**Attendance Policy**

The Haven School



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| **Approved by:** | Zoie Stevenson | **Date:** Oct 2018 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | June 26 | |
| **Next review due by:** | June 27 | |

**Attendance Policy**

**Types of Absence**

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which they are registered.  Should a parent fail to ensure that their child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence.  When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

At The Haven our pupils have often suffered from long periods of non-attendance or disrupted school attendance and whilst our longer term aim is always to build them up to full-time school attendance we acknowledge that this is at times aspirational rather than practical in the short term. Because of our small cohort and the possibility that individuals could be identified we do not mention here the various reasons why some pupils may attend part-time. This would always be an agreement between the school, local authority, parents or carers based on the needs detailed in the EHCP.

**Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

* Where a child has a part-time timetable and is not expected in school for a particular session
* Illness (including for mental health reasons), medical or dental appointment
* 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis);

**Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child’s absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Because of the exceptional circumstances of some of our pupils there will always be detailed discussion about the circumstances surrounding an absence.

**Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence (or PA) is normally agreed to be absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if their attendance is less than 90% of expected attendance (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). Pupils attending The Haven have a variety of difficulties around SEMH and it may be that their EHCP gives reasons why a particular pupil cannot attend full-time or may have periods of absence. Hence for some pupils the 90% attendance threshold may not be realistic as a result of their mental health needs. We firmly believe in working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to reduce absence and will always take a supportive rather than punitive approach to resolving any difficulties.

**Approved Educational Activity**

Children who are educated off site, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically ‘present’. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

**Registers**

The attendance register is marked twice daily – once for the morning session 9:00 till 12:30 and once for the afternoon session 12:35 till 2:00 (clubs 2-2.30). Most pupils are transported in LA arranged transport so it unlikely they would arrive late to school. Parents and carers must ensure that the children they are responsible for are ready for when the transport arrives.

Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court.  The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

**First Day Response**

As a vigilant and caring school, we contact home within a maximum of one hour of a pupil failing to arrive. If we cannot make contact by phone, we will try other ways, such as a home visit, to establish the reason for absence. Parents and carers are requested to inform the school before 9am if they know a child is going to be absent.

**Leave of Absence**

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 5 days will be asked to make an appointment to see the head teacher to explain the circumstances. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation penalty notices could be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met.

There may be particular circumstances with pupils attending The Haven where a family holiday for social/emotional reasons would be authorised but again this is very personal to individual circumstances and, to ensure that pupils cannot be identified, such circumstances cannot be written here. It would always be an agreement between the school, parents or carers, social worker and local authority.

**Absence for religious reasons**

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.   
If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

**Policy Date: September 2018**



Part time timetable

In some circumstances there may be a need for The Haven to implement a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil’s individual needs. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will be part of reintegration package.

Part-time timetables will be used in certain circumstances, for example:

* Where the pupil has been out of school for a long time prior to starting at The Haven and they need a gradual integration to school life
* Where the pupil has significant emotional or mental health difficulties and cannot manage the stress or anxiety of attending school full-time
* Where the pupil has a diagnosis that means a full-time timetable would not be appropriate

Whenever a part time timetable is implemented it will;

* Have clearly defined objectives.
* Be for a specified and limited period of time;
* Be reviewed weekly at SLT meeting;
* Will be implemented with parental agreement and the SEN Case Officer will be advised and updated weekly on progress.

Where possible and appropriate, pupils will be provided with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the work is regularly marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil. The Haven will ensure the EHCP is used to meet the child’s needs.

**Supporting Better Attendance at the Haven School- Sept 22**

Every half term, attendance for each student is calculated and recorded on the attendance tracker.

**Attendance for each child is RAG rated as follows:**

Red- Significantly below expected level = <79%

Amber- Below expected level = >80%

Green- At expected level = >90 %

See document ‘How we work at the Haven’ section of attendance policy

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Attendance of students in amber or red zones is discussed and tracked at weekly attendance meetings TM/SH (see notes on share point). Keyworkers are notified if their KW child falls into these zones so that they can provide support.

For students whose attendance falls below expected levels Keyworkers liaise with parents/carers to identify any issues. If required the involvement of the school's Student and Family Well-being Officer and/or the school's Clinical psychologist to work with the child and/or their family is initiated. Where appropriate EHA/PEP or midterm annual reviews are held to support.

For students, whose attendance falls significantly below expected levels, a discussion around the reasons for absence and the need for attendance pen portrait (PP) is discussed at SLT (see minutes). If a PP is required interventions will be formally recorded with associated evaluations of the support provided. If a child is new to the school and have an active integration plan, this may be used instead of an attendance PP.

**How we work at The Haven School**

The vast majority of our pupils want to behave well, learn successfully and thrive. However, their mental ill health or emotional distress interferes with this.  We use a medical model to support our pupils to improved health.  This can prove more complex than when helping someone get better from a physical illness because mental ill health does not necessarily make linear progress.  Sometimes we see great improvement which can be sustained for weeks or even months but then an event can occur which knocks the pupil off course again.  For our young people who are in the care system this could be a change of home placement; for children who have suffered trauma or family breakdown there are multiple scenarios that can occur – the return of a long lost family member, the disappearance of a parent or another event that retriggers the trauma etc. Sometimes there is no obvious reason for the return of emotional instability. However, pupils need intensive support at these times. This is where the importance of positive relationships with staff, built up over time, can have a big impact. A pupil will often confide in a trusted adult and, by talking through their trauma, make steps towards improvement. At these times it may be necessary to modify the programme that the pupil is following and adaptations are made to their timetable, allowing more time for calming and reducing either academic or social pressure. We are experienced in monitoring and managing emotional distress and mental ill health and work with the family and other professionals to agree steps which support the young person. Our records prove that this approach works. Some pupils who have not been to school for years remain on roll at The Haven and achieve success in examinations and move on to other educational destinations.

As with other forms of ill health, when a pupil is suffering from emotional distress they made need time out of school to access medical appointments, or to recover enough to be able to re-engage with school. This can impact on their attendance. However, we work closely with all professionals and parents/carers to ensure pupils are back in school as soon as they are ready and able to manage. When a pupil has suffered significant distress, we may use the principle of gradual exposure to re-integrate them back into the school. This model has been successful with many of our students. Timetables are reviewed weekly, with the aim being for them to be in school, as close to full time as possible, as soon as they are able.

We do not underestimate the effort it takes for some young people to navigate their way through the school system. Emotional distress and associated issues of low self-esteem, low mood, fear of failure etc. are very hard to live with and manage. Our staff are very aware of this and our training and procedures ensure that all our young people are very well supported at The Haven.