WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1 Introduction

Every child has a fundamental right to receive an education, and consistent attendance is crucial for students to fully benefit from the learning opportunities available to them. To achieve this, both parents and teachers share the responsibility of ensuring that children attend school as regularly as possible. Attendance is expected from all students unless they are unwell, in which case they should only return to school once they have fully recovered. Punctuality is a key requirement of school participation. At New Hall School, the safety and wellbeing of our students is our main priority. As such, staff are committed to promptly addressing any unexplained or unexpected absences and ensuring appropriate action is taken for students who may be at risk of missing from education.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and recognise that:

- parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children
- external factors may influence student attendance and the School will work in partnership with parents/guardians to overcome matters which may affect a child's attendance

2 Senior Divisions Procedures

2.1 Tutor

Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for morning sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1). At New Hall, the tutor is key in promoting regular, punctual attendance. The tutor should:

- provide a good example by always being punctual for registration
- carry out electronic registration in a timely manner using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- ensure that student registration is accurately completed for their tutor group
- encourage parents/guardians to submit attendance communications regarding absence through MySchoolPortal for approval
- monitor patterns of absence for individuals within their tutor group and alert the Head of Boarding (HoB) and/or Head of Division (HoDiv) when there is an attendance/punctuality concern
- ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians of students with poor attendance/punctuality
- where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the tutor will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The tutor will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

2.2 Attendance Administrator

The Attendance Administrator is responsible for maintaining accurate records of all Senior Divisions student attendance. The Attendance Administrator should:

- take calls, emails and notifications from MySchoolPortal, from Senior Divisions parents/guardians about absence on a day-to-day basis and record attendance, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system

- is responsible for ensuring that registers are complete after each registration session and for ensuring that all unauthorised absences are investigated by contacting parents/guardians if the School has not already had a notification via MySchoolPortal
- initiate first day response calls to parents/guardians
- ensure that all attendance information is recorded on My School Portal/iSAMS

2.3 Head of Department (HoD)

The HoD should:

- ensure new staff are aware of the iSAMS registration procedures
- provide a good example by always being punctual
- ensure that members of their department take a register at the beginning of every lesson and at afternoon registration on a daily basis as required
- analyse attendance at departmental meetings, to identify patterns of absence and provide support for students in liaison with the relevant HoB and/or HoDiv

2.4 Subject Teachers

Subject teachers should:

- provide a good example by always being punctual
- take a register at the beginning of every lesson
- take a register at afternoon registration on a daily basis as required
- follow up any suspected internal truancy by informing the Attendance Office, in accordance with the *Missing Student Policy*
- monitor student attendance and any impact on attainment in their subject area
- raise a concern with the relevant tutor when students have a poor attendance/punctuality record in lessons, and ensure students who have been absent are made aware of work missed and tasks to be completed in liaison with the HoD

3 Preparatory Divisions Procedures

3.1 Class Teachers

Class Teachers should:

- provide a good example by always being punctual
- take a register at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- ensure that registers are taken at the start of each Year 3-6 lesson
- carry out electronic registration in a timely manner using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- ensure that student registration is accurately completed for their class
- encourage parents/guardians to submit attendance communications regarding absence through MySchoolPortal for approval
- monitor patterns of absence for individuals within their class and alert the Head of Boarding (HoB) and/or Head of Division (HoDiv) when there is an attendance/punctuality concern
- ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians of pupils with poor attendance/punctuality

- ensure pupils who have been absent are made aware of work missed and tasks to be completed in liaison with specialist teachers/set teachers
- where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the class teacher will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The class teacher will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

3.2 Specialist teachers/set teachers

Specialist teachers/set teachers should:

- provide a good example by always being punctual
- take a register at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- ensure that registers are taken at the start of each Year 3-6 lesson
- carry out electronic registration in a timely manner using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- monitor patterns of absence for individuals within their class and alert the Class Teacher when there is an attendance/punctuality concern

3.3 Preparatory Divisions Office

Preparatory Divisions Office staff will:

- take calls, emails and notifications from MySchoolPortal, from Preparatory Divisions parents/guardians about absence on a day-to-day basis and record attendance, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) on the School system
- ensure that registers are complete after each registration session and ensure that all unauthorised absences are investigated by contacting parents/guardians if the School has not already had a notification via MySchoolPortal
- initiate first day response calls to parents/guardians
- ensure that all attendance information is recorded on MySchoolPortal/iSAMS

4. Nursery Division Procedures

In the Nursery:

- absences are followed up in a timely manner. Parents are called by 9.30 am if a child is absent and no notification has been received
- absences are monitored to consider trends or patterns, using knowledge of personal circumstances
- contact must be made to both parents and/or an emergency contact if not successful with parents
- parents know to inform the Nursery of a child's absence using MySchoolPortal using the absence portal for illness, or the leave portal for holidays

5 Whole School Procedures

5.1 Reporting to the Local Authority and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

New Hall recognises its legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority and reporting duties as a sponsor of Child Student and Student visas. Failure to attend regularly (or any other immediate concern) will result in such a report being made, and ten successive days of unauthorised absence, where absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U), will routinely trigger that report. The School will:

- notify the Local Authority (Essex County Council) of any additions or deletions to our admissions register, at standard and non-standard transition points, with the exception of pupils leaving at the end of Year 13.
- inform the local authority of all pupils of compulsory School age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the School has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.
- comply with the School's sponsor reporting duties, including changes in student circumstances, to the UKVI for any sponsored students

The School recognises that the Essex County Council (as the local authority) may view and take extracts from the Attendance Register from any school in their area and the Secretary of State may also access and take extracts of the registers.

