Attendance Policy

Hampton Gardens

Policy last reviewed:	February 2026
Next review due:	February 2027
Member of staff responsible:	Jody Lapish
Ratified by:	Hampton Gardens Local Governing Body

HAMPTON GARDENS: ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Hampton Gardens school believes that every child matters and that improving attendance is everyone's business. Good attendance begins with our school being a safe and supportive environment, which is a place where students want to be. Through maintaining a culture of respect, calm and positive behaviour we hope to ensure that students enjoy coming to school and are keen and ready to learn. Our school will deliver an effective system of incentives and rewards to acknowledge the efforts of students who improve and maintain their attendance, and we will challenge the behaviour of those students and families who do not prioritise efforts in improving attendance and punctuality.

Parents/carers have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means pupils registered at Hampton Gardens must attend every day that the school is open. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced new updated guidance "Working together in improving schools' attendance 19 August 2024 and 'Summary Table of School Responsibilities' August 2024 and this policy complies with the guidance set out by the DfE for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.

1. Intent

1.1 Hampton Gardens is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children have optimum life chances enabling them to achieve well and enter their next phase of education successfully: high attainment and strong progress depend on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – children, parents and carers, teaching, support staff and governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence. Staff will work to provide an environment in which all children are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day.

1.3 Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning. We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. We will also promote and support punctuality to school and lessons.

1.4 Hampton Gardens is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all children. A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. **Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter and may be referred onto the safer schools officer or social care in the cases of neglect.**

1.5 To regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence to identify students and cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

1.6 To recognise that some groups of students face more barriers to attending regularly (including students with long term physical/mental health conditions or those with SEND) and provide appropriate support for them to attend regularly.

1.7 To ensure that every student has access to the Full Time education they are entitled to.

1.8 To proactively promote a school culture whereby students and families value education and their school experience and feel a sense of belonging.

1.9 To promote the short and long term benefits of good attendance

1.10 To ensure successful intervention whenever necessary and ensure students and parents are regularly informed as to their child's attendance.

1.11 To collaborate and and work effectively with families, local partners and the local authority to ensure every child is able to access full time education.

1.12 To ensure regular, supportive and effective communication between school and home, which aims to highlight, signpost and advise of any attendance related matters or concerns. Ensuring all students and parents know that we aim for all children to have an attendance rate of 96% or above

2. Legal and National Context

The following documentation has been used to inform this policy:

- School Attendance (Guidance) November 2016;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance August 2024;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance (September 2024);
- Regional Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols & early Help Pathways;
- Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024)
- Working together to improve school attendance (Jul 2022)
- The Education Act 1996 (Part 6)
- The Education Act 2002 (Part 3)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Part 7)
- 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

2.1 Absence from school is a safeguarding concern. A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. *Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.* **The welfare of the child is always paramount.**

2.2 Hampton Gardens has a Service Level Agreement with the LA Attendance Service and are able to escalate concerns to this service for further support and/or legal action.

2.3 Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Heads of School may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are very

exceptional circumstances. Hampton Gardens upholds these regulations, and applications for holiday or leave during term time will not be authorised. To avoid difficulty or disappointment, parents are asked to refrain from such requests.

2.4 Penalty notices (fines) may be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Hampton Gardens adheres to the LA Code of Conduct and Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in the use of Penalty Notices for unauthorised single periods of absence and persistent absence.

a) There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

b) Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

2.5 Hampton Gardens has a duty to work together with parents/carers and other agencies to prevent a prosecution being necessary, however if the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, we will be required to collate evidence of non-attendance and report the information to the LA. The LA will then fulfil their statutory duty of prosecution under Section 444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

3 Implementation

Hampton Gardens will:

- Remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance and punctuality
- Actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term-time and ensure that school advice with regard to term-time holidays is clearly stated on the school website and is regularly communicated to parents
- Unequivocally remind parents that they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted and that all leave is granted at the discretion of the Head of School (or those authorised to exercise discretion on their behalf)
- Advise parents that absence that is unauthorised or an attendance that is 90% or less could result in parenting contracts, or legal enforcement including Penalty Notices, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution. In these circumstances, guidance will be obtained from the LA Attendance Service.

