



HAILSHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUST

'Be the very best you can be'

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SLT responsible:	Vice Principal (Aspirations and Ethos)
Last reviewed:	December 2020
To be ratified by Governors:	N/A

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust (HCCAT) expects all learner's attendance to be 95% or higher: our college target is 100%. This policy reflects the vision and aims of HCCAT by:

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents/carers and learners to maximise the learning experience in order that full potential is reached.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to college attendance.
- ❖ Providing a framework for parents/carers and staff
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for referring to external agencies.

For the purposes of this policy the reference to 'college' within the document shall apply to all educational sites under the Hailsham Community College Academy Trust; whether primary, secondary or Sixth Form.

1. Aim

The aim of Hailsham Community College Academy Trust's Attendance Policy is to enable the college to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all learners. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all learners have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when learners are absent or late.

Learners returning from an absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching. Teachers then must give more time to help individual learners catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under-achievement of other learners in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

HCCAT takes a whole-college approach to maintaining excellent attendance. It is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, learners and all staff members to ensure that learners are attending college as they should be. However, it remains the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their son/daughter attends college every day and on time.

Learners should be at college, on time, every day the college is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any problems with regular attendance must be discussed between the college, the parents/carers and the young person. If a learner is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up his/her absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him/her from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Permitting absence from college without a valid reason is an offence by the parents/carers.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- (a) To his/her age, ability and aptitude; and
- (b) To any special educational needs, he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age –

- (a) when he/she attains the age of five, if he/she attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his/her attaining that age. Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) –

- (a) if he/she attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following;
- (b) if he/she attains that age on that day; or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his/her attaining that age.

From September 2015, Section 2 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requires a young person to continue in education or training until his/her 18th birthday.

HCCAT is dedicated to complying with the attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this Attendance Policy accordingly.

3. Definitions of Learner Absence

HCCAT defines absence from college as either:

- arrival at college after the register has closed; or
- not attending college for any reason.

HCCAT defines authorised absence from college as:

- an absence for sickness for which the college has granted leave with medical evidence provided, and especially for absences of 3 or more days;
- medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during college time for which the college has granted leave and has received medical evidence;
- religious or cultural observances for which the college has granted leave;
- an absence due to a family emergency for which the college has granted leave.

HCCAT defines unauthorised absence from college as:

- parents/carers keeping a learner off college unnecessarily or without reason;
- truancy before or during the college day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- arrival at college after the register has closed;
- shopping, looking after other siblings/children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised;
- leaving college for no reason during the day and without college permission.

HCCAT defines 'persistent absence' (PA) as missing 10 per cent (10%) or more of college across the academic year for whatever reason. (Absence percentage is calculated cumulatively from the start of the academic year).

4. Categories of Absence and Procedure for Reporting Absence

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a valid explanation for the learner's absence is given to the college. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

When a learner is to be absent from college without prior permission, the parents/carers should inform the college by telephone on the first day of absence and each day thereafter. For a prolonged absence of 3 days or more, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the learner and appropriate evidence provided for example, medical appointment letter or card covering the full period of absence and signed by the GP. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they will follow the college's safeguarding procedure, this may include regular home visits.

First day absences can also be reported using Edulink or via the absence line. However, this does not apply to any planned absences for which approval is required. These must be requested via a 'Withdrawal from Learning' form and any appropriate evidence for the absence attached to the form, this includes (but is not limited to) holidays in term time, sporting events with supporting evidence from the organisation your son/daughter is representing, religious observances, charity events, funerals, other family events, etc.

Correspondence relating to absences should be directed to the following personnel:

- Years Reception to 6: Head of Primary School
- Years 7 to 11: Attendance Officer
- Years 12 to 13: Head of Sixth Form

4.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call or email to alert the college on the first day and **each subsequent day of absence**. The college will not forward mark a learner's absence at the parents/carers request. This can only be done with medical evidence from a consultant/medical professional, e.g. following an operation.

For **illness lasting three college days or more**, parents must provide the college with medical evidence such as note from the learner's doctor, and appointment card or a copy of the prescription or prescription label and the period of required absence stated and signed by the GP. If there is an ongoing pattern of student illness the college may require medical evidence in order to authorise future absence.

In the primary phase children who are absent or who are sent home from school because of vomiting or diarrhoea must not return to school for 24 hours from the last bout of either.

4.2 Medical or Dental Appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of college hours. Where it cannot be avoided, learners should attend college for as much of that day as possible and should aim to be in college to ensure they get their AM registration mark and PM registration mark. Whole day absences for medical appointments may incur an unauthorised session mark for part of the day if it is not deemed appropriate for the learner to be absent for the whole day.

