

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2017

ASPIRE
ACADEMY
BEXLEY



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1.0 SCHOOL

In order for students to access all the opportunities that New Horizons Federation provides, regular and punctual attendance is essential. Regular attendance ensures students have continuity of learning, can develop and maintain relationships with their peer groups and staff whilst also developing a pattern of commitment which will create a positive attitude and ethos to support their transition into the world of further education, training or employment. Students who maintain regular attendance also benefit from participating in the attendance reward system, specific to each individual New Horizon Federation School.

Students who attend a School within the New Horizons Federation - Pathways Short Stay School (Respite 12 weeks placements, Reception, Primary, KS3 and KS4 Year 10 and Long Term KS4), Long Term Welling Centre (KS4 Year 11), The Medical and Psychology Service (Based within Pathways Short Stay School), Oakwood Secondary School and Westbrooke Primary School, may have had erratic attendance patterns throughout their recent educational histories. These can be a result of exclusions (both fixed term and/or permanent), truancy, undiagnosed medical conditions, long term illness, medical conditions such as depression or anxiety, waiting for specialist school placements, travel arrangements, moving homes, parents choosing to keep their children away from school and family difficulties. In addition they may have also spent time out of lessons for misbehaviour, internal exclusion or even refused to enter a classroom. Each and every one on these experiences has a clear and sometimes drastic impact on each child's educational progress which then compounds any difficulties they may already have.

For students who attend Pathways Short Stay School or the Medical/Psychology Service on respite placements and remain on the role of their home school, the New Horizons Federation daily attendance procedures will be followed in order to address and improve that student's attendance for the duration of the respite period. However consequential processes for prolonged absence or punctuality issues, including referrals to Education Welfare Service will be the responsibility of the home school and dictated by their attendance policy. It is an expectation that New Horizons Federation Respite Key Stages and Medical/Psychology Service staff, home school staff and all relevant linked agencies will work in partnership to achieve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality with Professional Meetings being convened prior to placements commencing when deemed necessary by Pathways Short Stay School.

In order to ensure consistency, accuracy of recorded attendance and access to appropriate early help and intervention, **all home schools must mirror image Respite attendance upon receipt of the weekly attendance every Friday**. This ensures already established legal processes remain insitu and evidence to access early help or intervention and support is accurate. NHF Pastoral Support Co-ordinators and Primary/Secondary Respite will liaise daily with home school staff and all related external agencies in relation to individual student punctuality, attendance and safeguarding updates and are expected to work jointly to remove barriers preventing each student achieving above 95% attendance. This may include co-ordinated external referrals for example Family Wellbeing when required. This process will be further embedded by the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators supporting NHF Primary/Secondary Respite Co-ordinators at Initial Interviews, review and end meetings.

For those students who are permanently excluded and placed through 6th Day Provision or have a permanent exclusion rescinded they will be the responsibility of Pathways Short Stay School or Psychology/Medical Service. New Horizons Federation will again follow the daily attendance

procedures in order to assess, address, review and improve student attendance which is expected to be maintained above 95%. However the consequential process will work in partnership with NHF allocated staff and the relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Service which is reflected and outlined in this policy.

Students who reintegrate back into mainstream school following either a permanent or rescinded exclusion can remain on roll at Pathways Short Stay School for a period of 6 weeks, if they are in receipt of ongoing support from the NHF Outreach Service. During this 6 week period students will be main rolled with their new school where they attend daily but will remain on the dual roll of Pathways Short Stay School and will be recorded as D Code on the register.

