Attendance Policy

Responsible Staff	Andrew Commander
Governors Committee Responsible	Full Governing Board
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1. Introduction

Exhall Grange Specialist School endeavours to provide the best education possible for all its pupils in a safe, open and transparent learning environment. We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents/carers, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. Where concerns are raised, the school intends for these to be dealt with fairly, openly, promptly and without prejudice.

2. Statement of Intent

To ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to teaching and maximise learning opportunities at Exhall Grange Specialist School by promoting good attendance and punctuality.

Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for pupils and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

Exhall Grange Specialist School will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are concerns which affect a pupil's attendance we will explore, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible, therefore, reducing the level of unauthorised absences.

Absence may be authorised by the school before or after it occurs. The school will ensure that parents/ carers understand that it is their responsibility by law to make sure that their child attends school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance

Our whole school attendance target is 95%

Percentage Attendance	Number of days lost learning in a year	Equivalent to
100%	0	0
95%	9	1 days absent every 4 weeks
90%	19	1 days absence every 2 weeks
85%	28	1 days absence every 6th day
80%	38	1 days absence every week or one whole school year missed over 5 years

The attendance support team:–

- Deputy Headteacher (Andrew Commander) – Strategic attendance champion
- Fiona Holliland – Student and Family Support Lead
- Roy Owen – Mental health and wellbeing keyworker/Attendance support worker
- Harminder Birdi - Office Manager – Data admin support

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- "absence" as:
  - Not attending school for any reason.

- An "authorised absence" as:
  - When the pupil is prevented from attending by sickness, health-related issues or mental health related issues.
  - When the pupil has medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the school day.
  - Religious or cultural observances set by the religious body to which parents/carers/pupils belong.
  - An absence due to a family emergency or bereavement.
  - Traveller absence – where travelling pupils are away from school as a result of their family being on the road.

- An exceptional circumstance that has been requested in advance.
- When no suitable transport is available and the school is not within walking distance.

- An "unauthorised absence" as:
  - Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained or no reason has been provided for the absence.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed unless it is for school transport reasons.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed in advance.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.

- "Persistent absenteeism" as:
  Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year, despite whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- 'Severe absenteeism" as:
  Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year, despite whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

Additional information can be found at https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolattendance

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The School Governing Body are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's polices and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Appointing a governor to be responsible on promoting and prioritising good attendance. The Governor allocated to this is Shelia Harley – harley.s@exhallgrange.co.uk
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' (2022) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

5.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Managing the day-to-day implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed – penalty notices , where necessary
- Ensuring staff receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- Ensuring staff receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development

5.3 The Senior Leaders are responsible for :

- Leading attendance across each key stage ensuring it is a whole school approach
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

5.4 Class Teacher/Form Tutors:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

5.5 Staff, including teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

5.6 School admin/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer messages from parents/carers regarding attendance to the appropriate staff member
- Checking registers have been completed on time and correctly

5.7 Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly as a legal duty.
- Managing the attendance of their child during term-time and contacting school regarding any absences.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments are made outside of the school day
- **It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to also keep in touch with their provided school transport (if applicable).**

5.8 Pupils are responsible for:

- Managing their own attendance at school and any taking part in agreed activities throughout the school year.

6. Recording Attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

	Register Taken	**Register Closed**
Morning Session	09.00am	09.30am
Afternoon Session	13.35pm	2.05pm

The register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

We will also record:
- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

6.2 Lateness

Punctuality is of the utmost importance.

- The school day begins at 8.50am.
- Registers are marked by 9.10am. Pupils will receive a late mark (Attendance code L) if they are not in school by this time unless it is a school transport issue. Any regular issues linked to school transport will be reported to the corresponding Local Authority.
- The register closes at 9.30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time. Any pupils arriving after the close of registration will be marked late (Attendance Code U)
- The afternoon session begins at 1.35pm.

7. Planned and Unplanned Absences

7.1 Unplanned absence:

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.45 am or as soon as practically possible. Parents/carers should do this by phoning the main school phone number **024 7636 4200** or by emailing info@exhallgrange.co.uk and the pupil's form tutor.

Class absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

7.2 Illness:

If your child is too ill to come to school, it will class as an authorised absence (Attendance Code I). A recommended useful resource provided by NHS to identify if a child is too ill to come to school and guide you on when a child should return is https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/.

If over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will contact parents/carers to ask them to discuss this and provide medical evidence if required. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card, a copy of a prescription or image of appointment reminder.

7.3 If no contact is made:

Contact will be made with parent/carers if their child is absent and we have not received a reason for this absence. This will be done by text message in the first instance.

Parents/carers should keep in touch with school regarding absences and give an inclination of how long their child will be off for. If this is not known, parents/carers should update on a daily basis if their child is not able to return on that day.

7.4 Requesting a Leave of Absence during Term-time:

At Exhall Grange Specialist School we require parents/carers to follow the school holidays as prescribed.

Parents/Carers can view the school's term dates on the Warwickshire County Council website (https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolholidaydates).

