NORTH STAR
COMMUNITY TRUST

Heron Hall
ACADEMY

Attendance policy

Sixth Form

July 2026

Due for review be end July 2027

NSCTPol / HHA / 0012-E / 2607a

Introduction

We believe that regular attendance is clearly linked to pupils making good progress in their learning. It ensures that pupils settle into the sixth form and experience the stability and security they need in order to achieve their best.

We aim to ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and each school acts early to address patterns of absence.

The Sixth Form will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives, Heron Hall Sixth Form will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Our Sixth Form takes attendance very seriously and we acknowledge that good school attendance plays an essential part in academic development for post-16 students.

Post-16 courses can be intensive and students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time. As well as timetabled lessons students also have non-contact periods on their timetables for private study, homework, social time and enrichment activities. Unless stipulated otherwise, all non-contact studies will be expected to be undertaken in the designated sixth-form area.

Sixth-form students should strive to achieve consistently good attendance as poor attendance will affect academic achievement. Students should therefore aim for 100% attendance for the year. We appreciate however that attendance can be affected by extenuating circumstances on occasion, therefore, a minimum attendance of 97% would be acceptable.

An exemplary record of attendance suggests that a student is dedicated, well-motivated, organised and someone who takes their responsibilities seriously. Good attendance also plays an important part when applying to higher education establishments or employment.

Objectives

- improve the overall percentage of students at school to 96% and above
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the sixth form including students, parents, teachers and governors
- provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students regarding the importance of Post 16 attendance and punctuality
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data
- develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- promote effective partnerships with external services and agencies

- recognise the needs and support of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence
- ensure that the sixth form attendance figure remains in line with whole school KPI's

Expectations of students

- attend regularly, on time and be prepared to learn
- attend registration, assembly and enrichment
- to sign in if they arrive after registration time
- to tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending
- make every effort to make medical / dental appointments outside of school hours

Expectations of parent /carer

- to fulfil their responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- to contact the school on the first day their child is absent for any reason and then on all subsequent days
- to not take holidays during term time
- to speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school
- to provide evidence to support absence such as an appointment card / letter, a copy of a prescription slip with name and date visible or medication packaging with name and date visible. Alternatively, if none of the above are available a note, signed by the parent/carer explaining the reason for absence
- complete an absence request form if their child needs to leave early / will be absent from school (Available on request from the school office or see Appendix 1)

What parents/carers and students can expect from the school

- promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, regular encouragement and rewards
- efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence
- prompt action when a problem has been identified
- regular communication with students and parents/carers

Punctuality at the start of the school day

MORNING

Pupils should be in class and ready to start their day before the official start of the academy day.

Academy opens at:	8.00 am	
Gates open:	8.35 am	
Registration time:	8.45 am	Pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the office, will be recorded as **Late (L)** and issued with a lunchtime detention to be completed the same day. Continued lateness may result in an after school detention.
Register closes at:	9.15 am	Any pupil arriving after 9.10am will be coded as **Unauthorised Late (U)**. This is classed as an absence and will affect the pupil's attendance rate.

END OF SCHOOL DAY

School closes:	3:25 pm	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
School closes:	2.25 pm	Thursday

Pupils who arrive late should report to the main office and a designated member of staff will record the pupil's details and time of arrival. They will be officially marked as '*Late*'.

Persistent lateness (i.e. regular arrival to the academy after the official start to the academy day) is monitored, and parents / carers are informed of this in writing. Where there is no improvement to an individual pupil's punctuality, the parents / carers are invited into the academy to discuss a plan of action.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, unless a valid reason can be supplied (for example evidenced GP / dental appointment), they will be marked in the register with an '*Unauthorised Absence'*.

Pupils who are late for school will receive a 'late to school' detention, which they are expected to complete during the school day. Parents will be informed of this sanction through the school's Management Information System.

If a student is late twice or more in a week (i.e. five consecutive school days), their sanction will be escalated to the removal of sixth form privileges (such as use of mobile phone and the ability to leave the school site during lunchtimes).

Signing in and out

It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school building at all times.

Students must make sure that they sign in each time they are late to school and then sign in and out each time they leave the building during the day.

Sixth Form students are not permitted to leave the school site after Period 5. Students who need to leave the site must do so before the end of Period 5 **and must have permission to leave**. During form time, all students who remain on site are required to be in the Sixth Form study space.

Where students request early leave or early arrival (and this can be due to timetabling) students must inform the Sixth Form team (Head of Sixth Form, Head of Year, Sixth Form Admin).

The Sixth Form team are the gatekeepers for this decision and it is imperative that the attendance spreadsheet is completed.

Reasons for leaving early can include:

- Medical appointment
- University / apprenticeship visit
- Timetable (e.g. no Period 5) and as long as attendance, punctuality and conduct has been deemed to be satisfactory.

The attendance spreadsheet is shared with the Main Office and is a live document. This ensures that, if a student has been granted permission to leave early after lunchtime and signs out through the Main Office, staff are aware of the arrangement in advance

Reporting lateness and contacting the school

In the event of lateness or unplanned absence the school should be contacted before 08.00 am

School office telephone: **020 8443 9631**

School attendance email: heron.attendance@northstartrust.org.uk

Parental requests for absence during term time

Any requests for absence during term time must be made by completing an '*Absence Request Form'* (available from the school office)

The Headteacher of the academy will give due consideration to the request with the circumstances of each case being taken into account along with the pupil's attendance record. Evidence for the absence may be requested from the parent / carer concerned before a decision can be made.

The final decision rests with the Headteacher and parents / carer will be informed of that decision in writing.

If the Headteacher agrees a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Authorised*.

If the Headteacher does not agree a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Unauthorised*.