Students who have suffered prolonged periods of non-attendance will obviously find it difficult to return to the expectations of a classroom setting for a variety of reasons including loss of habit, fear of the work or teacher expectations and further conflict or failure. During both respite and long term placements across all Federation Schools, we endeavour to identify the individual student and family barriers impacting on punctuality and attendance through daily assessment, intervention and review. Our ethos is to work on an early intervention basis by promptly identifying barriers and initiating specific support and guidance to enable students and parents to fully benefit from what each New Horizon Federation School has to offer. Therefore, working in partnership with families and carers is an essential element of our work. We adopt a consistent, robust and honest approach to communication to ensure parents/carers have information and access to the intervention and support we can provide. Additionally parents are made fully aware from the outset and on a regular basis of the national and Federation expectations regarding their student's level of attendance and punctuality to enable their child to achieve their full social and academic potential.

2.0 EXPECTATION OVERVIEW

All New Horizons Federation Schools begin the morning with Tutor Time or Registration, except for Westbrook Primary School. This is when registration takes place and where each student is expected to arrive on time and in full correct uniform, ready for the day ahead.

2.1 TRAVEL

There are various ways in which pupils will be expected to travel to school which is the responsibility of the parents/carers. Those students attending Oakwood School, Westbrooke Primary School and Pathways Short Stay School Primary may be transported to and from home by either minibus or taxi via the Local Authority if they meet the specific criteria. Parents/carers are expected to ensure their student is ready for collection from home each morning at a designated time. In consideration for other taxi passengers and in order to arrive to school promptly, students will be allowed a maximum of three minutes 'waiting time' at which stage the taxi/mini bus will then leave and it will then become the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their student arrives to school on time. Students who are not ready in time for transport and do not attend school will be marked as an unauthorised absence; alternate decisions are made at the discretion of the Inclusion Manager and/or Head of School.

Parents/carers are expected to notify their relevant school or the transport directly of any absence related to illness and/or medical appointments at their earliest convenience to ensure absence is recorded correctly.

Should the Local Authority Transport remove a student's access to transport for any reason they deem appropriate including behaviour, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child is in school on time, daily. The removal of transport does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code). Student absence due to the removal of LA transport as a result of poor behaviour may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service as it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure alternative transport methods are put in place to ensure regular attendance is maintained and the students education is not disrupted.

Students who travel to and from school by an Oyster Card also need to be aware Transport for London (TfL) have devised a Behaviour Code which they expect all young people to adhere to at all times when they are travelling on public transport. This code is in place to ensure everyone travels safely with due respect for fellow passengers, staff and property and failure to adhere to the expected behaviours can result in this free concession being withdrawn. The removal of an Oyster Card does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code). Student absence due to the removal of an Oyster Card as a result of poor behaviour may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service as it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure alternative transport methods are put in place to ensure regular attendance is maintained.

Please see the attached letter from Transport for London (TfL) outlining their expectations and definitions of unacceptable Antisocial Behaviour.

2.2 GOVERNING BODY AND MANAGEMENT/SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

New Horizon Federation Management and Leadership Teams take a daily active role in student attendance and punctuality. Management and Senior Leaders will receive, participate and review attendance information, data and reports on a regular basis. All members of the NHF Management and Leadership Teams will receive copies of Weekly NHF Attendance Meeting Minutes. Each Manager and/or Senior Member of staff will have access to a Key Stage Attendance Overview Folder containing all relevant, related and current attendance information and data which has ongoing updates. Attendance remains a rolling agenda item on the fortnightly Management Meetings and also on the Termly Federation Senior Leadership Team Meetings. Adhoc strategic/review meetings will also be convened in relation to unforeseen attendance and punctuality themes occurring and changes in local and government policy and guidance.

Governors are encouraged and expected to take an active role in student attendance and punctuality. Designated Governor can regularly attend the Weekly NHF Attendance Meeting and actively participate in the strategic and operational review of Attendance process, support and intervention including offering consistent representation at Fast Track Attendance Panels in liaison with the Education Welfare Service. Governors will receive and review annual attendance reports and data in liaison with the Heads of School, Inclusion Manager and Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, challenging and analysing overall impact and outcomes. In partnership with the Executive Headteacher, the Board of Governors will set annual attendance targets working in tandem with the School Improvement Plan and individual key staff members' performance management targets.

