Attendance Policy

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Legislation and guidance
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Recording attendance
6. Authorised absence
7. Strategies for promoting attendance
8. Supporting pupils with poor attendance
9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school
10. Attendance monitoring
11. Links with other policies
12. Contact Information
13. Approval & Policy Review
14. Revision History
15. Appendix 1: attendance codes

1. Introduction

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values: 'Building confidence and preparing students for life.'

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Heathermount documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance, Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility, updated August 2023, considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

Heathermount is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Heathermount

The policy documents of Heathermount are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasion, a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the republication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Information Sharing Duty: statutory guidance issued under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 (September 2026).
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

4. Role and responsibilities

4.1 The local governing board

The local governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties, and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate. Where attendance information is relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare, the school will also ensure compliance with section 16LA of the Children Act 2004, including proactive sharing and responding to requests where the statutory criteria are met.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular, continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed. This includes promptly sharing relevant attendance and contextual information where section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 applies; no particular child protection, referral or statutory intervention threshold must be met before the duty can apply.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Carys Windle and can be contacted via the school office.

4.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/deputy headteacher/assistant headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Caireen Ewart and can be contacted via the school office.

4.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the **correct codes (see Appendix 1),** and submitting this information to the school office by 9.30am and 1.15pm.

4.6 School admin staff and the attendance officer

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the SLT where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e., live with and look after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time as far as possible
- Report their child's absence via Arbor before by 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's tutor, the assistant head for their child's phases or the school's pastoral lead, can be contacted via the school office.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register in the Arbor MIS platform and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. The school day starts at 9am and ends at 3.30pm.

Pupils must arrive at school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 9-9.20am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by logging their child's absence on Arbor.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents must email the school office with details of the medical/dental appointment absence.

Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality concerns are identified through regular monitoring of late marks and attendance data, and where patterns emerge, the school will respond through early communication with parents/carers, targeted support and monitoring by the Attendance Officer and relevant senior leaders, and, where necessary, the implementation of an individual support plan to address underlying barriers to punctual arrival

5.5 Following up on unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- On the first day of unexplained absence, the school will attempt to contact the student's parent/carer by telephone as soon as practicable during the morning to establish the reason for absence. Where no contact can be made, further attempts will be made using all available contact details, and safeguarding procedures will be followed where concerns arise.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals. Relevant information may need to be shared for early help, prevention or unmet need before a formal referral threshold is reached.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 8 below), as appropriate.

5.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via the termly school report cards and via the Annual Review documentation. Parents will also have daily visibility of attendance via the Parent Arbor App.

6. Authorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

Rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to recur. Examples include:
- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)]

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website and the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

6.2 Other reasons for authorised absence
Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances, a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

6.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)
The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an off-site approved educational activity, sporting activity, visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending a provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

Heathermount School promotes positive attendance through a culture of encouragement, recognition, and support. Good and improved attendance is acknowledged through regular celebration within class groups and whole-school assemblies, and through positive communication with parents/carers.

In addition, the school runs an annual whole-school attendance celebration to recognise positive attendance, raise the profile of the benefits of good attendance, and reinforce the importance of regular school attendance in an inclusive and motivating way.

8. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. **All of the following support mechanisms are considered an absolute last resort after all internal early-help strategies have been explored:**

8.1 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.
An education supervision order is a formal intervention, but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

8.3 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

8.4 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days.
If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.
In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

9.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

At Heathermount School, we recognise that some pupils may experience additional barriers to attending school regularly, particularly where these relate to their special educational needs, emotional wellbeing, anxiety, sensory differences or other individual circumstances.

We are committed to working collaboratively with pupils, families and relevant professionals to understand these barriers and develop personalised, supportive approaches that promote positive and sustainable attendance.

Where attendance difficulties are linked to a pupil's individual needs, we will work with the family and, where appropriate, involve the local authority to ensure that suitable support is identified and coordinated.

Support may include:

- **Working with families:** Meeting with parents and carers to understand the reasons behind attendance difficulties, identify barriers and agree appropriate support.
- **Listening to pupil voice:** Seeking the pupil's views, where possible and appropriate, to understand their experiences, concerns and feelings about attending school.
- **Identifying a key contact:** Providing families with a named member of staff who will act as a consistent point of contact and coordinate support.
- **Developing an individualised attendance support plan:** Working collaboratively with the pupil and their family to identify barriers, potential triggers, reasonable adjustments, agreed strategies, responsibilities and realistic, achievable attendance goals.
- **Supporting gradual reintegration:** Where appropriate, developing a structured and flexible reintegration plan, with the aim of increasing attendance sustainably over time.
- **Providing supported transitions:** Offering personalised arrival arrangements, including meeting pupils at the school entrance, providing access to a quiet space or supporting transitions into lessons.
- **Identifying a trusted adult:** Ensuring pupils have access to a familiar and trusted member of staff who can provide reassurance, emotional support and assistance throughout the school day.

- **Making reasonable adjustments:** Considering adaptations to the school environment, timetable, routines or learning arrangements to reduce barriers to attendance.
- **Working with external professionals:** Where appropriate, involving the school's therapy team, local authority and other relevant professionals to provide coordinated support.
- **Reviewing and monitoring progress:** Regularly reviewing attendance plans with pupils and families, recognising small successes and adapting support in response to changing needs.

Our approach will remain individualised, supportive and non-punitive, recognising that attendance difficulties may reflect unmet needs rather than a lack of willingness to attend school.

Our aim is for all pupils to access full-time education wherever appropriate. We recognise, however, that some pupils may require additional support and carefully planned steps towards achieving this. Any temporary part-time timetable will be used only in exceptional circumstances, agreed with parents or carers, regularly reviewed and implemented in accordance with statutory guidance, with a clear plan towards full-time attendance.

9.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

For students that are absent due to mental or physical ill health we will:

- **Maintain regular communication:** Keep in contact with the pupil and their family during periods of absence, where appropriate, to offer reassurance, maintain relationships and understand their changing needs.
- **Plan for a successful return:** Work collaboratively with the pupil, family and relevant professionals to identify appropriate arrangements and support for returning to school.
- **Make reasonable adjustments:** Consider adjustments to the learning environment, school routines, expectations or provision to support the pupil's health and wellbeing.
- **Support a manageable reintegration:** Where appropriate, develop a gradual and structured return to school that takes account of the pupil's individual circumstances, health needs and capacity to engage.
- **Set achievable attendance goals:** Agree realistic steps towards improving attendance, with regular reviews to ensure that arrangements remain appropriate and effective.
- **Provide emotional and pastoral support:** Ensure pupils have access to trusted staff and, where appropriate, therapeutic support to help manage any concerns associated with returning to school.
- **Work with external professionals:** Liaise with relevant healthcare professionals, the local authority and other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a coordinated approach.

Where a pupil's health needs prevent them from attending school for an extended period, we will work with the local authority and relevant professionals to consider how their educational needs can continue to be met.

Parents and carers are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* when deciding whether their child should remain at home due to illness. We will share this guidance and support families in understanding it to promote attendance wherever appropriate.

9.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

We recognise that some pupils may experience additional social, family or practical circumstances that affect their ability to attend school regularly.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Pupils who are currently, or have previously been, known to children's social care.
- Young carers and pupils with significant caring responsibilities.
- Pupils experiencing challenging family circumstances or changes in their home environment.
- Pupils experiencing difficulties with transport or other practical arrangements that affect their ability to attend school.

We are committed to identifying and understanding these barriers and working collaboratively with pupils, families and relevant agencies to provide appropriate support.

Our approach will include:

- **Understanding individual circumstances:** Working with pupils and families to identify the specific barriers affecting attendance and understand their impact.
- **Providing a consistent point of contact:** Identifying a trusted, named member of staff who can work with the pupil and their family to coordinate support.
- **Agreeing realistic actions:** Developing clear, achievable actions with pupils and families to address barriers and improve attendance.
- **Offering practical support:** Where possible and appropriate, helping families to access support with transport, uniform, meals, equipment, hygiene products or technology.
- **Supporting school readiness:** Providing practical resources such as social stories, visual timetables, checklists and other personalised strategies to support morning routines, transitions and preparation for school.
- **Working with other agencies:** Liaising with children's social care, local authorities and other relevant services where additional support may be beneficial.
- **Monitoring and reviewing:** Regularly reviewing attendance patterns, evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and adapting support where necessary.

We will ensure that any reasonable adjustments and interventions are timely, proportionate, appropriately targeted and responsive to the pupil's individual circumstances.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, we will inform the local authority and work collaboratively to consider whether additional support or a review of existing provision is required.

9.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

At Heathermount School, we recognise that returning to school following a prolonged or unavoidable period of absence can be challenging, particularly for pupils who experience anxiety, difficulties with transitions or changes to established routines.

We will take a supportive and individualised approach to reintegration, working closely with pupils, families and relevant professionals to ensure that pupils feel safe, prepared and supported when returning to school.

Support may include:

- **Maintaining relationships:** Keeping in appropriate contact with the pupil and their family during the period of absence to maintain a positive connection with school.
- **Planning for the return:** Arranging a return-to-school meeting, where appropriate, to discuss any concerns, identify support needs and agree a clear reintegration plan.
- **Providing a trusted adult:** Identifying a familiar member of staff who can support the pupil during their return and act as a consistent point of contact.
- **Creating predictability:** Providing clear information about routines, expectations, staffing and any changes that may have occurred during the pupil's absence.
- **Considering a phased return:** Where appropriate and in accordance with statutory guidance, considering a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable as part of a planned reintegration programme.
- **Supporting relationships:** Helping pupils to reconnect with peers and staff and rebuild their confidence within the school environment.
- **Supporting learning:** Identifying any gaps in learning and providing appropriate opportunities to revisit key knowledge and skills, without placing unnecessary pressure on the pupil.
- **Reviewing progress:** Monitoring the pupil's wellbeing, engagement and attendance, making adjustments to the reintegration plan where necessary.

Our priority will be to ensure that pupils experience a positive and sustainable return to school. Reintegration arrangements will be responsive to individual needs, with the aim of restoring full-time attendance as soon as it is appropriate and achievable.

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy (which can be found on the school website) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check. The school will also share relevant information with other relevant persons where section 16LA applies and will not delay required sharing while awaiting parental consent.

10. Attendance Monitoring

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the local governing body.

10.2 Analysing attendance

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct a 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

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 11.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate. Where section 16LA applies, such sharing is a statutory duty rather than optional: relevant information must be shared where it may facilitate the recipient's safeguarding or welfare functions, subject to the limited detriment exception and applicable data protection requirements.

10.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Attendance concerns do not need to meet a significant-harm or other statutory intervention threshold before relevant safeguarding or welfare information is shared under section 16LA. Decisions to share or not share should be recorded with the rationale.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)
- The school also analyses attendance across different cohorts and groups of students to identify whether there are particular groups whose absence may be a cause for concern. Attendance data is compared with national attendance figures, and this information is shared with the governing board to support strategic oversight and accountability.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Children missing in education

Contact Information

If staff have any questions or concerns about passwords, they should contact the following individuals:

Caireen Ewart

Approval & Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the board of directors.

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Policy Approver(s)	Cavendish Education Board of Directors/Senior Leadership Team of the school
Storage Location	Website, Online, hard copy in the schools
Effective Date	June 2025
Next Review Date	June 2028

Revision History

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
V1	Original document	Cavendish Education	June 2025
V1.1	Reviewed, changes to: Legislation and Guidance, Roles and Responsibilities, Recording Absences, Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school	Cavendish Education	June 2026

V1.2	Reviewed; changes to guidance following the webinar Attendance – Law and Practice on 15 September 2026 by Farrier & Co	Cavendish Education	29th September 2026
V1.3	**Updated to align with the Information Sharing Duty September 2026**	**Cavendish Central Team**	**2nd October 2026**

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before the register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	The pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	A pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	The pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home, and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of the school premises is closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	The whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent when the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	The pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived at school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of the session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on the admission register	The pupil has not joined school yet, but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays