

Attendance Policy

A child at school is a safe child. By attending school both their welfare and education can be monitored and supported. A child who regularly attends school is giving themselves the best opportunity for social and academic progress and development. At Highcliffe we are committed to giving your child the best possible transition into a happy and successful adult life; as a result we place huge importance on their regular attendance at school. Due to the importance of good attendance and its strong correlation with both positive attainment and social, emotional well-being we set each student at **Highcliffe a target of 97%+ attendance.**

Philosophy and Principles

The purpose of this document is to outline the importance of regular attendance and the impact that poor attendance is very likely to have on your son/daughter's academic progress and social development. Its purpose is also to clearly outline the school's attendance policies and procedures, ensuring parents and carers are well informed, allowing us to work together to support your child and their attendance.

If young people do not attend school regularly they are more likely to experience difficulties academically in keeping up with their studies, reducing your son/daughter's chance of fulfilling their academic potential. In addition to the academic challenges this will present, they are also more likely to miss out on social development and a wide range of opportunities at Highcliffe that aid their development into young adults.

In addition to attendance, it is important to point out the need for students to be **punctual.** Students **must** be in their Tutor rooms for the start of the school day at 8.35am. A bell will ring at 8.30 am to give students a five minute warning to make their way to Tutor Time. Late arrival to school and class is disruptive to learning and may be punished.

A perspective on attendance:

Time Missed:

Attendance Percentage	Time missed per Term	Time missed per Year	Time missed by Year 11
90%	1 week 2 days	4 weeks	20 weeks
80%	2 weeks 4 days	8 weeks	1 Year
70%	4 weeks 1 day	12 weeks	1 ½ Years
60%	5 weeks 3 days	16 weeks	2 years
50%	7 weeks	20 weeks	2 ½ years

Attendance and Attainment:

Attendance Percentage Range	Average Grade
97.1-100%	B
95.1-97%	C+
90.1-95%	C-
85.1-90%	C-
80.1-85%	D+
70.1-80%	D-
0-70%	E

Based on Highcliffe GCSE results 2014

Attendance Categories:

As of September 2015 the current threshold for the level of absence at which a child's attendance becomes a matter of serious concern is being raised by the government from 85% to 90%. Any pattern of frequent, repeated absence or episodes of prolonged absence in a school term are likely to have a negative impact on a student's well-being and academic progress. High levels of attendance are likely to have a positive impact.

As a result of the change the Department for Education will publish persistent absence levels at both 90% and 85%.

At Highcliffe we have a number of strategies and interventions that we use within school to ensure each child is educationally, socially and emotionally safe and developing.

Attached is our Attendance Intervention Flow Chart showing the stages of communication and intervention in order to support you and your child in achieving high levels of attendance. When reading this document please be assured that the situation and circumstance around each individual is fully taken into account by us and any communication or action is not based purely around a statistic. Please also be aware that we can use our professional judgement and discretion when deciding which interventions to implement and when.

Notifying the School of any Absence :

All students are electronically registered by staff during AM tutor time and at the beginning of each of the five lessons.

-On any day that your child is unable to attend school please contact the school by telephone or email before 10am.

Calls should be made to our designated Attendance Line: 01425 282337

Or sent to our designated email for attendance: attendance@highcliffeschool.com

If the school has not been notified of an absence by 10am, parents will automatically be contacted by our Group Call Service. Please note that this is an automated service and has been put in place to alert parents to the fact that their son/daughter is not present in Tutor Time. Attendance in Tutor Time is compulsory for all students at Highcliffe from year 7 through to year 13. Tutor Time begins at 8.35 am. Punctuality is expected.

If you receive Group Call service please ensure you contact the school to communicate your child's absence or that to your knowledge they are in school. This communication should again be made to the school's attendance line.

When your son/daughter returns to school, please ensure that they bring a note to confirm the reason for the absence, which should be handed to their Form Tutor on their first day back. (If requested this should be in the form of a doctor's note.)

If your child's absence was as a result of a medical or dental appointment please ensure they return to school with a slip/appointment card.

It is important that students take responsibility for this in order to ensure that attendance records are kept up to date and to avoid any unnecessary reminders having to be issued.

If we do not receive a response to Group Call to clarify your son/daughter's absence a letter will be issued seeking reasons and justification for the absence, if this letter is not responded to by the outlined date within the letter then it will become an unauthorised absence.

Please remember that you can keep up to date with the attendance and progress of your son/daughter by accessing our web site portal 'MyHighcliffe'. Details regarding how to obtain access to this facility are available from office@highcliffeschool.com

Authorised and Unauthorised absences:

Only the school has the right to authorise a child's absence from school. This is not possible without communication from parents. Any absence that receives no communication or justification from a parent will be coded as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent absence, particularly unauthorised ones, would be a concern to the school and would eventually require us to seek external support in improving the situation, (as shown in our

Attendance Intervention Flow Chart). Where attendance is not an issue communication in the form of email or letter will be acceptable to authorise an absence.