2.3. PARENTS/CARERS

The Department for Education (Dfe) states parents/carers are legally obliged to:

- Secure education for their children of compulsory school age whether at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and
- Ensure regular attendance once the pupil has been registered (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition parents/carers have a duty to support the importance and value of education as a whole. The Department of Education (Dfe) guidance recommends: -

"Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education - and for those who deliver it - and ensuring that pupils complete homework on time. Parents should impress upon their children the need to observe schools' code of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home."

In line with the Dfe School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Guidance (2015, updated 2017), parents/carers of all New Horizons Federation students are expected to support their student's prompt and regular arrival to school. Appropriate support and intervention is made available following assessment within each New Horizon Federation School, to families where attendance is a concern and deterioration or patterns of change are evident. Internal support and intervention is offered via the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, Outreach Staff, Behaviour Mentors, Progress Coaches and Form/Class Tutors. External support and intervention can include but is not limited to Early Help (Family Wellbeing), Integrated Youth Service, School Nurse, Education Welfare Service, Community Safety Team, Schools Police, CAMHS and social care. Referrals may be made by a NHF School without parental consent when it is deemed necessary to ensure the wellbeing of a student. Designated staff are however encouraged and expected to work alongside home to engage the student, identifying and working towards removing barriers to learning to encourage, increase and maintain punctual and regular attendance.

Parents/carers **must** contact the School on the first day of absence and keep the School updated on a regular basis throughout the absence period. Should a student be absent from school parents/carers are expected to inform the relevant School before registration time and will be notified formally in writing should such time arise that medical evidence is required. Additionally it is both important and helpful to keep the School informed of any changes in family circumstances to enable the School to appropriately support student whilst in school or during their return. Recording attendance is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator within each School and coding is determined at the discretion of the Head of School/Key Stage Co-ordinator in partnership with the Inclusion Manager and the allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinator. All registration coding decisions are made in line with Dfe School Attendance Guidance (2014

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to provide the School with current home contact details to enable absence calls to be completed daily. The Schools inability or failure to make home contact to confirm a student's absence will result in a home visit from the allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinator until contact is made and/or the absence is addressed. Allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinators are expected to adopt a solution-focused approach when making home contact to continually improve attendance and to challenge inappropriate excuses, investigate regular patterns of unauthorised absence and to support parents/carers in ensuring their student attends school on a regular basis. Home liaison and support is expected to initially take the form of supplying parents/carers with basic, practical advice and may involve early morning 'wake up'

calls before the start of school and on rare occasions collecting and transporting students into school when deemed absolutely necessary. However it is expected intensive home support has to be limited to allow families to develop their own coping strategies and build resilience in the students. Working with families and students to help identify and adopt the own solutions is a key element of a Pastoral Support Co-ordinators. Should families require and consent when required to additional external support, the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, in partnership with the Safeguarding Liaison Officer, Inclusion Manager and Head of School, are expected to initiate and facilitate relevant referrals whilst continuing to support improved attendance.

If contact either via telephone or during a home visit is unsuccessful, in line with the New Horizon Federation Safeguarding Policy a Welfare Home Check by our Designated Safeguarding Liaison Officer can be triggered. Prolonged failure to provide current contact details, failure to make direct contact or a concern for student wellbeing can also result in a safeguarding concern being raised, resulting in a referral/consultation with social care and/or police. Should the school be made aware a student has left for school in the morning but has failed to arrive in school a report to Police and/or social care may be initiated in partnership with parent/carer. Equally the same process will be following if a student decides to leave the school premises without permission or has permission but does not arrive home. However should a parent/carer refuse to notify relevant agencies that the students whereabouts are unknown, the Federation reserves the right to notify all relevant agencies (including but not limited to Police and social care) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student, which remains the priority.

*NHF mandatorily share all student attendance information with statutory agencies and known voluntary agents who are currently working with the family/student including but not limited to social care, police, community safety and youth offending service.