- Inform the Local Authority of any child who is going to be deleted from the register where they are to be home educated, have ceased to attend the school, have a medical condition where the school medical officer certifies they will be unfit for school, are in custody or are permanently excluded
- Inform the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend regularly and is missing for 10 consecutive days or more 'a child missing from education'
- Monitor patterns of attendance carefully, notifying parents at the earliest opportunity, where attendance is beginning to raise a concern
- Enable parents to monitor their child's attendance via the parent portal, MCAS
- Provide attendance data on school reports
- Report on attendance to Governors.
- Pass on attendance data at key transition times, as required
- Advise parents in a timely manner where there is a risk of their child being classed as persistently absent from school (below 90%)
- Meet with students in the first instance when they have missed 6-9 sessions of school
- Arrange a meeting with student and parent when their child has missed 9-12+ sessions missed
- Follow up with parents / carers if they fail to attend the meeting or if attendance continues to decline
- Refer matters to the local authority in cases of poor school attendance
- Complete safe and well checks in the event a parent fails to report absence and the child is not in school for 3 or more days in one period.
- The school has to right to refer cases of educational neglect to the safer schools officer or social care if there are safeguarding concerns

4 Understanding types of absence

4.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

4.2 **Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

4.3 **Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before and during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as exceptional circumstances
- time off school for minor illnesses for example headache, sore throat, period pains may not be authorised and will be O coded

4.4 Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible to seek additional support in regards to any school attendance issues or concerns.

5 Persistent Absence (PA)

5.1 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we will seek full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

5.2 Absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and parents are informed of this immediately.

5.3 PA cases may be referred to our Link Peterborough City Council Attendance Officer.

5.4 PA pupils are tracked, monitored and supported through our pastoral system. Additional support may be obtained via a single referral or an Early Help Assessment

6 Lateness

6.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children missing the start of the day will miss lessons and will not spend time with their class teacher working on key skills and collecting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

6.2 The management of lateness:

- Students need to be on school site by 8.25am ready to attend form time no later than 8.30am.
- Any child arriving after 8.25am will be recorded as Late via the late gate sign in and will be issued with a same day after school late detention which runs from 3.10pm until 3.40pm
- Any child arriving after 8.45am but before 9am will be required to sign in via main reception and will also be marked with an L code and issued an after school late detention.
- Any child arriving after the register closes (9am) without a verified reason will be marked as 'unauthorised late' and coded as 'U', acknowledging the child is in school. A 'U code' constitutes an unauthorised absence due to missing the legal registration period; legal action may be taken for continued U code absences.

6.3 Parents of a child with a persistent late record will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem. Parents are encouraged to approach the school, at any time, if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed. We may also discuss and implement an attendance contract which is agreed by school and parents/ carers.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Appendix A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

Should parents/ carers which to discuss or provide any further information in relation to a child's absence contact can be made via email to absence@hamptongardens.org.uk

7 Leave of Absence

7.1 Taking leave of absence will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence; we expect parents to support us by not taking children away in school time.

7.2 There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday.

7.3 All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence. Where possible leave of absence requests should be made at least 4 weeks in advance, for example to attend a family wedding.

7.4 Absences may only be **authorised** in **exceptional circumstances.**

7.5 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may lead to sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

8. **Promoting Attendance**

Hampton Gardens uses opportunities as they arise to remind parents and children of the importance of attendance, for instance through parent information evenings, assemblies, emails and letters, newsletters. Attendance and punctuality are also celebrated through awards assemblies, and weekly rewards.

All staff have a responsibility to act as role models in terms of their own punctuality and attendance. In addition the following personnel have a key role in supporting good attendance.

8.1 Parents will:

- ensure their child leaves for school on time every day
- Contact the school by 8am on the first and each subsequent day of absence and advise when their child are expected to return
- provide a written explanation for their child's absences from school (this includes medical evidence) if requested
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- endeavour not to take children out of school in term time including medical appointments and holiday
- notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance, and work collaboratively with the school when interventions are necessary to improve attendance
- seek medical support from their GP or local mental health services in the event their child is absent from school due to mental health related illness.
- agree with the school on a suitable time and date for a weekly safe and well attendance check during the school day when persistent non-attendance occurs or when requested by the school.

