



AVANTI HOUSE

EXCELLENCE · VIRTUE · DEVOTION

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY 2020/21

Approval	Staff/Parents/Carers
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	Principal: Mr Simon Arnell Signed : _____

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Avanti House School works in close partnership with both our pupils and their families, in order to ensure that school attendance is the best that it can be. We recognise that good attendance can be influenced by a number of factors and these are as follows:

- Emotional wellbeing, self-worth and self-esteem of our pupils;
- Relationships at different levels, extending into the home environment;
- Different forms of communication between different individuals and at each level;
- Pupil attitudes and engagement in their learning;
- Behaviour management systems which are employed to motivate pupils for good or better attendance levels;
- Staffing structures within schools;
- Pupil and/or family awareness;
- Tracking and monitoring systems;
- Health;
- Responses and consistencies in approaches;
- Ethos and culture of the organisation.

We believe that all pupils will only achieve academic excellence, character development and spiritual enlightenment, if they attend school on a very regular basis. Taking into consideration the above key

factors and by adopting a proactive, personalised and holistic approach, specific interventions are carefully planned in order to address any attendance issues in a timely manner.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Harrow Guidance on Improving Attendance](#)

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 7.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.25pm and will be kept open until 2.35pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents who need to take their child(ren) out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the attention of the Principal at least 3 days in advance of the absence. All requests for will be responded to in writing. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised.

ABSENCE	PROCEDURE
Illness During the day	Students to see Welfare Officer (Mrs Goody) who will contact parents to collect their child if necessary.
Absence through illness	Message from parent/guardian to the Attendance Officer by 8.15am each morning of absence by either phone or email to attendance.ahs@avanti.org.uk <i>In the case of prolonged or repeated absences due to illness, a doctor's letter may be requested or absences will be unauthorised</i>
Medical appointments <i>Where possible all medical appointments should be made outside of school hours</i>	Letter, email or note from parent/guardian to the Attendance Officer in advance where possible (with a copy of the appointment letter/ card/ prescription on the day). Students should only be absent from lessons for a reasonable amount of time depending on the location and duration of an appointment. Students must collect a permission slip to leave lessons from the Welfare Officer (Mrs Goody) in advance. Sign in/ out at reception. <i>N.B Excessive appointments may be unauthorised.</i>
Request for Absence in exceptional circumstances <i>Please Note: Holidays will not be authorised during term time</i>	Letter or email from parent/guardian to the Attendance Officer in advance of the absence. attendance.ahs@avanti.org.uk Requests are at the discretion of the Principal.
Lateness For school (any reason)	If there is an unavoidable reason for a student's lateness, please notify the school by phone/email. <i>Lateness will be unauthorised after registers have closed (9.30am) unless there is an exceptional and unavoidable reason.</i>
Email: attendance.ahs@avanti.org.uk Telephone: 020 8249 6830 NB: When leaving a voice message please remember to provide your child's name, registration group, a detailed reason for absence and telephone number.	

Exit Slips

If a student needs to leave the premises during school hours for a medical appointment or other pre-approved reason they must have an exit slip. This must be obtained in advance from either Ms Goody, Welfare or the Attendance Officer. Students should be collected from school by a parent or guardian. Where a student needs to leave by themselves the school will require a written statement from a parent that they take full responsibility for their child once they have left the school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school works in a proactive manner with our pupils and families and recognises that persistent lateness to school impacts very negatively on a child's learning, however, the school also recognises that there will be occasions where this may be unavoidable due to external factors or family issues. The Pastoral and Inclusion teams work with all families on an individual basis, in order to address any concerns surrounding the punctuality of pupils to school. The impact of actions are tracked.

3.4 a Monitoring, Tracking and Analysing Attendance Data

Attendance is monitored, tracked and analysed in meetings and as an integral part of our daily, weekly, half and termly practice. Individuals and specific groups of learners are identified and interventions to support good or better attendance are implemented

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Weekly attendance reports are sent to parents indicating their child's current attendance level. In addition, this is also included in all progress reports which are issued to parents three times per year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principals discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. Please note Avanti House takes into consideration the faith element of our school and its ethos and this is reflected in our school calendar. The school does not endorse holidays being taken during term time. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only

when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- The school actively targets unauthorised attendance – students who the school identifies pupils and families where attendance is poor ie under 95% are closely monitored and a series of meetings, letters, closer monitoring occurs. We strive to work with families to understand the cause of the problem and to provide solutions and support. This could result in a referral to Childrens Services or to other professionals such as the Education Welfare Officer.
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11 at the discretion of the Principal. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school.

