



Including local arrangements in annexes for:

HAMILTON SCHOOL

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(COVID impact)*

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Expectations Regarding Attendance

Regular attendance and good punctuality are crucial factors for pupils/students to achieve their full potential at school. Pupils/students attend school for 190 days each year. The Trust expects 100% attendance and, on average, attendance is consistently above 96%.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school regularly but also a role in encouraging their children to see the value of education.

School registers are taken each morning and afternoon. Pupil/pupils/students arriving late but within 30 minutes of registration will be marked as Late. After this point an absence will be recorded which requires a parental explanation. Unexplained lateness will be deemed as Unauthorised Absence.

Legislation and guidance underpinning this policy

School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities July 2019 which summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents. These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- 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
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 and schools (May 2014)

Attendance Register

The Trust is required by law to maintain an attendance register. The attendance register must be taken at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session.

If a pupil/student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Each pupil/student must be recorded as:

- Present;
- Attendance at an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The absence of a pupil/student to take part in a supervised educational activity outside the School but authorised by the School is recorded as an “approved educational activity” and is regarded as “present”.

The School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for the absence, establish whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code for the register.

Lesson Registers - Secondary Schools Only

In addition to morning and afternoon registrations, we take an electronic register during each lesson. Where a student is absent for a lesson, and there is no recorded reason for that absence, the teacher will raise the alert and a member of staff will verify the student has not signed out or gone to another area of the School. If the pupil/student cannot be found on site after a reasonable search, then parents are contacted. Where a child has identified vulnerabilities and/or special educational needs, then the School may decide to call parents immediately. Similarly, the School

may take the decision to contact the police directly if there is a risk of significant harm to the pupil/student.

Modified Timetables

In some situations (usually to support a pupil/student who is or has been unwell) a pupil/student may be put on a Modified (part-time) Timetable. This will be done as part of a formal process with a signed agreement. The Modified Timetable will be reviewed regularly and will be time limited. Where pupil/pupils/students are on agreed modified timetable, the School has agreed to the pupil/student being absent for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence.

Illness

Parents are expected to notify the School before 9am on each day that their child will be absent due to illness. Where a pupil/student does not register for a morning session and there is no explanation for their absence, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents to inform them of this. The first day calling procedures are contained in Annex 1.

If an email or telephone message has been received, the parents are not required to send a further acknowledgement in writing, however the School reserves the right to ask for confirmation in writing at any time. Whilst the parent may provide a reason for an absence, decisions as to whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised will be made by the School.

Emails may be sent to the Attendance Officer directly or via the school office as long as they are received from an email address which has previously been registered with the School on its database.

When a child is unwell and absent over a short period (less than a week), the School will assume that they are not well enough to complete work. In this event, teachers will not normally provide work for children to complete but will support them to catch up on their return.

When a child is absent over a longer period due to an illness which is supported by a medical note the School will work with child and their family to arrange work for them as appropriate.

Pupils/students falling ill during the school day

When a child appears to be too physically or emotionally/mentally unwell to be in school we will ask that they be collected by a parent in order to be either taken home or to seek medical attention.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Medical or dental appointments should, in all cases, be made after the school day has ended, except in an emergency.

Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

From 1 September 2013, the regulations governing the granting of leaves of absence to pupils/students in term time changed. Leaves of absence can now only be granted in "exceptional circumstances".

For the avoidance of doubt, going on holiday during term time does not constitute exceptional circumstances, and a leave of absence during term time will not be granted to parents for this reason unless there is some other "exceptional reason" for doing so (for example, the holiday is to visit a terminally ill relative who lives in another country). The School may, in some circumstances, grant a leave of absence to attend a funeral or wedding of a close relative, namely a parent, sibling and, in cases where there was regular contact, grandparents.

Parents should submit requests for a leave of absence to the school office **at least 15 days** before

the first date of the proposed absence. Such requests must be in writing and outlined **in detail** the reason for the request for leave of absence, the number of days that the pupil/student would be absent, and any consequences should the leave of absence not be granted.

Parents should not assume that a request for leave of absence will be granted, and no arrangements (for example, travel tickets or accommodation) should be booked before the request has been considered and authorised. The School will not accept any responsibility for any losses incurred in consequence of the refusal of a request.