8.2 **Students should:**

- arrive punctually every morning and every afternoon
- sign in if they are late arriving for school
- sign out if they leaving school at any point before the end of the day
- tell their form tutor, year team or their class teacher if they are having any problems attending school

8.3 The Head of School will ensure

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring of school -level absence data and reporting it to DFE
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

8.4 The Assistant Head of School (Attendance Champion) will ensure:

- The implementation of attendance strategies are carried out in a timely and effective manner
- effective administration of the Register system;
- streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures;
- implement a system of rewards and sanctions, including giving praise to those who arrive on time
- meetings with parents take place to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified
- meet regularly with the Attendance Officer, and LA personnel, where appropriate
- ensure work is provided for excluded children and long-term absentees
- look for patterns of absence and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes
- lead on strategies to improve attendance of pupils who are identified as being a concern
- ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school due to short-term illness are provided with work to complete at home as appropriate
- work with appropriate internal senior staff and external agencies with regard to providing packages of support for children whose attendance is causing concern. This could include attendance reports, regular meetings and re-integration meetings
- support children with medical needs in accordance with relevant LA medical needs guidance
- Maintain oversight of whole school attendance including data relating to persistent absenteeism and ensure the implementation of the attendance support and escalation protocols

8.5 The Attendance Officer will:

- Follow up in a timely manner with absence that is unreported, using first day calling procedures
- keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised
- send letters when attendance becomes a concern or when there is an improvement in attendance
- Report concerns in relation to student absence, punctuality and welfare to the pastoral and safeguarding team as appropriate
- liaise with the LA Attendance Officer regarding any poor attendance, arrange and attend meetings, where appropriate
- Chair meetings with Assistant Head of School to discuss trends, patterns and decide on interventions in accordance with the Attendance Support and Escalation Protocols.

- Advise the Assistant Head of School and Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- support the work of the Class teacher by:

  - providing regular attendance information
  - contacting parents on first day of absence
  - monitoring attendance and punctuality
  - alerting Leaders when concerns arise
  - monitoring the accuracy of record keeping
  - keeping Leaders informed of attendance issues
  - keeping Leaders informed of inaccurate marking of registers
  - monitoring applications for leave.

- give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events and in the school newsletter
- monitor attendance targets and record keeping

8.6 Class Teachers / Form Tutors will:

- maintain an accurate class register through the Management Information System, following internal procedures if a pupil is missing
- praise pupils for their punctuality to school
- Discuss with students in their form group any matters in relation to school attendance and punctuality as per the attendance escalation protocols
- alert the Year Team or the Senior Leader in charge of attendance and the attendance officer if there are concerns over pupil absence.

8.7 The Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff recognise that children who do not attend school regularly or go missing from education are particularly vulnerable and at increased risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse.
- Ensuring that attendance and welfare of students with a social worker is carefully monitored as a group that face additional barriers to attending.
- Ensure that social workers/foster carers and Youth Offending teams are regularly kept informed of student absence and any concerns over their attendance, especially absences that are unexplained.
- Ensure that social workers and other lead practitioners are involved in meetings to intervene with poor attendance.
- Ensure that safe and well checks are completed (with the support of the attendance officer and pastoral team) in a timely manner for students that have been absent for 3 days or more and where absence has not been reported or there is a safeguarding concern

9. Local Authority Attendance Support Services

The Local Authority Attendance Service work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Peterborough City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/attendance/

10. **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School**

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or

where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Peterborough's Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Hampton Gardens School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as: being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

11. **Deletions from Register**

For any student leaving Hampton Gardens *secondary school other than at the end of year 11,* parents/carers are required to inform the school. Parents should provide the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

11.1 Under Section 8 (1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should a student fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of the absence, the school is permitted to delete the student's name from their register.

11.2 This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) – that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 days and

I. at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
II. the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause.

Summary

12.1 The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

12.2 Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

12.3 All school staff are committed to working with parents and children; promoting as high a level of attendance as possible, ensuring that every child's welfare and life opportunities are considered in order that they reach their potential.

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS:

…….	…….	11 March 2026
SIGNATURE	NAME	DATE

DATE OF POLICY REVIEW: March 2026

Appendix A

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix B
Attendance support and escalation guidance