If a child's attendance falls to 85% or below the school would insist on medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's note to authorise any absence. If the school has major concerns regarding the authenticity of absences we may seek medical evidence at an earlier stage.

Please be assured that if your child is unwell we would not keep them in school or force them to be here, so on occasions where your child may be feeling a little under the weather please do all you can to get them into school, especially if attendance is an issue around your child.

Legal Aspects:

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure their son/daughter regularly attends school; it is also the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide reasonable justification to satisfy the school. As mentioned above it is only the school that can authorise an absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

444 Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.

(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

[F1(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.]

In line with government policies and guidelines the school is not in a position to authorise any holidays or leave of absence (e.g. a wedding) without exceptional circumstance. As a result any absence would be recorded as unauthorised. If you feel the circumstance is an exceptional one then please include all details when completing the leave of absence request, in addition to this we would encourage you to contact the school to speak about the matter.

Please be aware:

If the school does not deem the circumstance around a term time holiday as exceptional we may seek support from Dorset County Council in issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice should you choose to take the holiday anyway.

In cases of persistent unauthorised absences the school may also seek support from Dorset County Council in issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. This is also applicable in cases where a child is consistently late for school after the register has closed.

In addition to this as outlined in our Attendance Intervention Flow Chart, if your child's attendance and the circumstance around it continue to concern us despite all of our efforts we would look to make a referral to Locality and the Early Intervention Team.

For those students in the sixth form their place is subject to maintaining good attendance, continued poor attendance would eventually result in your son/daughter being removed from the sixth form.

Information of the stages of intervention and concern are shown in the attached Attendance Intervention Flow Chart.

School procedures on a child missing from education:

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The school should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

The school must inform the appropriate local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by a school medical professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when the school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register.

The school must inform the appropriate local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

Parents supporting attendance:

We would ask that parents support us in ensuring their child's attendance is at such a level that allows the student the full benefits presence at school can bring both socially and academically. Parents can help re-enforce this message by ensuring:

- Your son/daughter fully understands how seriously you view their attendance and reminding them that participation in a number of our school teams and clubs is dependent on good attendance.
- If there is an unavoidable circumstance meaning your child requires time away from school please ensure we get as much notice of the absence as possible, this will allow us to ensure your son/daughter is kept up to date with any work they would miss during that period.
- Wherever possible any medical or dental appointments are made outside of school hours. It is appreciated this is not always possible, but we would encourage parents to make every effort to ensure this is the case.
- Please do not take your child out of school during term time.
- If your son/daughter has any concerns or anxieties about or in school please contact us as knowledge and communication is key in enabling us to support your son/daughter as best we can.

What does the school do to reward good attendance?

Students who attend regularly will access secure learning by ensuring each child is taught as an individual in order to fulfil their own potential and support them with aspects of the curriculum they may find a challenge.

As well as the academic benefits, your son/daughter will also benefit from strong peer relationships which are enhanced by a number of projects and activities that take place within school.

Your son/daughter will have less "catch up" work to complete by ensuring they attend regularly and therefore will benefit from the guidance and feedback of our staff.

Attendance Certificates and **Rewards** are as follows:

Certificates are issued for 100% attendance. In addition to various tutor group competitions and most improved awards.

Prizes and rewards for longer term high levels of attendance are also in place:

Bronze: 97.0% to 98.5% attendance since 1st September/over a year.

Silver: 98.6% to 99.9% attendance since 1st September/over a year.

Gold: 100% attendance since 1st September/over a year.

Most Improved Attenders Awards

Overall Best Tutor Group for Attendance

Overall Most Improved Tutor Group for Attendance

Good attendance will help your son/daughter complete elements of 'The Highcliffe Challenge' for which there is an end of year graduation ceremony in years 8, 10 and 12.

Our Aim:

Our aim by working closely with parents and placing a high importance on regular attendance is to ensure that:

All students learn to their full potential in an informed, caring and supportive environment and that challenging learning experiences develop students as successful confident young adults.

Feedback:

If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please contact in the first instance the Pastoral Lead for your son/daughter's year group.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the Attendance Policy then please do not hesitate to contact Mr J Prodomo the school's Attendance Officer.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (including Child Protection). All our practice and activities must be consistent and in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Any deviations from these policies and procedures should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher so that the matter can be addressed.

Policy compiled by:	J. Prodomo
Date:	July 2015
Review date:	June 2016