Absence of a pupil/student will never be authorised retrospectively, and any such absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If a request for leave of absence is refused and the pupil/student is subsequently absent on any of the days that the request related to, the School will notify the local authority, which is likely to result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent for each day of the absence for each child. This is also the case if a request is authorised, but the pupil/student is absent for longer than agreed.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Under certain circumstances the School might refer parents to the Local Authority with the recommendation that a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) be issued. For example:

- Taking unauthorised holiday (or other leave) during term-time
- Repeated absence or lateness which is not explained in writing by a medical professional
- A long absence which is not explained in writing by a medical professional

In this event, each parent would be fined for each affected child.

Absence for Religious Observance

A request for leave of absence to take part in a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong will be agreed by the School. A request for such absence should be made in writing **at least 15 days** in advance. Typically, the Trust will grant a leave of absence of one day per annum for religious observance. The Trust may seek advice from the religious body before agreeing the request.

Long-Term Absence

Where pupil/pupils/students are absent from school for any length of time (including long visits overseas) the School may remove a pupil/student from the admission register after six weeks of absence. Notice of this intended action will be given to the parents in writing to the pupil/student's normal home address. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will be consulted in all such cases.

Pupils/students going off roll and preventing Children Missing in Education

Children Missing in Education (CME) are children whose whereabouts are known but for whom there is no educational provision in place and children whose whereabouts and educational provision are unknown.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an appropriate full-time education. Maiden Erlegh Trust works with local authorities to ensure that children do not go missing from education and/or fall into the NEET category (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

The School's Attendance Officer monitors attendance on a day to day basis and refers the names of individual pupils/students who may require additional support. The Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance Officer monitor attendance patterns across the School and trends for particular groups.

Where members of staff are concerned that an absence or pattern of absence raises a

safeguarding concern (including possible links to forced marriage or female genital mutilation), they will consult with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Local Authority will be informed when the School is **about to** remove a pupil/student's name from the admission register.

Where a pupil/student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days the pupil/student can be removed having made reasonable enquiries in conjunction with the Local Authority re the whereabouts of the child.

Where a parent has notified the School of their intention to remove their child from the school roll in order to Electively Home Educate (EHE) them, the school will inform the Local Authority.

Attendance pupil/student support strategies

Pupils/students whose attendance is not considered satisfactory will need positive reinforcement on their return to school, and the Inclusion Team and/or Pastoral Team will seek to provide support by working with pupils/students and their parents to encourage a more positive attitude towards attendance.

The Inclusion Team and Pastoral Team have positive roles in assisting those who are potential school refusers. Non-attendance will usually be addressed by the Attendance Officer in the first instance but will be escalated to a Pastoral Leader and/or the Local Authority Attendance Officer if there is no improvement. The Safeguarding Lead, the SENCO or the Inclusion Team may also be included.

Pupils/students who miss school through accident, injury or ill health often worry about the work being missed and about travelling around the busy school site on their return. The Inclusion Team can co-ordinate work to be carried out at home (if the absence period is going to be longer than a week) and offer support to the pupil/student on their return. These members of staff will also be in close contact with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and other outside medical and support agencies, as necessary. A Modified Timetable may be instigated.

Where pupils'/students' attendance is at risk of falling below 93%, the actions outlined in Annex 2 are followed.

A pupil/student's attendance record may be taken into account when allocating places on a school trip, visit or activity.

Support for Parents

Parents will be kept fully informed about their child's behaviour, attendance and punctuality. The School will seek to work in partnership with parents in order to improve behaviour through, for example, meetings, pastoral support plans, etc.

The School will encourage parents to make use of outside agencies and parenting classes, where appropriate, and will assist with arrangements for the use of these agencies. In these cases, a formal referral requesting support will need to be made by the School in consultation with parents, and submitted with parental consent.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive punctually to school and to lessons. Lateness will be recorded in registers by both tutors and teaching staff.

Where a pupil/student is late to a session, this will be dealt with by the tutor or teacher in the first instance with a Level 1 response.

