



# LONGHILL

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HIGH SCHOOL

## Student Attendance Policy

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| <b>Reviewed By</b>                        | Mike Jones |
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## **CONTENTS:**

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Principles**
- 3. Purpose**
- 4. Underlying principles**
- 5. Role and responsibilities**
- 6. Absences**
- 7. Leave of absence guidelines**
- 8. Unauthorised absences**
- 9. Traveller absences**
- 10. Punctuality**
- 11. Truancy**
- 12. Attendance Matters**

## Purpose

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Longhill High School by:

1. Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential
2. Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance

## Principles

Regular school attendance is the most important factor in achievement at school and we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential. Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning. Missing lessons damages a student's self-confidence and understanding. In addition, teachers who then have to slow down lessons to accommodate those who have missed previous sessions are not doing justice to the rest of the class who attended all the lessons.

We, at Longhill High School, regard regular attendance to be 96% or higher, this equates to 8 school days of absence over the academic year. Excellent attendance improves students' outcomes and allows each child to fulfil their potential. When students' attendance falls below this, valuable learning time is lost or interrupted.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Present** – The student is on the school site at the time of registration.

**Approved Education Activity (AEA)** – The student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site for example, an educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised absence (C,M,I)** – Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. This will include illness, medical appointments, bereavement or any other circumstances that the school deems appropriate. A request for medical evidence is made when a student falls below 91% attendance and is therefore classified as a Persistent Absentee.

**Excluded** – Excluded from school

**Unauthorised absences (U)** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily

- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

**It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. Even though the latter is authorised, it will still be counted as an absence.**

**School refusal (O)** – this is chronic non-attendance, usually where there are wider family, psychological or behavioural problems affecting the student’s ability to attend school. The school will use interventions to support such situations, but this can lead to local authority involvement in more serious cases. We can only accept consultant letters to make onward referrals to SEND Teaching and Learning provision. GP letters are insufficient for such purposes.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The Government threshold for Persistent Absenteeism is 90% or lower. This includes all absence, whether as a result of genuine illness or for unauthorised reasons. The names of those on this figure or below are taken directly from our database by Brighton and Hove City Council.

### **Longhill High School Policy regarding Holidays in Term Time**

The DfE instructs schools to consider holidays in term time only in very exceptional circumstances. Almost all holidays taken during term time will be coded as unauthorised absences. There is no entitlement for parents to remove their child from school for a family holiday during term time, even in circumstances where the parents’ employers refuse to grant holidays outside of the school term. The school is the only agency which can authorise such a holiday.

Parents who wish to claim exceptional circumstances as a reason for taking holidays in term time should be given the school’s request form and return it to the Headteacher when possible at least 2 months before the holiday. A copy of our request form, together with a letter from the Headteacher explaining our policy, is available on the website.

### **Attendance Role and Responsibilities**

#### **Parent/Carers**

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child regularly attends school.

#### **Parent/Carers are asked to:**

Contact the school by 8.15am on each day of absence via Class Charts, by using the absence line 01273 304696 or via email [attendance@longhill.org.uk](mailto:attendance@longhill.org.uk), stating clearly the reasons for absence.

Parents are also responsible for informing the school of an advanced or planned appointment that cannot be taken outside the school day.

Refrain from requesting any authorised absence except under exceptional circumstances.

**Mentors will:**

- Encourage all students to have regular attendance by engaging in frequent reminders and sharing attendance data with their tutees
- Have conversations with students regarding absences
- Have direct correspondence with parents regarding the students' wellbeing and attendance if this falls below 96%
- Keep an overview of your child's attendance
- Liaise with the Senior Leadership Team regarding interventions and individual concerns
- Inform students of the procedures regarding planned absence
- Sanction poor punctuality: if a child has arrived on site and on time, but failed to attend Lesson 1 at 8:40am

**Teachers will:**

- Take an electronic register each lesson within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons using 'on call' and the pastoral support team
- Electronically record any punctuality issues and pass any concerns to the mentor, Head of Year and/or Pastoral Support Team
- Sanction poor punctuality to any lesson
- If taking students off site, follow the protocol for recording attendance with the Attendance Officer and pastoral leaders
- Inform the Attendance Officer by email and other staff of the student's absence due to off-site activities

**Pastoral Support Team will:**

- Contact parents regarding poor punctuality on the day this has occurred, and follow up with conversations if the problem of poor punctuality persists
- Track and monitor poor punctuality
- Provide support and guidance to students and families around school attendance and punctuality
- Follow ATTEND procedures, in line with Brighton and Hove local authority practices

**Heads of Year will:**

- Track and monitor attendance for their year group
- Liaise with mentors and highlight concerns that require action
- Liaise and meet with the Assistant Headteacher where there are concerns, reporting fortnightly on their year group attendance and vulnerable groups
- Act on information from staff concerning attendance or poor punctuality, sanctioning accordingly
- Inform parents of any students where poor punctuality or regular attendance is not habitual and put intervention in place, referring to agencies as required
- Use assemblies and the school reward system to promote regular attendance
- Hold attendance meetings with parents