5.2 Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is Suzanna Minnis, Assistant Principal and Lead DSL. Mrs Minnis is contactable via s.minnis@newhallschool.co.uk or 01245 467 588 (ext 450).

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- leading, championing and improving attendance across the School
- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

5.3 Heads of Division (HoDiv)

HoDiv are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year groups and the implementation of this policy. They should:

- induct new tutors in the year team on attendance procedures
- monitor absence data and set targets for improvement
- review registers, attendance and punctuality figures on a weekly basis
- support tutors with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- hold regular meetings with parents who the School (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at School
- work with parents/guardians of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- communicate with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs
- in liaison with Admissions, share information from the School register with the local authority, including:
    - notifying the local authority when a student's name is added to or deleted from the School admission register outside of standard transition times

- provide the local authority with the details of students who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- provide the local authority with the details of students who the School believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians of poor attendees

5.4 Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians should:

- ensure that their children attend School every day on time
- contact the School to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the School day
- seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the tutor and/or HoDiv

5.5 Recording Attendance

The School will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students onto this register. If a student arrives after registration has closed, they should sign in at the Attendance Office/School Office immediately.

The morning register will be taken at 8.20am and the morning register will be kept open until 8.40am. The afternoon register will be taken at 2.20pm and the afternoon register will be kept open until 2.40pm.

5.6 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/guardian must notify the Attendance Office on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am, or as soon as practically possible via MySchoolPortal or email: attendance@newhallschool.co.uk. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If a child is absent from School, parents/guardians should notify the School on the first morning they are absent and each subsequent day. If notification has been given verbally, this should be followed up in writing.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the School will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

5.7 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/guardian notifies the School in advance of the appointment. If parents/guardians are requesting future absence, they should direct this request via MySchoolPortal. This should be sent in good time (at least 72 hours before the day on which absence is being sought) and must be sent in by a parent or guardian.

We encourage parents/guardians to make medical and dental appointments out of School hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/guardians must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

5.8 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A student who arrives late after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Serious or persistent lateness in the Senior Divisions will be addressed via appropriate sanctions. In the Preparatory Divisions, lateness is recognised as being the fault of the parent/guardian and therefore, there are no sanctions for pupils. Instead, serious or persistent lateness will result in a letter being sent home from the HoDiv.

5.9 Following up on unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend School does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the School will:

- contact the student's parent/guardian on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the School cannot reach the parent/guardian the School will contact the emergency contacts listed for the student
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- contact the parent/guardian on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the School will consider involving an education welfare officer
- where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer
- where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents/guardians to improve attendance
- identify whether the student needs support from wider partners and make the necessary referrals
- escalate the matter where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with

5.10 Authorised and unauthorised absence

The HoDiv will permit students to be absent from the School site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. The HoDiv will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in *Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026*. These circumstances are:

- taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- attending an interview
- study leave
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the HoDiv's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

In exceptional circumstances, permission for absence may be granted if a notification is received from parents, in advance. Students' attendance is included on all School references and is requested by prospective colleges and employers and used as part of their admissions and interview procedure. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. All students, including boarders, are expected to be in School from the first day of term until the last day of term. Student absences affect not just the individual but may affect the whole teaching group and teachers' schemes of work. The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The HoDiv may require documentation to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student and/or their parents belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the relevant religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Other reasons the School may allow a student to be absent from the School site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the School
- attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- attending provision arranged by the local authority
- attending work experience
- if there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the School premises are closed

5.11 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of School. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the School's strategy for managing attendance.

The School will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- implement sanctions, where necessary
- consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the School (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - discuss attendance and engagement at School
  - listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - explain the help that is available
  - explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe
  - absence
  - review any existing actions or interventions

- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage students

APPENDIX 1

The codes recommended by DfE are used at New Hall:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination. *All Year 11 students are expected to remain in full-time education until the last Friday in June of that academic year: Where a school has a sixth form and the student is due to transition to year 12, the school may use the X code after the student has*

		ceased to be of compulsory school age (last Friday in June). Where schools do not have a sixth form or the student is not due to transition into Year 12, schools may remove from roll after the last Friday in June has passed. (https://schools.essex.gov.uk/essex-schools-infolink/attendance/attendance-coding)
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every Student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)

Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays