

HNS Attendance Policy

1.0. Hackney New School mission statement

Hackney New School is a learning community where our students have high aspirations for themselves and each other. We want our students to grow into well-informed, well-balanced and confident citizens. We aim to provide a disciplined, safe environment where children learn effectively and respect each other.

2.0 Policy links, aims and values

2.1 Policy links

This policy links with:

- Safeguarding policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education government guidelines

2.2 Aims and values

At Hackney New School we do everything possible to facilitate regular attendance at school. There are four main reasons for this:

1. All young people aged between 5 and 16 have the right to full time education. Schools and local education authorities have a duty to ensure that they take up this right.
2. A key factor in raising levels of achievement in our school is establishing a regular pattern of attendance and punctuality. Students cannot achieve if they are absent from school.
3. Positive attitudes towards attendance enable pupils to maximise their opportunities both at school and in later life.
4. Hackney New School places a high priority on promoting equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. Irregular attendance may lead to disadvantage and inequality, place pupils at risk, isolate them from their peers and may result in unsettled behaviour.

3.0. The position regarding family holidays, extended trips and/or leave for other purposes

We generally do not authorise requests for personal leave, family holidays, extended trips or any other purposes. Absences taken during term time for the purpose above after a termly/half termly break cannot be authorised by parents; only the school can do this. Exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Head of School or designated member(s) of staff at their discretion, and their decision is final. The legal position is that under regulation 12 of the Education, Schools and Further Education Regulations 1981, no parent can demand leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday or personal circumstances as of right.

At Hackney New School we do not authorise holidays and/or extended trips overseas in term time as regular attendance is a key factor in a pupil's achievement at school.

If a pupil is taken on holiday and/or extended trip during the school term, the school may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. The fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid

within 21 days of receiving the notice. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, but is paid within 28 days, the cost will rise to £120. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in the parent/carer being taken to court.

In exceptional circumstances, a parent/carer must make a case for taking the pupil away from school during term time, which means that the parent/carer has to show why his or her child should be treated differently from the norm. The case must be made in writing directly to the Head of School. However, making a case does not mean that leave will be granted.

4.0. School procedures for improving pupil attendance and punctuality

4.1. Recording and authorising absence

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be reported to the Local Authority. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken to address the absence.

4.2 Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8:20am. Any students arriving after this time will be deemed as late. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases, for instance, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered. If a pupil is late to school after 8:20am (when the gates close), they will receive an automatic detention. Afternoon registration takes place after lunch.

If a pupil is persistently late to school, the Student Manager and/or Head of Learning will intervene to resolve the problem. This may include an interview with the pupil to understand the problems, placing the pupil on punctuality report, and making home contact to remind parents of the school's punctuality expectations.

4.3 First Day/ Second Day Absence

For safeguarding reasons, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the school on the morning of their child's absence. The school will make contact to notify parent(s)/carer(s) on the first day of absence if we have not previously been contacted.

4.4 Third Day Absence

If a pupil is still away and there has been no parental contact over the previous two days, the Family Support Worker or a member of the pastoral team will complete a home visit to confirm the pupil is safe and not a Child Missing Education (CME). The parent/carer will be reminded of the attendance procedures of the school. The school will invite the parent/carer into school for a meeting to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Head of Learning, Student Manager or Attendance Lead if absences persist.

4.5 Attendance Intervention Stages

Research has indicated that poor attendance has a detrimental effect on student achievement and outcomes. For that reason, the school monitors and undertakes various actions to improve the attendance of all pupils. These include meetings with various members of the attendance team in the following stages:

Stage	Criteria	Actions
Stage 1	Sporadic absences & attendance figure of below 96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage 1 attendance meeting between the parent/carer and Student Manager ● Stage 1 letter sent ● Actions agreed and attendance is monitored for 3 weeks ● Referral to Stage 2 if attendance does not improve
Stage 2	Regular absences & below 96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage 2 attendance meeting between the parent/carer and Head of Learning ● Stage 2 letter sent ● Actions agreed and attendance is monitored for 3 weeks ● Referral to Stage 3 if attendance does not improve
Stage 3	Regular absences & below 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage 3 attendance meeting between the parent/carer and LG Attendance Lead ● Stage 3 letter sent ● Actions agreed and attendance is monitored for 3 weeks ● A letter warning parent/carer that a referral could be made to Attendance Panel Hearing sent ● Referral to Attendance Panel Hearing if attendance does not improve
Stage 4	Regular absences & below 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage 4 Attendance Panel Hearing meeting between parent and Deputy Headteacher ● Parents/carers attendance contract signed and improvement timeline is set ● Stage 4 letter sent ● Actions agreed and attendance is monitored for 3 weeks ● Referral to Local Authority's Court Officer if attendance does not improve

4.6 Persistent Absence

A pupil is considered to have persistent absences if he/she has an overall attendance at the school of below 90%. Parents are notified of this via letters, home contact is made to remind parents of the school's attendance procedures and meetings are arranged in accordance with attendance stages to understand the issues and agree actions to improve attendance.

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after the above interventions and support measures have been tried, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- a.) The school may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.
- b.) The school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- c.) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

4.7 Child Missing Education (CME)

A Child Missing from Education is defined as all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise, for example, privately or in alternative provision, and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

Hackney New School take the following steps to track students who are at risk of CME or meet the CME criteria:

- Day 1-2 of absence: attempt to make telephone contact with home
- Day 3 of absence: conduct a home visit (which may involve checking with neighbours)
- Day 6-20: check with local agencies and databases, such as; Children’s Social Care, Housing, Young Hackney, Health/ GP, Council Tax, HLT SEN/ Admissions
- Day 21: CME referral made to Hackney Learning Trust and child taken off roll

5.0 Policy Documentation Control

Responsible for review:	Ms Hannah McDermott
Version:	1
Reviewed:	April 2020
Next review date:	April 2021