



Heathermount Attendance Policy 2018

Governors' Committee Responsible:

Governor Lead:

Nominated Lead Member of Staff

Jane Jackson (Head Teacher)

Status & Review Cycle:

Statutory Annual

Ratified by Governing Body:

TBC

1st Review:

1st October 2018

Next Review Date:

1st October 2019

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1. Associated Policies and Guidance:

This policy has been created to reflect the guidance provided in the following documents:

- ❖ DFE School Attendance parental responsibility measures statutory guidance Jan 2015
- ❖ DFE School Attendance guidance for schools November 2016

This policy also links to Heathermount and The Disabilities Trust policies on:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

2. Introduction

Heathermount School is a non-maintained specialist school, owned by The Disabilities Trust, for pupils aged 4-19 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. The School is supported by a Governing Body consisting of members of the Board of Trustees of The Disabilities Trust and other individuals who act as critical friends of the school.

Heathermount School are committed in partnership with parents, pupils, governors and local authorities to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their potential.

Heathermount School recognises that attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates so do performance achievement friendship circles and self-esteem.

Pupils can arrive with previous poor attendance levels or even school refusal, due to their difficulties with their ASC. It is our aim to ensure that their attendance improves as soon as they are able, and we deploy several strategies to help them and their families manage this and improve resilience to attend school.

3. Aims of the policy

The policy has been written using reference to legislation and guidance as stated in School Attendance Guidance November 2016.

This policy will be made available and accessible to the whole school community.

The key aims of this policy are:

- To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or SEN;
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To support and encourage parents to understand and perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
- That all pupils are punctual to their lessons;
- That schools staff ensure that school is welcoming and that pupils feel safe and secure in attending school
- To provide clear ways of working and define agreed roles and responsibilities, to promote consistency and fairness;
- To make clear all expectations relating to attendance and punctuality clear to all stakeholders affected by them;
- To ensure that attendance and punctuality is a high priority for all staff, families, students and governors.

4. Expectations

We expect all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day; and
- Talk to someone they trust at school if they have any problems that impact on their school attendance

We expect that parents/carers for pupils will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school promptly before 9am each day that their child is absent;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that impacts on their child's school attendance.

5. Admissions and Attendance Register

The school will keep an **admission register** which records the personal details of every pupil at the school using the school's management information system – BROMCOM.

The **admissions register** will include the following information for every pupil:

- The full name, gender, date of birth, date the pupil was admitted to the school and the name of the school the pupil last attended.
- The name and details of those with parental responsibility for every pupil in the school
- At least two emergency contacts for each pupil in the school.

The school will keep an **attendance register** which records every pupil's attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions that the school is open to pupils.

We expect that school staff will follow the tabled guidance of responsibility:

Attendance Task	Responsible member of staff
1. Ensure that school registers are completed at least twice daily and promptly;	All class teachers/tutors
2. Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all pupils; providing a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns	All school staff
3. Respond promptly and take action to a child or parent/carers concern about the school or other pupils	All school staff Senior Leadership Team Safeguarding Team
4. Monitor every pupil's attendance and notify senior leadership team of attendance statistics	School attendance officer
5. Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence	School attendance officer
6. Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence	School attendance officer
7. Utilise statistical data on attendance to influence the school's response to behaviour, attendance and mental health and Wellbeing.	Senior Leadership Team
8. Inform parents/carers in writing of concerns about attendance, arrange meetings with them to discuss further and to liaise with external agencies to assist the improvement of school attendance for individual pupils	Attendance officer Senior Leadership Team Safeguarding Team

6. Levels of attendance guide and actions to improve attendance

Attendance %	Level of Concern	Action by the school
96% and above	None – on track attendance	Letter of recognition
90-96%	Concern as below school target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring over a short period of time by school to see if improvement occurs
Below 90% initial	Persistent absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter home Medical evidence required for all absences Meeting with parents Action plan
Below 90% next steps	Continued persistent absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter home Further meeting with parents Update action plan Involve EWO or other agencies

Repeated absence may require us to request medical evidence from your GP, Paediatrician, Hospital or other Health professional.

7. Registration process

School starts at 9am each day Monday to Friday and finishes at 3:30pm.

All students are expected to be in attendance and registered between 09:00 and 09:15am when the morning register will close.

Parents have a duty to notify school before 9am each morning of absence if their child is not able to attend school with a descriptor of the reason for nonattendance. Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that all registers are completed by 09:15 each morning.

Pupils who arrive in school after the 09:15am deadline are required to register with the school office and sign in their attendance before going to their lesson. The school office will notify the attendance officer of the late arrival and the attendance officer will amend the attendance code for that day, recording the actual minutes late.

There are two main categories of absence that are recorded:

Authorised absence (AA) – an accepted explanation with justified reasons for the absence. Authorised absence is granted under the following circumstances:

- Exclusion
- Days of religious observance
- Medical/dental appointments that cannot take place out of school hours
- Illness – with written parental consent or medical note.
- Prevention from attending by an unavoidable cause, agreed beforehand.
- Attending a family funeral (this must not, however, exceed an agreed period of absence)

Un-authorised absence (UA) – when school has not received an accepted reason and/or school has not approved a pupil's absence.

8. Absence Requests

Parents should note that it is not a parental-right to prevent children from attending school. At Heathermount School, it is a policy that absence for holidays in term time is generally not authorised. Only in very exceptional circumstances will leave be granted.

Occasionally pupils will be required to be absent from school due to medical appointments or with regards to an urgent family situation such as a family bereavement. Parents/Carers are required to complete in advance an absence request form for all medical appointments and time required away from school during Term time. This form must be forwarded to the school and reviewed and signed by the Head Teacher for approval. Leave of absence should, where possible, be requested at least 2 weeks in advance of the period of absence. A copy of this will be kept in school and parents notified if the absence request has been agreed.

Parents are reminded that term time absence should only be requested in exceptional circumstances (this means being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time).

Absence request forms are available in hard copy from the [school website](#).

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