

Horizons Education

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children and young people are to achieve their full potential.

Horizons Education believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We encourage students and parents/carers to aspire for 100% attendance although attendance below 85% or patterns of absences will initiate a formal intervention.

1.2 Horizons Education acknowledge that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and curriculum. We are committed to working with our partner schools and other agencies to promote regular school attendance.

2. Legal Obligations

2.1 The Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Raising of the participation age (RPA) does not affect the compulsory school age. However, its effect is that a person who ceased to be of compulsory school age but has not yet reached the age of 18 (or attained a level 3 qualification), is under a duty to participate in education or training.

2.3 Under the Education Act, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.4 The Education Regulations require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record the details for each student to identify whether they are;

- Present; - Attending an approved educational activity; - Absent; or, - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

3. Categorising attendance

3.1 All students will be categorised using one of the codes below;

Present at School

/ \ Present (/ = am, \ = pm)

L Late arrival before the register has closed

Present at and Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

B Off-site educational activity

D Dual Registered – at another educational establishment

J At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

P Participating in a supervised sporting activity

V Educational visit or trip

W Work Experience

Authorised Absence from School

C Leave of absence authorised by school

E Excluded but no alternative provision made

H Holiday authorised by the school

I Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

M Medical or dental appointments

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head

teacher

N Reason for absence not yet provided

O Absent from school without authorisation

U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

X Not required to be in school

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z Pupil not on admission register

Planned whole or partial school closure (Bank holidays, Inset days)

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by Horizons Education and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

3.3 Partner schools and agencies should advise Horizons Education by telephone on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.4 Absences will be defined as follows;

3.4.1 Illness - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing Horizons Education that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

3.4.2 Medical/Dental Appointments – Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend Horizons Education for part of the day.

3.4.3 Other Authorised Circumstances - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

3.4.5 Family Holidays and Extended Leave – Parents/carers are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time.

3.5 Religious Observance – Horizons Education acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of Horizons Education and limiting the authorised absence rate of Horizons Education and the referring school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

3.6 Study Leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. The referring school will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels. Horizons Education do not offer study leave. Students will only leave early at the request of the referring school.

3.7 Arrival registration begins at 9.30am. Students who arrive after 9:45am will be marked as present but arrived late while register is still open. The register will close at 10am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised (arrived in school after register closed). The absence will remain recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late.

3.8 Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by Horizons Education.

3.8.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping

- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Horizons Education believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the referring school staff, referring school governors, referring agency, parents/carers, students and the wider school community. As such, we will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers
- Annually review our Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the centre attendance and related issues through termly reporting at senior management meetings
- Ensure that the centre has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

4.3 Horizons Education will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Contribute to a whole company approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of Horizons Education strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

4.4 Horizons Education request that parents/carers:

- Talk to their child about Horizons Education and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress

- Instil the value of education and regular attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact Horizons Education if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Not keep their child off from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the head teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

5. Using attendance data

5.1 Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

5.2 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

5.3 Progress Schools will share attendance data with the referring school/agency and the local authority as required.

5.4 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR 2018.