signing out slip which will be signed by the Year Team. The student must sign out at Student Services and get their pink signing out slip stamped with a school stamp. Appropriate arrangements should be made to collect a student from school.

Attendance

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parent/carer) as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the reasons for absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason, such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Where a medical/dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents/carers should ensure that their child is absent for the minimum time possible. Hope Academy acknowledges that some students may have long term medical/health issue and works to support students and families in minimising the impact of such issues on attendance.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and won't be recorded as authorised. This type of absence can lead to the school considering reasonable and/or legal proceedings such as Penalty Notices.

Examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping or allowing students off school unnecessarily
- Truancy at any time during the school day
- Absences which are unexplained
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Waiting for deliveries or workmen
- Students not attending school without a valid medical reason

Medical Evidence

Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to support their child's absence. If medical evidence has been requested and it is not provided by the parent the absence will be unauthorised by school.

Acceptable medical evidence can be:

- Copy of prescription medicine or prescription counterpart
- Signed and dated medical appointment card
- A copy of dentist/doctors/hospital letter

Leave of Absence during term time

Hope Academy cannot authorise time off for family holidays, sports or performing arts events during term time and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such cases.

Parents/carers can only apply for a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Parents must apply for leave of absence in writing using a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (available from the Attendance Team) and must attach any evidence for the school to take into consideration. The application must be submitted SIX WEEKS prior to the absence request date. The form should be returned to Hope Academy's Attendance Officer.

The Principal or delegated lead will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision within two weeks.

If the Principal or delegated lead does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway the absence will be unauthorised. This may lead to Penalty Notice Fines. Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent for every child concerned.

A leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is removed from school for a period of leave absence without the school being informed, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

Penalty Notices

Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide whether or not to issue fines. However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days**. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500

More information about Penalty Notices can be found at [Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Children Missing In Education

If a child transfers to another setting before they leave in Y11 then you must complete transfer forms by visiting St Helens Council website <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/school-admissions/transferring-schools/>

If parents/carers remove their child from Hope Academy without completing a transfer form then the child is considered to be a Child Missing in Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered students (Education Act 1996).

This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority.

Students Educated off Site

The Attendance Team are responsible for monitoring the attendance of students who are educated off site by close liaison with the offsite education provider. Students will be marked with the appropriate registration code to explain the education provision being accessed.

Regular safeguarding and curriculum visits take place by Hope Academy to all students who are educated off site. When a student's attendance to their alternative provision becomes of concern an attendance meeting will be conducted by Hope Academy staff and parents and students. All visits are recorded using CPOMS

Safeguarding and Attendance

Hope Academy considers safeguarding of its students as one of its critical roles. Hope Academy operates a first day response system. This means parents are expected to contact school by telephone on the first day, and any subsequent days, of any absence to explain why their child is not

in school. Unexplained absences will be followed up by a text or a telephone call from the Attendance Team. For safeguarding reasons school will attempt to contact parents until we receive a response, this may involve a home visit in order to ascertain the reason for the absence. Home visits are undertaken on the first day of absence for students who are identified as vulnerable. Students who are absent for 3 days with no contact from parents/carers will receive a home visit. Students who are absent from school for 5 days will receive a home visit, regardless of contact from a parent or carer. Home visits are undertaken by any member of staff from Hope Academy. Where there is a safeguarding concern a member of the safeguarding team will visit. St Helen's EWO or Hope Academy's Safer School's Police Officer may accompany staff on home visits.

Completion of register and initiating first day response procedures for unexplained absence in a timely manner is a priority to ensure students' whereabouts are known on a daily basis. Registers are taken at the start of every lesson to ensure that students are accounted for.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

From September 2015, the government set the persistent absence (PA) threshold at 10% of student's possible attendance. This means that any students who has 10% absence or above (90% attendance or below) fall into this category. The government do not distinguish between absence that is authorised or unauthorised. Hope Academy will investigate, support and challenge any absence that meets this threshold. Parents are informed when their child is nearing PA status and will be offered supportive strategies, to assist with improving attendance. The following table is a guide to show when a child would become a persistent absentee:

Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1-2 (Autumn Term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (Autumn and Spring terms combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

Extreme Persistent Absenteeism (Extreme PA)

Extreme PA is when a students attendance falls below 50% absence. Hope Academy will investigate, support and challenge any absence that falls below 50%. Parents are informed when their child's attendance falls below 50%. Parents are expected to attend attendance meeting which may involve a St Helen's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Further supportive strategies will be offered to improve attendance.

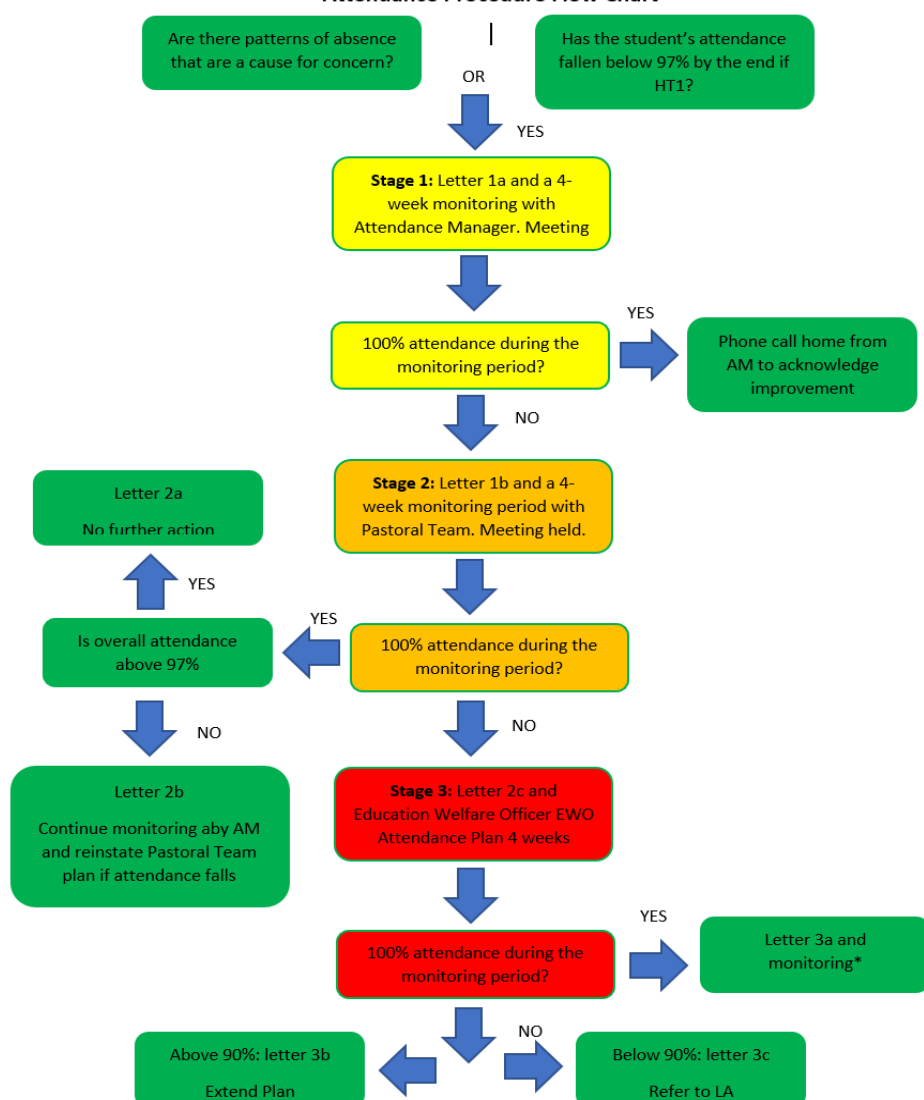
Hope Academy's strategies for promoting good attendance

- Hope Academy will provide an environment where students feel valued and welcomed. Our ethos demonstrates that students feel that their presence in school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent or late.
- A varied curriculum will be offered to all students and learning tasks will be matched to students needs
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and progress in order to support students
- Attendance figures are displayed around the Academy
- Year Teams will be provided with attendance figures daily and will share these with students during weekly year group collective worship and during Inspire.
- Celebration through certificates, postcards home, graduation, rewards trips/events, invitation to celebration events and more.

- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. These will be reviewed by the Inspire Tutor, Year Team and/or Attendance Team
- Parents will be reminded at all school events the importance of good attendance
- The Year Teams and Attendance Teams will liaise with other agencies where appropriate to support students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Year Teams will have regular meeting with the Attendance Team, DSL and designated lead member of SLT to discuss and review students with attendance concerns. Support packages for students and actions for these students will be discussed.
- Regular visits will be made to feeder primary schools to ensure a sound transition to Hope Academy. Discussions with staff will seek to identify those students who may require addition help. These students may be given a bespoke transition programme.
- Hope Academy staff will explore bespoke support packages for those in need. These may include one or more of the following:
 - Change/adaptation of curriculum
 - Change of year bands
 - Change of Inspire groups
 - Change of class groups/sets
 - Access to Hope Academy's Hope Centre and SEND department
 - Access to Hope Academy's onsite counsellor
 - Access to Hope Academy's Inclusion Hub
 - Referral to external agencies via and EHAT or MASH referral



Attendance Procedure Flow Chart



*Monitoring from the AM but one absence prior to the student returning to 'good' attendance will result in being placed back



Attendance Matters



Hope Academy's aim is for all students to have an attendance rate of **above 97%**. Research outlines that missing out on lessons, leaves children feeling vulnerable to falling behind both academically and socially and studies show children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in all phases of education. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – students, parents/carers and all members of staff.