Please note that optician appointments during the college day will not be authorised, unless evidence is provided that it is necessary due to an ongoing medical condition.

4.3 Authorised Absences

There may be some instances where the college will authorise absences for exceptional circumstances. This is only on rare occasions and by the approval of the Executive Principal, Associate Principals or Head of Primary School.

4.4 Exclusions: Fixed Term Exclusions

This is treated as an authorised absence. The college will arrange for work to be sent home for the first five days. Reference should be made to the college's Behaviour and Exclusion Policy. Please note that a re-integration meeting will need to take place with parents/carers, learner and a senior member of HCCAT following all exclusions. This will be at a time convenient to all concerned. However, if the meeting falls after the expected return date of the learner then they will be required to attend and work within our Intervention Facility until the meeting has taken place. If parents/carers or the learner choose to not attend college on the expected return date, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

4.5 Family Holidays and Extended Leave

Parents/carers must ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of college term time. Parents/carers may request a withdrawal from learning during term time. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing using an official 'Withdrawal from Learning' form (Appendix 1) available from Reception or online and addressed to the Attendance Officer (Secondary/Sixth Form) or Head of Primary School. Applications should be received at least 14 days in advance of the leave being taken, where possible.

The Executive Principal, Associate Principals or Head of Primary School may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the decision is final on whether the request is authorised, and the length of absence approved.

All requests for absence will be responded to in writing. Parents/carers should contact the college immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the learner is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be subject to further action by the college or prosecution by the Local Authority.

Please note, applications for absence made via email or our online absence reporting system and retrospective applications will not be considered, and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

If a student is persistently absent (unauthorised) and has not shown an improvement in their attendance or engagement with supportive interventions offered, a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

If a learner is absent before/after a holiday during term time or has additional days off before/after it, the college will ask for medical evidence by way of doctor's appointment letter/card or will ask for a copy of the holiday booking to confirm the dates of the holiday, if applicable. Failure to provide this evidence may result in the college referring the parents/carers to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

All monies received through fines from parents/carers are paid direct to the Local Authority. The college receives no financial gain from any Penalty Notices.

HCCAT is obliged to inform parents that the college uses East Sussex County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/4085/code-of-conduct-september-2015.pdf>. Parents may be subject to a Penalty Notice if the learner's absence from college is unauthorised.

At the time of writing the Penalty Notice is:

- £120 per parent, per child decreasing to
- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

At the time of writing, if the fine is not paid within 28 days, the parent(s) may be prosecuted under S444 of the Education Act 1996. If the prosecution takes place, at the time of writing the maximum fine in the first instance is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from college.

4.6 Religious Observance

HCCAT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of college holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times in line with government guidance. Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the college written notification in advance by way of a Withdrawal from Learning form.

4.7 Late Arrival

Registration for Primary and Secondary phases is as follows:

- 8.45am registration opens and closes at 9.15am

Learners who arrive after the open time will be marked as late. Learners who arrive after the registers close at 9.15am will be marked as unauthorised for the morning session. Learners who arrive after the registration period should go straight to the Main Reception to sign in, manually, biometrically and give a reason for their lateness. Any invalid reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that learners sign in to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all learners are accounted for. Sanctions are in place for learners arriving late to college (Secondary only).

Taking younger siblings to school is not considered an acceptable reason for regular lateness to college.

Persistent lateness will result in disciplinary action and / or a fine issued by the Local Authority.

4.8 Monitoring Absence Levels and Responding to Falling Absence

Please refer to our Attendance Process and Rewards poster for further details (Appendix 2).

Please be warned that should unauthorised absences continue we may refer your son/daughter to the Education Support for Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) for closer

monitoring and support with a practitioner. ESBAS will try to resolve the situation by agreement and through support. However, **ESBAS Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.**

Whilst we wish to work with parents/carers to support them in improving their son/daughter's attendance, HCCAT reserves the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence of any nature, including but not limited to unauthorised holidays, persistent lateness and repeated absence without medical evidence.

5.0 Children Missing in Education

If no known reason is given for a learner's absence, and they are absent for ten consecutive unauthorised college days without any parent/carer contact then a Child Missing in Education report will be triggered as per our Safeguarding Policy. After a period of twenty unauthorised days the college may remove the learner from the college roll.

6.0 Complaints

Please refer to the college's Complaints Policy if you have any concerns in relation to the procedures or processes that have been applied in relation to HCCAT's management of the Attendance Policy.