2.4 STUDENTS

Students are expected to value their education and themselves, with staff and parents/carers helping students to understand that an education will provide future post statutory choices and opportunities. All students are expected to arrive to school on time, ready and prepared for the day ahead, firstly by handing in their bags and phones at reception. Students will not be permitted to enter school without doing so. Students are also expected to wear school uniform and to remain on site for the length of their timetable. If a student arrives to school without the correct school uniform, parent/carer will be contacted and asked to bring in the correct uniform. With parent/carer consent a student may be allowed to return home for the correct uniform.

A student will not receive their registration mark until they return to school in full, correct school uniform. If a student chooses to leave the school site, parents/carers will be notified and they will be marked as truanting and will be recorded as absent until they return. Students are never expected to leave school site without pre agreed notification from parent/carer and agreed by a relevant member of staff in partnership with home. As a Federation, we have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people (Section 175 of the Education Act 2002) and registering children is one of our fundamental safeguarding processes therefore we must ensure the registration marks are recorded correctly. Furthermore should a student leave the school site and they are deemed at risk, their whereabouts are unknown or we have a concern for their wellbeing, then we may notify statutory agencies including but not limited to, social care and/or police as it is our duty to ensure their safety.

Students are encouraged to talk to staff regarding any issues that may affect their attendance to provide staff with the opportunity to deal with matters quickly, appropriately and at the earliest opportunity to prevent a student from missing any education. This may include peer issues, curriculum concerns or any external factors impacting of daily attendance.

2.5 STAFF

For some of our student parents/carers will not view education with any sense of value or purpose and will not therefore habitually see the importance or need to attend school on a regular basis. Improving attendance is a whole school ethos and everyone's responsibility, therefore we expect all staff to encourage and promote excellent punctual, regular attendance.

All New Horizons Federation are expected to support the high expectation for student attendance which are role modelled first and foremost by our own excellent attendance. Discussions with students regarding absence or punctuality should always reflect our high expectations and in cases of doubt should be referred to the Inclusion Manager or Head of School.

1. The New Horizons Federation high standard for attendance is expected to be emphasised by staff to students at the initial interview/entry stage with both parents/carers and most importantly with the student prior to admission to the School and through an Attendance Agreement.
2. Staff are expected to regularly outline to students why it is important to attend school punctually and consistently, setting individual targets when required during lessons and tutor time.
3. Attendance and individual student attendance visual displays should be present in classrooms and staff room to promote and embedded attendance awareness.
4. Staff are not permitted to allow or facilitate students leaving school site during the school day without Management/SLT and parent/carer permission.
5. Staff are expected to relay to parents/carers and students help and support is available.
6. Attendance is a joint partnership responsibility between student, home, home school, New Horizons Federation and the local authority and we are expected to make every effort to engage families in understanding and supporting the value of good attendance.
7. Staff are expected to encourage the use of Breakfast Club, especially for those travelling a distance every day.
8. Staff are expected to discuss attendance concerns with the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators to promote a preventative and early help approach to absence.
9. Staff will discuss and plan daily actions to address and overcome poor punctuality and absence.

3.0 PROCESSES

3.1 REGISTERS AND DAILY ACTIONS

Each Federation School must ensure student attendance and absence is recorded (AM and PM), these recordings constitute the official register, which is a legal document (The Education (Pupil's Registration) Regulations 1995 and (Amendment) 1997).

If a valid, acceptable reason to the Federation is provided for a student's absence the School will ensure the appropriate code is entered on the register. All codes are utilised in line with Dfe School Attendance Guidance (November 2016) and reviewed regularly by Bexley Education Welfare Service, including annual Register Swoops and Checks.