Where a pupil/student displays persistent lateness, a Pastoral Leader will contact the parents. Support and a Level 2 response will be actioned. Possible consequences include:

- The withdrawal of free time at break or lunch;
- A period of community service in school;
- A temporary or permanent ban from representing the School on trips, visits or public activities;
- A temporary or permanent ban from taking part in school social activities;
- The withdrawal of an allocated place on a school trip, visit or activity.

Information on sanctions for poor punctuality can be found in our Behaviour Policy.

A pupil/student's punctuality record may be taken into account when allocating places on a school trip, visit or activity.

Off-Rolling

Off-rolling refers to the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the School rather than in the best interests of the child.

Maiden Erlegh Trust schools will never off-roll children in these circumstances.

There are many reasons why a school might remove a pupil from the school roll, such as when a pupil moves house or a parent decides (without coercion from the School) to home educate their child. This is not off-rolling. If a school removes a pupil from the roll due to a formal permanent exclusion and follows the proper processes, this is not off-rolling.

Monitoring

Monitoring of attendance is carried out by the attendance officer in liaison with pastoral staff. Pupils/students are referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer when their attendance has dropped below 85% or where their attendance is cause for concern (for example extended absence). The attendance officer will liaise between parents and The Trust and make every effort to get pupils/students back into school. The Attendance Officer will, if necessary, refer parents to the local authority for prosecution.

Every half term, an analysis of behaviour and attendance logs forms part of each School's self-evaluation. This analysis will then be shared with and discussed by the relevant Senior Leadership Group and Local Advisory Board.

The Headteacher and Local Advisor Board Chair will discuss trust-wide attendance and punctuality issues with the Board of Trustees.

ANNEX 1: FIRST DAY CALLING

First Day calling procedures are followed consistently. Between 9.20 – 10.00 each school day, Hamilton School's Attendance Team call/text parent/carer to enquire why their child is absent if no prior notification has been received. This also relates to those students who are taught by off-site tutors and Alternative Provision and messages must go through Hamilton School systems, e.g. Teachers 2 Parents text not mobile phones.

If no contact is made, a message will be left and followed up with a *Text 2 Parents*. 'O' code to be used until response received from parent.

Calls to be made in the following order of priority:

- Child Looked After students
- Students on Child Protection/Child in Need Plans
- Pupil Premium students (of any year)
- Persistently absent students
- Any other parents/carers

Outcomes/additional information/contact to be recorded through the Hamilton School data system.

ANNEX 2: REDUCING PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Families of students who are persistently absent to be engaged in 1:1 work with the School Care Officer through progress reviews and home visits, so that support can be activated in a timely manner where intervention is necessary.

Students will be visited at home by Keyworker and School Care Officer to attempt to re-engage the student.

A fortnight's modified return to school timetable will be offered to re-engage students. The Pastoral Support Worker linked to this student will monitor their attendance on the modified timetable, make positive phone calls home daily and report to Attendance Officer / School Care Officer daily on success of modified timetable.

In the event of non-attendance, we will aim to visit students every ten school days both as a safeguarding measure and as a supportive measure to maintain communication between home and school. In the event that we have not been able to see the student we may ask the police to conduct a welfare check on our behalf.

Where the absence is unauthorised, work will NOT be provided and failure to engage with school will result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service and/or Children's Social Care.

ANNEX 3: PROCEDURES FOR POTENTIAL CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

1. See Annex 2 for actions relating to persistent or regular unauthorised absence.
2. For actions regarding Exclusions see the Behaviour and Exclusions policy.
3. Where we are aware that a student is moving to a new, named, school, we post the student's Common Transfer File (CTF) on the s2s website to the destination school.
4. Where we are aware that a student is moving to abroad, to an independent school or to school not using Common Transfer Files, the CTF is posed on the s2s website to the out of maintained school destination.
5. Where we are aware that a student is moving to a British Forces school (a) if we know the name of the school we transfer the CTF using the s2s website to destination SCE School (b) if we do not know the name of the school, we refer the student to the Education Welfare Service.
6. Where we are aware that a student has left or is leaving and we do not know the destination school, we refer to the Education Welfare Service.

NB: We use Reading Borough Council Children Missing in Education Policy as a guide.