7.0 Policy Review and Approval

Review Interval: 1 year

Review Term: Summer

Reviewed by: Attendance Officer

Approved by: Vice Principal (Aspirations & Ethos) and Head of Primary School.

APPENDIX 1



HAILSHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUST

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WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING FORM

Please complete and return this form to Student Services at least 14 days before the requested period of absence.

Student name:		Mentor:	
First date of absence:		Last date of absence:	
Total number of days requested:			
Reason for absence:			

- I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Education Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued.
- I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of college and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the Notice.
- I understand that failure to pay may result in legal action.

Name of Parent/Carer making the application.....

Signed:..... Date:.....

Name of other sibling/s e.g. sister, step-brother, etc.	Name of School

.....

Absence Request Reply Slip

Student Name: Mentor:

	AUTHORISED for the following dates:	
	UNAUTHORISED for the following dates: This will incur a Penalty Notice being issued.	
	UNAUTHORISED for the following dates: No Penalty Notice will be issued.	

..... Mr P Matthews, Principal



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SECONDARY

ATTENDANCE PROCESS

100-95%

(up to 50 missed lessons)

- No action just rewards

95-93% (up to 70 missed lessons)

- Monitored by Pastoral Support Assistant
- Call home to parents/carers to offer support and discuss absence reasons.
- Wave 1 Letter sent.

93-90% (up to 100 missed lessons)

- Monitored by House Leader
- Invited in to an attendance meeting.
- Attendance Improvement Agreement may be issued.
- Wave 2 Letter sent.

Below 90% (Persistent Absentee)

- Monitored by a member of the attendance team.
- Parents/carers invited in to an attendance meeting.
- Attendance Improvement Agreement will be issued.
- May refer to Education Support for Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS).
- Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued

85% and below

- Referral to ESBAS will be made.

REWARDS

WEEKLY

100% ATTENDANCE EACH WEEK

- Class Teacher to award achievement points.

CLASS WITH HIGHEST ATTENDANCE EACH WEEK

- Class rewarded.

TERMLY

100% ATTENDANCE EACH TERM

- Class Teacher to award achievement points.
- ~~Entered into~~ 100 Club and a chance to win £50 Amazon voucher (one child per term).
- Certificate awarded to each student.

MOST IMPROVED FROM START OF ONE TERM TO THE NEXT

- Celebration letter sent home to parents/carers.

END OF ACADEMIC YEAR

100% ATTENDANCE FOR YEAR

- Invite to Celebration Event with 2 family members.
- Certificate presented by Principal and Head of School.
- 100% Attendance badge awarded.
- Achievement points awarded.



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PRIMARY

ATTENDANCE PROCESS

• 100-95%

(up to 50 missed lessons)

- No action just rewards 😊



• 95-93% (up to 70 missed lessons)

- Monitored by Class Teacher
- Call home to parents/carers to offer support and discuss absence reasons.
- Stage 1 Letter sent.

• 93-90% (up to 100 missed lessons)

- Monitored by Attendance Officer and Member of Primary School Senior Leadership Team
- Invited in to an attendance meeting.
- Attendance Improvement Agreement may be issued.
- Stage 2 Letter sent.

• Below 90% (Persistent Absentee)

- Monitored by Attendance Officer.
- Parents/carers invited in to an attendance meeting.
- Attendance Improvement Agreement will be issued.
- Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.
- May refer to Education Support for Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS).

• 85% and below

- Referral to ESBAS will be made.

REWARDS

WEEKLY

• 100% ATTENDANCE EACH WEEK

- Class Teacher to award achievement points.

• CLASS WITH HIGHEST ATTENDANCE EACH WEEK

- Class rewarded.



TERMLY

• 100% ATTENDANCE EACH TERM

- Class Teacher to award achievement points.
- Entered into 100 Club and a chance to win £20 Amazon voucher (one child per term).
- Certificate awarded to each student.

• MOST IMPROVED FROM START OF ONE TERM TO THE NEXT

- Celebration letter sent home to parents/carers.

END OF ACADEMIC YEAR

• 100% ATTENDANCE FOR YEAR

- Invite to Celebration Tea Party with 2 family members.
- Certificate presented by Principal and Head of School.
- 100% Attendance badge awarded.
- Achievement points awarded.

December 2020:

The college is adhering to the addendum that was published by the Department for Education regarding attendance (*"Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year"*). The college will continue to provide attendance support and guidance to families during this unprecedented time.