



Hermitage Academy Attendance Policy

We are committed to maximising the achievement of all our students. There is a clear link between attendance and educational achievement and in turn future success. Our aim is to promote excellent attendance and punctuality in order to ensure all of our students achieve their potential.

The expectation of attendance at our school is above 97%.

Attendance below 95% - Your child has missed at least 2 weeks of school. This is the equivalent of missing 50 lessons and is a serious concern.

Attendance between 95% and 96.9% - Your child has missed approximately 8 days of school, the equivalent of 40 lessons, leaving room for further improvement.

Attendance at 97% or above - Congratulations, your child has achieved the Academy's target.

Ways to encourage high attendance

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time ready for morning registration.
- Only allow your child to stay at home in response to genuine illness. Please visit the NHS website for further information on illness and school attendance.
- If your child is absent, phone school as soon as possible to provide a reason.
- The school should be phoned on each day of your child’s absence.
- Where possible, make appointments outside of the school day. The school may request you provide medical appointment letters/cards to authorise the absence.
- Check the school website for the dates of school holidays.
- Do not take holidays in term time – there are 175 non-school days.

School timings

Students are expected to arrive at the Academy no later than 8:20am ready for an 8:25am start. Registers are taken for two sessions during the school day, am and pm. Morning registers close at 8:55am, after which the morning session will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U Code), unless an appropriate reason is given for the absence. Absences within the school day will require a parent or nominated adult to collect the student from school. School ends at 3:05pm.

Reporting a student absence

All absences should be reported through the school absence line (0191 388 7161) before morning registers close. Emails are not accepted as a form of communication to report a student absence. You will receive a call to discuss your child’s absence.

It is a legal requirement to inform a school of a student absence. If an absence is unexplained, the school will enact its attendance processes. Failure to contact the school can be used in legal attendance procedures.

