



POLICY: Attendance and Punctuality Policy

STATUTORY: Yes

DATE AGREED:

REVIEW DATE:

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF STAFF: D Wyatt

TRUSTEE COMMITTEE: Personnel and Welfare

SIGNED HEADTEACHER:

SIGNED CHAIR OF TRUSTEES:



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

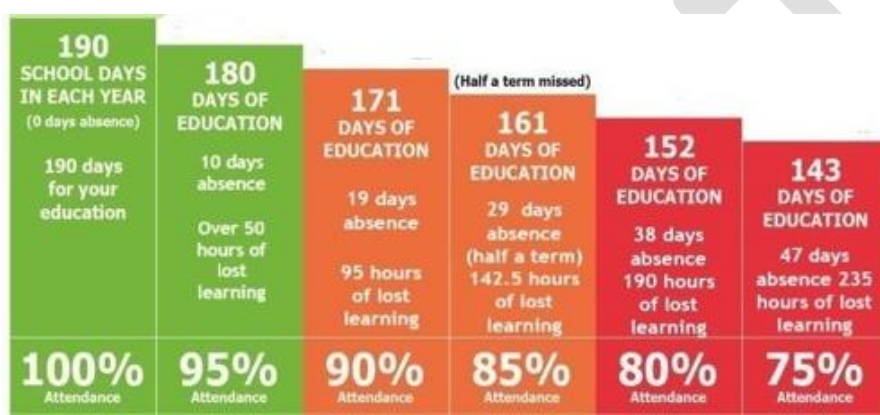
Aims:

JMHS is committed to providing a full and effective education for all our students where excellent and enjoyable learning is at the heart of the success we enjoy as a school. We will do all we can to ensure that all students attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. We understand the link between attendance and welfare as well as attendance and progress and are therefore committed to ensuring students attend school as much as possible.

We aim for every student to achieve full attendance throughout the school year.

Rationale:

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement and improved social and emotional well-being of students. The DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024) has been used to help develop this policy.



Principles:

We believe a positive attendance and punctuality culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other.

	Expectations
Students We expect that all students will:	Attend school regularly. Arrive to school and to lessons on time and fully equipped and prepared for the day. Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and on time so that we can provide effective support.
Parents/Carers We expect that all parents/carers will:	Ensure their children to attend school every day and on time. Ensure that they contact school by 9.00am every day that their child is unable to attend school to provide a full explanation for absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a satisfactory explanation is not provided. An explanation should include symptoms, reference to medication if appropriate and details of any medical advice sought or received.

	<p>Contact the school on 01531 631012, Option 1 or studentabsence@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk to report their child's absence.</p> <p>Contact the relevant Year Leader or Form Tutor about any problem which is making it hard for their child to attend school regularly and on time so that we can provide effective support.</p> <p>Ensure that their children arrive in school fully equipped and prepared for the school day.</p> <p>Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers.</p> <p>Make medical appointments outside of school hours, where possible. Where appointments are made during school hours, students should only be absent for the duration of the appointment.</p>
<p>School Parents/carers can expect that the school will:</p>	<p>Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs via a published timetable which necessitates regular and punctual attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete attendance registers at the beginning of each session using Bromcom.</p> <p>Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without explanation or good reason.</p> <p>Collect and make effective use of attendance data. Monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement of individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school.</p>

Physical and Mental Health:

JMHS recognises that attendance can be affected by both physical and mental health and accepts both equally as reasons for absence. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> provides useful guidance to schools and parents/carers on common illnesses and expectations around school attendance.

JMHS has access to a number of agencies, including the school nursing team, ONSIDE counselling and CAMHS to offer support to students for mental health difficulties including emotionally based school avoidance. We will always look to work collaboratively with students, parents and carers and outside agencies to support high attendance.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

Our policy is to place more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective sanctions are necessary. We will encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- Following-up absence without explanation each day
- Recording attendance on students' records, e.g. school report
- Acknowledging individual's improvements in attendance
- Providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and, where necessary, parents

- Encouraging liaison between the school, attendance advisor and other agencies wherever appropriate
- Emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance during the induction process for new students and throughout their school career
- Provide support to overcome barriers to attendance, including collaboration with medical professionals
- Publish attendance information to parents/carers in school newsletters
- Reward schemes on an individual and tutor group level for both high and improved attendance

Responding to poor attendance:

When a pupil fails to attend school without a satisfactory explanation, or if absence becomes persistent or severe we will use a range of strategies including:

- Contact the parent on each day of absence to obtain a satisfactory explanation for that absence
- Send a letter home to the parent/carer of a student where attendance is a concern
- Mentoring provided to identified students
- Invite parents in to meet with Year Leader and external attendance advisor or carry out home visits, where attendance is a concern.
- Request evidence that medical appointments are taking place
- Request medical evidence where there are high levels of absence for illness
- Refer to Herefordshire Council for legal action under the Education Act 1996, section 444 (1(A))
- Refer to the Herefordshire Children Missing in Education (CMIE) panel
- Consider a referral to Herefordshire Children's Services in line with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Use of strategies will be based on individual circumstances and the level of absence. Student absence falls in to three main categories. The level of intervention and referral to outside agencies is likely to be determined by the absence category the student is in.