- Tutors, Managers and members of the Senior Leadership will adopt a daily preventative approach to absence and lateness by utilising early morning telephone or home visit contacts in order to improve both areas.
- Registers are taken during Registration/Tutor Time at all schools except Westbrooke Primary where registration occurs as the students arrive through the main door.
- At Westbrooke students are marked (L) on the register until 9.30am and (U) thereafter.
- Registers are collected the Attendance Administration Staff (except Westbrooke).
- At Oakwood if a student arrives after Tutor Time (9.15am) and before 9.45am they will be marked as Late (L) on the register. If a student arrives after 9.45am they will be marked as an (U) on the register. This means the student is in school and present, however you have arrived too late and your mark will not be counted against your overall attendance percentage.
- At Pathways Short Stay School – TWELVE, Long Term KS4 (including Welling Centre) and Medical and Psychology Service:
 - All students must be in their class for registration at 8.55am until 9am to receive a present mark. Students who arrive from 9am-9.15am will receive a late mark (L), students who arrive after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) which equates to an absent mark and will detrimentally affect a student's overall attendance.
 - Pathways Short Stay School KS1 & 2 Students - will receive a Late Mark 9am-9.30am and an Unauthorised Late Mark (U) if arrive after 9.30am.
- Students with acceptable reasons for absence will be marked accordingly which is determined at the discretion of relevant staff within the Federation.
- New Horizons Federation may determine no further absence will be authorised unless medical proof is provided and will send a letter notifying parents/carers of this decision.
- All Federation schools are permitted by the Bexley Local Authority to use the B Code to support a student's attendance of any appointment which endeavours to improve behaviour, engagement and attendance of school but the reasons why must be clearly defined in the SIMS attendance comment section.
- All Attendance is recorded on SIMS.
- It is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator to ensure attendance data is recorded accurately on SIMS with relating comments.
- Parents will be contacted by telephone to confirm a student's absence.
- If we are unable to make contact and we are not aware of a reason for absence, a Pastoral Support Co-ordinator will endeavour to make a Home Visit to again verify the absence and ensure student wellbeing.
- If a student's whereabouts is unknown NHF may report a student missing if a parent/carer is unable or chooses not to. This decision is always made in the interest of the child's welfare and may take place without parent/carer consent.
- If contact cannot be made our Safeguarding Liaison Officer will conduct a Welfare Call to the home address, in liaison with the Inclusion Manager and relevant Head of School.
- Prolonged failure to make contact or a concern for student welfare may result in a consultation/referral to social care or Police in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
- All Federation students who are absent will be reviewed at the weekly NHF Attendance Meeting in partnership with Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, Safeguarding Liaison Officer, Inclusion Manager, allocated Education Welfare Officers and NHF Governor. Additional agencies may also attend through invite only.

- All New Horizons Schools work in partnership with Bexley Education Welfare Service and will facilitate when they deem appropriate regular Attendance Surgeries, Penalty Notices and formal referrals in order to address poor attendance or punctuality.
- Allocated Federation staff have a responsibility to liaise and update of relevant agents and parents/carers of student absence and have a duty to challenge actions that we do not feel meets a child's needs.
- Students who are dual rolled and fail to attend a respite programme (TWELVE, Pathways Primary or Psychology & Medical Service) on a regular basis can have their placements terminated at the discretion of New Horizons Federation and in consultation with home school. The student will immediately return to their home school as single rolled. Students who fail to return to their home schools are the responsibility of the home school but referrals to statutory agencies including Local Authority Children Missing Education Teams can be undertaken in partnership, as the safety of the child remains paramount.

3.2 INTERVENTION AND CONSEQUENCES

Early identification of issues is a faster and more effective way to see improvements in student attendance. As a Federation we work with a solution based approach to implementing strategies as early as possible to tackle poor attendance and/or lateness and we have specific designated skilled members of staff to deliver the strategies. These are;

1. Pastoral Support Co-ordinators – whilst attending a New Horizon Federation School and may consist for example of 1-2-1 sessions, small group work, home support or working in partnership with statutory agencies.
2. Outreach Support – for students reintegrating back to mainstream school working in partnership with home school staff.
3. Behaviour Mentors – offering targeted support to address behaviour that may impact on attendance or classroom engagement.
4. Progress Coaches – focusing a student on achieving their potential.
5. Transition Learning Mentors – exploring post 16 options, encouraging focus and ambition and highlighting the value of education and grades.
6. Form Tutors/Teachers – daily support to encourage and inspire regular attendance and a positive approach to education.