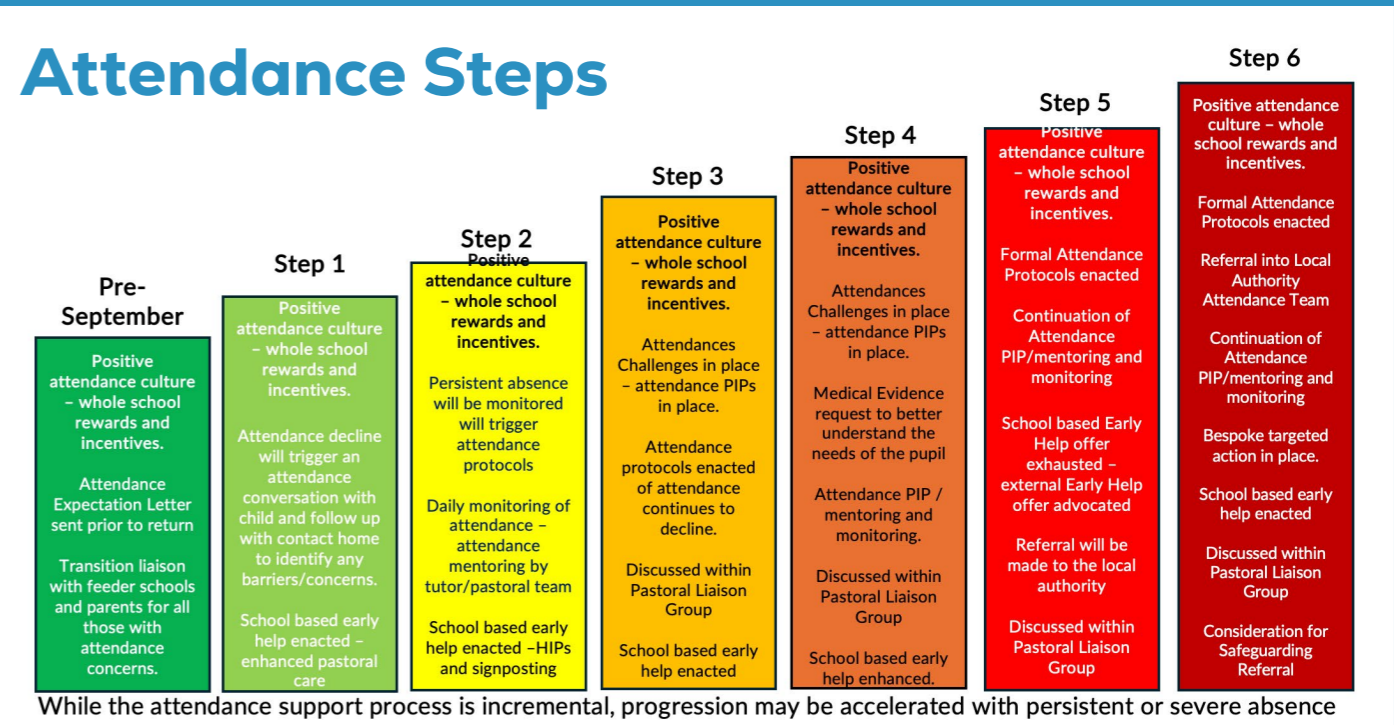
Absence protocols

Leave of absence	Any request for a leave of absence should be communicated in writing to the Headteacher with a minimum of two week’s notice. Organisations should not organise events and training during term time. There are 175 non school days. Absence requests related to such activities are unlikely to be approved, this is in line with the Trust Curriculum Statement.
Authorised absence	Absences for a genuine illness will be authorised. Where persistent or patterns of absence emerge, the school will monitor the student’s attendance going forward. Should further absences be recorded, the school will ask you to provide medical evidence to authorise future absences. Schools can seek medical guidance to better understand the needs of students.
Persistent Absence	Any student whose attendance drops below 90% will be categorised as a persistent absentee. Unless medical evidence is provided, it is likely the Academy will issue a formal warning to parents requesting immediate action to improve their child’s attendance. Schools will refer to the Local Authority for consideration of formal legal action. See attendance steps infographic overleaf.

Severe Absence	Any student who is absent from school more than they are present (50% attendance or below) will be supported by school-based Early Help and educational neglect may be explored.
Support	The Pastoral Liaison Group are an experienced team within school. Together they monitor, intervene and support students and families with attendance concerns. This team includes the Behaviour Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance Manager, SENDCO and Inclusion Manager. The attendance champion is Mrs Jamieson. The team can be reached via the school telephone number. Further to the school based early help offer, the school may escalate concerns of entrenched non-attendance to the Education Welfare Officer to explore further external support.
Penalty Notices	When support is exhausted and absence remains an issue, the school will refer to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Depending on circumstances, this can escalate to further criminal prosecution. More information can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk . See the below infographic for information on our ‘attendance steps’.
Term Time Holidays	Any student who goes on holiday during term time can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Home visits

When schools are unable to establish contact, or intervention is required to support students back into school, home visits will be carried out.



Attendance Strategy

Culture

Our wider school culture where students who 'want to come to school'. Achieved by: a broad curriculum offer, quality personal development and extra-curricular activities and outstanding pastoral care.

Rewards and Incentives

Rewards and incentives are important encourage student engagement. Maintains the high profile of attendance across the Academy.

External Agencies

Proactive school-based Early Help work is essential. Getting the right help at the right time is paramount to addressing absenteeism (either emerging concerns or persistent absenteeism).

Contextual Understanding

Knowledge of the community which the Academy serves is crucial. Local understanding is key to identifying and mitigating against barriers to good attendance.

Attendance Expectations

High expectations of attendance will be communicated with students and parents on a regular basis.

Working with Parents and Carers

Parental engagement is key - both proactive communication and engagement events alongside bespoke and targeted school-based Early Help with families where intervention is needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Good attendance is 'everyone's responsibility'. Trustees, the Local Academy Council and the Trust Attendance Leadership Group support, guide and challenge the Academy's implementation of the attendance strategy. Key responsibilities within the Academy's attendance team are clearly defined.

Interventions

Whole school approach to understanding the impact of attendance on both academic pastoral outcomes. Targeted school-based Early Help interventions such as Pastoral Intervention Program (PIP) support students in improving or maintaining good attendance.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Attendance strategy is a fundamental aspect of the Academy's 'Culture of Safeguarding': accurate registers; a dynamic approach to improving school attendance and informed referrals around educational neglect.

Data and reporting

Rigorous monitoring and analysis of data to track student sub-groups and trends. Use of comparative DfE and local benchmarks to guide attendance strategy. Evaluation of intervention to maximise targeted support.