- Students at risk of persistent absence (Under 93%)
- Persistently absent students (Under 90%)
- Severely absent students (Under 50%)

Unauthorised Absence:

JMHS will not authorise absences in the circumstances identified below.

- No reasonable explanation provided for absence.
- Insufficient explanation given for absence.
- Absence extending beyond what is considered reasonable for the reason given.
- Whole day absence for local medical appointments.
- Failure to seek professional medical advice for persistent health issues.
- Planned absences that do not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances.

Where a parent has no reasonable explanation for absences of a child, or where support is not relevant, not successful or not engaged with, we will consider a referral to Herefordshire Council who may decide to prosecute the parent, issue a Fixed Penalty or take other legal action in line with the National Framework.

Punctuality and Lateness:

The morning register will open at 8.45am and close at 9.15am. If a student arrives after 8.45am but before 9.15am, they will be marked as 'Late'. If a student arrives after 9.15am, they will be recorded as 'Late after registration', which is an unauthorised absence and has an impact on attendance.

Students who are persistently late for school will be subject to school sanctions and will receive support from a designated member of staff to try and overcome any barriers.

Planned Absence

Leave in term time is not permitted, unless in exceptional circumstances. Where a parent/carer believes exceptional circumstances exist, they must contact the school in writing to request planned leave. This request should be made at the earliest possible opportunity to the Senior Attendance Champion (Dean Wyatt – Assistant Headteacher).

Where planned leave is taken without authorisation and amounts to 10 sessions (5 days) or more a referral will be made to Herefordshire Council who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or take other legal action. The National Framework states;

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Notice to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in [Herefordshire Penalty Notice – Local Code of Conduct](#) and will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act (1996).
- Details of support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Roles and Responsibilities:

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the students the importance of the education being provided.

Role	Responsibility
Governors	To ensure that the school has in place a whole school attendance and punctuality policy. To monitor the effectiveness of the whole school policy.
Senior Attendance Champion	To collate and share attendance and punctuality data. To allocate mentors and to monitor effectiveness of strategies. To liaise with School Attendance Advisor to support students who are persistently absent or in danger of being persistently absent. To liaise with outside agencies and families where required. To liaise with Hereford Council on requests for planned absence and communicate decisions.
Student Support Assistants	To ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time. To ensure that all reasons for absence are recorded on the register. To follow-up any unexplained absence. To inform relevant staff of any absence patterns or concerns. To liaise with Year Leaders, the external attendance advisor and the Senior Attendance Champion on a regular basis.
Year Leader	To receive the analysis of attendance and punctuality data from the Senior Attendance Champion. To ensure that good attendance and punctuality is embedded into all members of the Year group. To share success and effectively deal with concerns regarding punctuality and attendance. To initiate contact with parents/carers in the case of prolonged and unexplained absence. To ensure effective liaison with outside agencies and families where required.
Class Teachers/ Form Tutor/Mentor	To complete registers accurately and on time. To inform relevant staff of any absence patterns or concerns. To provide effective support to identified students, including mentoring of individuals where an improvement in attendance is needed.

Key Staff:

Role	Name	Contact Details
Student Support Assistants	Helen Mitchell (Year 7)	studentabsence@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk 01531 631012 – Option 1

For day to day contact about attendance	Sally McCarthy (Year 8 &9) Val Chadney (Year 10 & 11)	
Year Leaders For more detailed attendance support		
Year 7 Leader	Nicole Drew	nicole.drew@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Year 8 Leader	Trinity Fletcher	trinity.fletcher@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Year 9 Leader	Matthew Day	matthew.day@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Year 10 Leader	Amy Mackintosh	amy.mackintosh@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Year 11 Leader	Matt Carter	matthew.carter@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Head of VI Form	Ami Phillips	ami.phillips@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Senior Attendance Champion For significant attendance support	Dean Wyatt	dean.wyatt@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead For safeguarding matters	Andy Williams	safeguarding@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Links to other JMHS policies:

Behaviour for Learning policy including Anti Bullying
Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Staff Home Visits Policy

Links to key local and national guidance:

DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Herefordshire Council Guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/25326/emotionally-based-school-avoidance-ebsa---a-guide-for-primary-and-secondary-schools>

NHS Guidance – Is my child too ill for school?

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Herefordshire Council Graduated Response

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/25925/improving-attendance-herefordshire-graduated-response>

Herefordshire Council Education of Children with Medical Needs Policy

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/25881/herefordshire_education_of_children_with_medical_needs_policy

Review:

This policy will be subject to review on an annual basis.

Version	Date	Done by	Comment	Approval
2.0	June 2024	Dean Wyatt Jo Ellis	Additional links added to local and national guidance Expansion of key staff roles and contact details Updated response to planned and unauthorised absence based on national framework	FGB 2 July 2024

Version	Date	Done by	Comment	Approval
3.0	September 2025	Dean Wyatt Jo Ellis	Link to Staff Home Visits Policy added Reference to 'Working together to improve school attendance' updated to reflect August 2024 version.	
3.1	April 2026	Dean Wyatt	Notice to Improve section added	

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2HF
Registered in England and Wales
Company Number: 07631985
An Exempt Charitable Trust