Examples of where absence may be authorised

- absences during term time which have been both requested by parents using the absence request form and agreed by the Head teacher in writing.
- on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
- medical / dental appointments with proof of appointment provided to the office at least 24 hours prior to the appointment. All medical / dental appointments should be arranged, where possible, outside of school hours.
- illness:
  This does not include minor sickness (such as headaches, coughs and colds); *and*
  a) the academy should be informed by the pupil's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of absence and regularly throughout the period of illness (this does not automatically condone absence, only the Head teacher of the academy can do that).
  b) if medical advice was sought, the parent / carer must provide the academy with a medical note and supporting evidence (e.g. prescription, appointment card, medical certificate) on the student's return.
  c) If a student is absent from school longer than a period of 5 days due to illness parents / carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence.
- a close family bereavement
- Interviews for courses / employment that will begin after the end of the students time at sixth form.
- University and Employer Open Days (**no more than two of these events in an academic year**
- Work experience – requests for term-time leave for essential work experience (e.g. medicine, law) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (**and these requests should be submitted at least a month in advance**)

Examples of where absence will be unauthorised

- to wait for a delivery or tradesman
- to look after siblings
- to go shopping
- to celebrate a birthday
- sleeping in
- one child is ill, so all are kept off school
- minor ailments such as a tummy ache or headache

- the last day of the week or term
- driving lessons or tests
- adverse weather conditions (unless approved by the school)

Leave of absence may not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours unless it is to engage in work experience arranged through the school.

How we manage poor attendance

Unexplained absence process

If a student is absent from school and we have received no communication from either the student or a parent / carer, a text message will be sent on the morning of the students' absence requesting a reason.

If following this there is no response to our text message, a phone call will be made to parents/carers requesting a reason for their child's absence. If there is still no response, the student will then be logged as an unauthorised absence, subsequent phone calls made and dependent on circumstances, a home visit may be undertaken on that day.

Cause for concern process

Cause for concern letters will be sent home to parents/carers when attendance is below 99%. This early notification is intended to share our concerns with you and give you the opportunity to intervene/contact the school so that early support/intervention can be put in to place, if needed.

When there is cause for concern, we follow a staged approach.

STAGE 1 | Attendance officer / School office administrator

Where attendance below 99%

- Attendance officer / School office administrator will make the initial contact with parent / carer to discuss any issues / barriers that are impacting their attendance / punctuality
- Attendance will be monitored closely for 4 weeks

STAGE 2 | Attendance officer / Form tutor

Where there is a continued decline in attendance (90% - 95.99%)

- Attendance Officer and Year Team review attendance patterns and reasons for absence.
- Parents / carers are contacted by the attendance officer or form tutor by phone, letter, email, or meeting invitation
- Support plans and reasonable adjustments are considered where appropriate
- Any safeguarding concerns identified will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and escalated in line with the school's safeguarding procedures, where appropriate

- A 4-week monitoring period begins with a scheduled review date
- Failure to improve attendance during the monitoring period, or any further unauthorised absences, persistent lateness, or absences not supported by evidence, may result in escalation to Stage 3.
- We will monitor and review attendance over the following 4 weeks to identify any significant improvement in attendance. If this has been achieved, then no further intervention/action will be taken at this stage. Should attendance not improve, or decline further we will implement the next step, as agreed at the previous Attendance meeting.
- Home visits may be undertaken where appropriate

STAGE 3 | Attendance officer / School office administrator and Head of Year

Where there is a continued decline in attendance (80% - 89.99%)

- A formal attendance meeting is arranged with parents / carers and the pupil.
- Attendance concerns, barriers, and expectations are discussed.
- An Attendance Improvement plan may be implemented with clear targets and review dates.
- Additional support from internal and external agencies may be considered.
- Attendance is reviewed regularly and monitored by Attendance Officer & Head of Year.
- A written warning will be issued

STAGE 4 | Education Welfare Officer / Head teacher

Where there is a continued decline in attendance (50% - 79.99%)

- Formal attendance meetings are held with parents/carers.
- Cases are referred to the Education Welfare Officer where attendance/ punctuality continues to be a concern despite previous interventions and support.
- Education Welfare Officer investigates barriers to attendance and coordinates support.
- Formal attendance contracts, parenting agreements, or statutory interventions may be implemented.
- Possible request to leave Sixth Form if the student is persistently absent from school and refuses to engage in intervention procedures.

Where there is ongoing, poor attendance and only with the Headteacher's authorisation, the school reserves the right to remove a sixth-form student from roll.

This would only be in the unlikely event that all intervention and support have had no impact and the student and parent have made no improvements in attendance.

Sixth form absence request form

There is no automatic right for parents / carers to take their children out of school during term time.

The Department of Education will only allow a Head teacher to grant a leave of absence if there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is for the Head teacher to determine whether or not an absence can be authorised and the number of days a child can be away from school.

All absence requests must be completed on this form. Letters will **not** be accepted.

The form **plus supporting evidence** should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence.

Pupil's name:		Form:	

Home address and postcode

First date of absence:		Date of return to the academy:	

I / we request to take my / our child out of school during term time for the following reasons: -

I understand that unauthorised requests will be monitored and addressed in line with the Sixth Form attendance policy.

Name of parent / carer making application:	

Signed:		Date:	

You will be notified in writing of the school's decision

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Student name:	
Student form:	

Current attendance:	%	Current unauthorised:	%

Dates requested from:		To:	

Term time days in total:	
Term time sessions in total:	

DECISION

☐ AUTHORISED

The request has been authorised for the following dates:

☐ UNAUTHORISED

The request is unauthorised for the following dates / reasons:

☐ Parents informed of the decision in writing

☐ Information entered on database / pupil record

Signed: ..... (Head teacher) Date: .....