



HEDINGHAM SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

ACHIEVEMENT & EXCELLENCE

July 2024

Official Sensitive

Dear Parent/Guardian

Updated Attendance Policy

In March, the Department for Education (DfE) issued new statutory guidance for schools regarding attendance. This guidance will take effect on 19th August 2024, coinciding with the new academic year. Due to significant changes in how schools are expected to monitor, analyse, and follow up on student attendance, we have updated our policy in line with Essex County Council's guidance.

Research has shown a clear link between high levels of attendance and academic success. Students with the highest attendance levels make the most progress among their peers. Frequent absences can significantly hinder a student's ability to keep up with classwork and achieve their full potential.

High levels of attendance not only supports academic learning but also fosters social skills, builds relationships with peers and teachers, and contributes to overall personal development. Being part of the school community on a daily basis enhances students' engagement, motivation, and sense of belonging, all of which are vital for their growth and success.

The Importance of High Levels of Attendance

To help us track and monitor student attendance, we place students into attendance bands based on their overall roll call attendance. This is determined by their attendance during our AM and PM roll call times and is the figure used by the DfE for tracking individual student attendance. Our AM Roll Call is between 08:40 and 09:10, and our PM Roll Call is between 14:15 and 14:45. There are seven attendance bands in total, as shown below. The below table shows how absence from school affects the number of days and lessons students are missing per attendance band. **Please also note, the government regards any student with 90% or less attendance as "Persistently Absent" from school.**

Band	Attendance %	Days Missed	Lessons Missed
Band 1	100% to 97.1%	0 to 6 days missed	0 to 30 lessons missed
Band 2	97% to 94.1%	6 to 11 days missed	30 to 56 lessons missed
Band 3	94% to 90.1%	11 to 19 days missed	56 to 94 lessons missed
Band 4	90% to 70.1%	19 to 55 days missed	94 to 276 lessons missed
Band 5	70% to 50.1%	55 to 93 days missed	276 to 465 lessons missed
Band 6	50% to 20.1%	93 to 150 days missed	465 to 751 lessons missed
Band 7	20% to 0%	150 to 190 days missed	751 to 950 lessons missed

Studies have shown that, on average a 10% drop in attendance in a particular subject leads to an average drop of 1 grade within that subject. For example, a student targeted for a Grade 6 but with 90% attendance is more likely to achieve a Grade 5 due to their high absence rate. This is due to the volume of lesson content missed and the difficulty in catching up. We appreciate that not all absences can be avoided, and we will always work hard to support students with attendance issues. However, it is important to understand that frequent absences disrupt learning continuity, making it challenging for students to grasp complex concepts and keep pace with their peers.

Our Approach to Attendance

The updated policy also reflects changes in the statutory guidance regarding penalty notices for student absence. Please familiarise yourself with this section, as there are significant changes to the levels at which the school is legally required to consider taking action against parents for high student absence rates. Our approach will remain 'support first', acting in the best interests of our students, but we must comply with legal responsibilities regarding certain absences. An infographic in Annex 3 of the new policy explains this process.

We believe that regular attendance is a shared responsibility between the school, students, and parents. Open communication and cooperation are essential in addressing any attendance issues and ensuring that students receive the necessary support to attend school consistently. We are committed to working with families to overcome any barriers to attendance and to providing an environment where every student can thrive.

If you have any concerns about your child's absence or would like to discuss the updated policy, please contact the school at 01787 460470. We can direct your call to the relevant person or arrange a call back to address any issues you may have. Your partnership is crucial in promoting a culture of regular attendance and supporting your child's educational journey.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Daniels
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Enc Student Attendance Policy

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