The school's INSET days are published on the school website at the beginning of each academic year.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence;

- Headteachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The Leave of Absence Form should outline why it would more difficult to access the holiday in school holiday time, linked to the needs of the child. This would, therefore, count as exceptional circumstances.

- Parents/carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent/carer, using the school's request for leave of absence form
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent/carer, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Any requests for leave will be unacceptable if:
  - It takes place immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent/carer, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits. Any granted leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

7.5 Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents/carers are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

7.6 Medical Appointments

As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where this is not possible, parents/carers should notify the school at the earliest convenience. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school reception by a parent/carer.

Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

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

7.7 Unauthorised Absence

Where the school has not received reasons for a child's absence, a phone call home will be made by the admin team to ascertain the reason for absence. A decision will then be made by the Headteacher and/or the Deputy Headteacher regarding the absence. If the absence is deemed to be unauthorised a letter will be sent out explaining the reasons why the absence has been recorded as unauthorised. (Attendance Code O).

Home visits will be considered if staff are unable to make contact with pupils and their families or if there is a safeguarding concern.

7.8 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7.9 Child Missing Education

Where a pupil has been absent from school for 10 or more days and their whereabouts are unknown and school has taken all reasonable steps to locate, the school will refer them to the Local Authority using the Children Missing Education (CME) process. The school will then remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Promoting Good Attendance

The senior leadership team, teaching staff and school council to discuss and agree systems, for both individuals and whole classes, to reward good and improved attendance. Termly rewards will be agreed for those pupils who have made a marked improvement in their attendance within the term. This will be agreed by the attendance monitoring team in conjunction with SLT, following attendance data analysis meetings.

In addition to these rewards, certificates are awarded for 100% attendance on a regular basis.

Reward systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are kept fresh and motivational.

All rewards and certificates will be presented within form time or end of term assemblies.

8.1 Encouraging Good Attendance

The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents/carers. The school also aims to help pupils develop their own motivation for daily, punctual attendance.

Positive attendance is encouraged and celebrated through:

- PSHE
- Work Related Learning
- Availability of class staff and leadership team to talk to pupils as appropriate.
- Communication with parents/carers to promote positive attendance.
- Accurate and up-to-date information for parents/carers on their child's attendance through the annual review and annual report.
- Any issues about poor attendance will be discussed with parents/carers from the earliest stage.

High expectations relating to pupil attendance will be promoted and shared with parents and carers regularly through face-to-face presentations, parents/carer evenings, social media, school website, letters, email and text messages.

9. Attendance Monitoring

The attendance support team:–

- Deputy Headteacher (ACO) – Strategic attendance champion
- Student and Family Support Lead (FHO)
- Mental health and wellbeing keyworker/Attendance support worker (ROW)
- Office Manager – Data admin support (HBI)

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The attendance support team in School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern (e.g. pupil premium, gender, year groups, form groups)

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The attendance support team in school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Update an attendance monitoring spreadsheet half termly, RAG rate pupils relating to their attendance and indicate 4 pathways of support for pupils indicated as red, dependent upon their reasons for absence and their individual need. The 4 pathways of support are: Mental Health & Wellbeing, Sensory and physical support, Pastoral form tutor & key stage leaders support and SLT/safeguarding interventions.

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The attendance support team in school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The attendance support team in school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Ensure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, including Early Help Pathway to Change, are understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- Liaise closely with WAS regarding pupils displaying persistent and severe absence. WAS to support with stage letters and home visits as and when deemed appropriate.

If pupil lateness begins to impact upon pupil attendance a letter will be sent home reiterating expectations around punctuality and the impact upon learning.

Letters will also be sent home if unauthorised absences begin to impact upon pupil learning and progress. This will be done on an individualized basis following attendance monitoring meetings and review of the RAG rate pathway process.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by Andy Commander, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Help and Support

If you have any concerns in regards to your child's attendance, please contact their form tutor/class teacher or their Key Stage Lead.

Please see below contact details for the Key Stage lead:

Helen Hughes – Assistant Headteacher – Primary
hughes.h5@exhallgrange.co.uk

Geoff Goode – Assistant Headteacher – Years 7 and 8
goode.g@exhallgrange.co.uk

Janet Bacon – Assistant Headteacher – Years 9, 10 and 11
ward.j7@exhallgrange.co.uk

Caroline Parkhouse – Assistant Headteacher – Post 16
parkhouse.c@ exhallgrange.co.uk

If you feel you would like further support, Exhall Grange School employs a Student and Family Support Lead, Fiona Holliland. Please contact Fiona for any advice and support needed outside of educational concerns.

Fiona Holliland – Student and Family Support Lead
holliland.f@exhallgrange.co.uk

The school also has a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead and a Mental Health Keyworker

Please see below contact details

Lauren Pinfield – Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead
pinfield.l@exhallgrange.co.uk

Roy Owen – Mental Health Keyworker
owen.r1@exhallgrange.co.uk

The school Senior Leader Attendance Champion is Andy Commander (Deputy Headteacher)
commander.a@exhallgrange.co.uk