4.2 Legal sanctions and Legal Enforcement by Harrow Local Authority

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority has set up the Attendance Intervention Model (AIM) for all Harrow schools. AIM will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic; including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents/ carers for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents/ carers allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007 sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. (see appendix 2)

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Avanti House Secondary School actively promotes good attendance and has high expectations. The school works closely with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements and also providing students with a positive praise report etc.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily/weekly/monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call/email the school each day a child is ill by 8.15am.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the School Standards Committee.

The school collects and stores attendance data on their secure system (Arbor) and it may be used for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The School Standards Committee (SSC)

The School Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the SSC.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer in conjunction with Pastoral Leads and Progress Leads

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system if the attendance officer is unavailable.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal together with members of the SET. At every review, the policy will be shared with the SSC.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the school's child protection and safeguarding policies.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

APPENDIX 2

What should I do if my child is truanting?

If your child is truanting you should:

Talk to them to find out why.

Meet with a member of school staff to discuss the situation and look for solutions.

Contact the School for advice and guidance - try to understand what is happening for your child and help them resolve the problem.

Education is key to their future success so it is vitally important

Why am I being sent this leaflet?

This leaflet is being sent to every parent/carer so everyone is aware of the need for their child to attend regularly and on time in order to achieve their best. It is important parents and carers understand their responsibilities and the consequences of their child having unauthorised absence from school.

What should I do if my child is off school?

Telephone the school as early as possible on the first morning of their absence to give the reason. Make routine dentist & doctor appointments after school or during holidays. If you have to make an appointment during school time, help your child to be at school for most of the day and let the school know about the appointment. You may be asked for a medical certificate or appointment card if your child is regularly absent due to illness or dental/medical appointments.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help with your child's attendance. It is very important that you speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

For more information, please contact your child's school or, if you have further enquiries, contact:

courtattendanceofficer@harrow.gov.uk

School Attendance and Education Penalty Notices (EPNs)

What Parents and Carers need to know



Why attend every day?

Good school attendance gives your child the opportunity for success and helps develop skills for life. Your child should attend school every day unless there is an unavoidable cause like illness.

Missing school damages a child's learning and their grades. We know that 6 in 10 young people who miss school for 17 days or more do not get good GCSE grades. However, more than 9 in 10 young people who miss less than 8 days of school go on to get good GCSE grades. Missing school regularly could affect your child's chances in life, for example, their ability to get into university or be accepted into a qualification of their choice.

Children should never miss school for reasons like shopping, birthdays or to wait in for a repair person.

You have a legal duty to ensure that your child attends school every day and is on time.

Taking your child out of school during term time for holidays is also likely to impact on their achievement. There are 38 weeks in the year when schools are open, and 14 weeks when families can take holidays. Head teachers can only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Consequences

If your child takes unauthorised holidays or takes longer than the time agreed by your Headteacher, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Sanctions could be imposed including:

- Your child could lose their school place
- You could face a penalty fine (per parent per child)
- You could be subject to legal action by the authority that could result in a fine of up to £2,500.

If your child has an unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays during term time, re-occurring lateness, or persistent absence for any other reason other than certified illness, the school will refer the matter to the Council for consideration of a Penalty Notice and/or Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record with a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Regular and punctual attendance is both a legal requirement and essential for your child to maximise the opportunities available to them.

Why are Penalty Notices issued?

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child doesn't attend school regularly and the absence is not agreed by the school (unauthorised). In some cases unauthorised absence may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution. If paid within deadlines a Penalty Notice does not require a court appearance, but still aims to improve attendance.

How much is a Penalty Notice?

£60 if payment is made within 21 days. £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

When will they be used?

A Penalty Notice will only be issued when 'unauthorised' absences have been recorded.

If I get a Penalty Notice and don't pay, what happens?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If full payment is not received within this time the local authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence by your child. If proven, this can result in fines of up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences and imprisonment. If a parent is found guilty of the aggravated offence of failing to secure regular attendance, the parent will receive a criminal record.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice as payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of unauthorised absence not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Early Support, Education Services or Social Services.