**Educational Welfare Officer will:**

- Track and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies and systems as required. Track and monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, passing such information to the relevant members of staff
- Support Heads of Year to lead their teams to foster regular attendance
- Liaise with external agencies to devise any necessary interventions for students with persistent absenteeism or at risk of long-term absence
- Contact parents on first day of absence and every day thereafter
- Compile attendance data for Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Team
- Hold attendance meetings with Parents, Heads of Year, Pastoral Team and Assistant Headteacher
- Provide support and guidance to pastoral teams in their management of attendance and punctuality
- Take ownership and manage the attendance of all students at stage 5, with less than 90% attendance
- Attend the whole-school attendance review meeting, once a fortnight
- To keep Heads of Year and the Pastoral Support Team updated
- To complete good quality attendance plans on Provision Map for all stage 5 students
- To update and review attendance plans for all stage 5 students
- To complete referrals, as necessary to the local authority attendance team and/or Front Door For Families, where necessary
- To complete home visits

**Assistant Headteacher will:**

- Track and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies and systems as required. This will be achieved with the Senior Leadership Team and other members of the pastoral team
- Track and monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, passing such information to the relevant members of staff
- Support Heads of Year to lead their teams to foster regular attendance
- Liaise with the Attendance Manager regarding whole school attendance

**The Headteacher will:**

- Monitor the policy and ensure the policy is adhered to
- Ensure that attendance data is presented to the governing body and shared regularly with staff
- Set attendance targets as part of the School Improvement Plan
- Consider withdrawal from learning (holiday) applications
- Consider exceptional leave requests based on students' prior levels of attendance

**The Governing Body will:**

- Approve attendance policy
- Receive reports from the Headteacher
- Scrutinise the working of the policy in light of the attendance data presented
- Support the implementation of the policy

## Attendance Procedures

### Notifying the School of a Child's Absence

If a child is absent from school, parents are expected to notify the school in advance (if this is a planned absence) or as soon as possible on the day of absence, preferably before 8.15am. This can take the form of a telephone call, Class Charts message or email to the Attendance Manager. Absence line 01273 304696. They may also email [attendance@longhill.org.uk](mailto:attendance@longhill.org.uk).

If no such communication is received, the school will contact parents by phone or text to inform them that their child is absent from school and request the reason. If the school does not receive an explanation for absence on the first day, an email of enquiry will be sent home. The absence will be unauthorised if no reason given.

The same procedure will be followed on each day of a child's absence and not just on the first day of absence, even if a valid reason is given. This is a precaution in case a child truants after having had an authorised absence for illness. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the local authority and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The Local Authority will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, Local Authority Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

The school will have the following rigorous and robust systems to ensure high levels of attendance:

- Daily monitoring of student absence with parent/carer by phone or email where we have not been informed of the absence
- Daily monitoring of punctuality and lateness to school/lessons with follow up sanctions applied and parents notified on the day
- Weekly monitoring and tracking of attendance to identify trends and initiate interventions to promote excellent attendance

### Punctuality

Late arrival at school is recorded for all late students regardless of the reason. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child arrives for an 8:20 start to the registration periods. Registers will close at 8:40. Students arriving between 8:20am and 8:40am will be coded as Late (L). Any arrivals after this time will be unauthorised and coded as such (U), unless there is medical evidence or special circumstances to which the school have been notified (i.e. half a day).

If a student arrives at school after 8:40am, parents will be notified via Class Charts. They will receive a standard notification that their child has arrived late. They will also receive a same day break sanction and this will be logged on our behaviour management system. Continued issues with punctuality will accelerate the sanction and lead to a meeting with parents and the pastoral team or Head of Year. Late arrival can be authorised in cases of delay in the arrival of school transport or known appointments. The school reserves the right to adjust morning registration time for individuals, after discussion with the Local Authority and/or the Education Welfare Officer. Parents will be notified in writing in such cases.

Students arriving after 8:20 must enter through Reception and log in on the monitor to ensure we have an accurate record of students on site at all times.



**Medical appointment during the school day**

Students who need to leave during the school day require a letter from home, or notify the Attendance Manager prior to the appointment, and will need to have this on them when they sign out at Reception. We would encourage all appointments to be made out of school hours to avoid the negative impact this has on your child's learning. If this is unavoidable, we urge parents to refrain from using the whole day unless absolutely necessary.

**Child Missing from Education (CME)**

If a child leaves school and is not enrolled at another school within the required period, a CME notification is made. This notification may be made at an earlier point if there are Safeguarding concerns.

**Rewards and Incentives**

Excellent and regular attendance is acknowledged by the school in Mentor, assemblies and through our school rewards system. Students will receive recognition for achieving excellent attendance (above 95%) each term. Heads of Year may also use rewards to incentivise attendance.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Rachelle Otulakowski – Headteacher  
Mike Jones – Assistant Headteacher  
Mark Fleming – Education Welfare Officer  
Heads of Year  
Pastoral Support Assistants



## Attendance Matters

|      |           |                   |
|------|-----------|-------------------|
| 100% | 0 DAYS    | 0 LESSONS MISSED  |
| 99%  | 1 DAY     | 5 LESSONS MISSED  |
| 98%  | 3 DAYS    | 15 LESSONS MISSED |
| 97%  | 1 WEEK    | 25 LESSONS MISSED |
| 96%  | 1.5 WEEKS | 35 LESSONS MISSED |
| 94%  | 2 WEEKS   | 50 LESSONS MISSED |
| 93%  | 2.5 WEEKS | 65 LESSONS MISSED |
| 92%  | 3 WEEKS   | 75 LESSONS MISSED |
| 90%  | 3.5 WEEKS | 90 LESSONS MISSED |

**MAXIMISE YOUR POTENTIAL.  
ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY.**