

# Policy for Ensuring Pupil Attendance



The Bridge London  
Hungerford School

Pride  
Passion  
Partnership  
Professionalism  
Positivity

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Hungerford School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.

### **School’s roles and responsibilities**

All staff (teaching and support) have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils look forward to coming to school every day.

The School Leadership Team will co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will ensure that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **Registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the electronic registers. The School Admin Team will complete the register codes (see appendix 1)

Registers will be called promptly at 9. am and 1.pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at 9.05 am and 1.15pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as late (L).

## Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked with an unauthorised absence (No reason yet provided) unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, the Admin Team at Hungerford will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 7 days, the absence will remain unauthorised;

At Hungerford School we will only authorise absences as circumstantial in wholly exceptional circumstances. Where an absence cannot be covered by any other code it will be marked as C.

### Absence will be marked as authorised

- Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible), and to return their child to school immediately afterwards.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g extreme weather conditions;
- Where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;

Exceptional circumstances are classified as a family bereavement, an event of an accident or an emergency which must be attended straight away (this does not include home repairs, or planned appointments, but may include genuine medical emergencies).

### Appointments or arrangements for other members of the family will be unauthorised

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for NOT authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent;
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- The pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house , for repairs etc
- The pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. A birthday, wedding;
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday

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## Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## Absences after close of class registers

Any absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class teacher and reported to the school office who will alert the Senior Leadership Team

## Staff Training

The School Leadership Team will ensure that all staff responsible for taking electronic registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## Collection and analysis of data

The School Leadership Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the Access and Engagement team within the stipulated time frame.

The school produces reports every half term and should your child's attendance drop below 90% parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Head Teacher and Senior teacher to discuss any family/medical issues that are affecting attendance and to explore strategies to improve attendance.

## Deletion from Roll / Missing in education

When a registered pupil fails to attend school for a period of three weeks and all efforts by the Access and Engagement Team and school have been unsuccessful in tracing the child the school will report the child to the local authority as Missing from Education. The school will then take advice on the next steps to be followed.

In order to ensure that children are safeguarded from being Missing in Education the school admin team will not delete a child from the school roll until they are satisfied that the child is on roll at another school. If this is not possible the admin staff will contact Islington Pupil Services for advice on how to proceed.

## Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Hungerford. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters, text messages, school website and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Children will be sent a "we're missing you at school" text prior to any formal absence letters being sent.

If there is no improvement once letters have been sent, parents will be invited in to an improving attendance meeting. At this meeting the school will ask the family to consider any additional support required. It may be appropriate to encourage parents to agree to a referral to Bright Futures or to consider whether a Family Group Conference may be appropriate.

When considering persistent absenteeism it is also important to consider whether this may be due to emotion based school avoidance and whether a referral to CAMHs or the School Wellbeing Service may be appropriate.

## First-day calling

Hungerford has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day or texted if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify, at an early stage, pupils who do not

have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to contact parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

Meetings with parents Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter the family will be invited to an attendance panel to discuss the concerns.

## Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Access and Engagement team

Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the office and will be recorded in the register and late slip given. They will then be marked as late.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

## Attendance and Punctuality Rewards

At Hungerford we have clear strategies and rewards to promote and celebrate good attendance these can be given to individual or classes.

Individual pupils can receive certificates for 100% or improved attendance/punctuality termly. Pupils with 100% attendance every term will be given a small reward, Pupils who have 100% attendance for the year will get a £10 voucher

End of each academic year all pupils with 100% attendance including the two winning classes with the highest attendance will be rewarded with an additional locality trip. The children with the most improved attendance will also be included in this trip.

There will be a special Lifetime Achievement Award for any children who have 100% attendance from Reception through to the end of Year 6.

Notices will be put in the newsletter, school website and text messages sent to celebrate

## Term-time Holidays

No time off for holidays during term time will be granted.

## Home country visits or visits to relatives.

Hungerford School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a home country visit. Time off school for this purpose is not a right. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended trip.

Hungerford School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

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## Parents' / Carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Hungerford. Hungerford expects parents / carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the school regularly
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

Notify school by phone, email or by reporting to the school office.

- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, full uniform and with the right equipment for the day;
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, overseeing homework when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Hungerford school will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or headteacher

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

### Policy Owner and Contact Details

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**Next Review Date 1/3/25**