Weekly NHF Attendance Team Meetings will also take place to determine appropriate action to rectify any attendance deterioration by discussing, identifying and implementing interventions promptly in partnership with parents/carers and students and external agencies when agreed appropriate. Underlying causes discussed may include unidentified education needs, undiagnosed medical needs, peer group issues, family difficulties, social problems, disaffection and lateness.

Attendance Surgeries also take place on a regular basis in School for those students with less than 90% attendance, those who patterns of attendance have suddenly changed and those who are receiving unauthorised lates and despite our daily steps no improvement has been seen. This process is deemed as an additional form of early intervention and a further means to identify and support improved attendance. Attendance Contracts are implemented at the initial Surgery and reviewed if attendance or punctuality is not improved. Attendance Contracts can be used as evidence should a student's absence escalate to a formal court process or a basis to apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice. Attendance Surgeries are also a pre-requisite to statutory referrals Local Authority Statutory Education Welfare Service unless absence is a potential

safeguarding issue and parents/carers fail to attend their given date/time. Attendance Surgeries take place on an allotted time and date, with the allocated Education Welfare Officer and Inclusion Manager (Safeguarding Liaison Officer in her absence) present to provide additional information, outline expectations, initiate support plans and also guidance to students, parents/carers and School staff. Parents will be given at least 5 day's notice of the meeting time/date and all efforts will be made to ensure attendance however an Attendance Surgery can go ahead in the parents/carers absence when efforts have been exhausted to encourage parental/carer attendance. All formal processes are equally applied to students who hold either an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or have Looked After Child status, however this will take place in partnership with relevant statutory agencies including but not limited to LA SEN Departments and Virtual School.

New Horizons Federation Schools may also implement Pastoral Support Plan (Reduced Timetable) as a further short term intervention to support improved attendance and behaviour or reduce risk posed to or from a student. Pastoral Support Plans (PSP's) are initiated by the School, in agreement with the parent/carers and statutory agencies when appropriate, and is where a student has a timetable amended or reduced in order to meet a student's current change in educational, social, behavioural needs or increase in risk. PSP's are an internal interim intervention with the overall aim of a student successfully returning to a fulltime time table and are reviewed on a fortnightly basis with partnership with parents/carers, external agencies if relevant and the student. PSP's will only be implemented for Looked After Students in liaison with all relevant statutory agencies and with Virtual School support and recorded in nearest scheduled Personal Education Plan. LA SEN Department will also be informed of all students subject to an interim reduced timetable. Emergency Annual Reviews may also be initiated should this be required in order to access additional support.

New Horizons Federation Schools may also further consider the implementation of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) where a student is required to participate in a personalised timetable of Edlounge and on site learning totalling 25 hours per week. This may be implemented again to reduce risk, to reengage or to allow interventions to take place. The plan will be reviewed every two weeks in partnership with parents/carers, students and any statutory agencies involved. Alternative provision can only be implemented as part of a PLP if the education on offer is by a DfE registered provision and is graded either the same or higher than the Federation school by Ofsted. This is to ensure all our students are afforded the same opportunities as their peers. This can also only be implemented with the agreement of the Head of School, in partnership with external statutory agencies when relevant.

There are however occasions when intervention, reduced or amended timetable and support unfortunately does not have the desired outcome and alternative formal and/or legal processes will be instigated via the Local Authority in order to address poor attendance or unauthorised lateness.

In accordance with the Dfe guidance the London Borough of Bexley has a statutory requirement to:

- Ensure that parents/carers fulfil their obligations
- Provide services to support parent in achieving optimum attendance
- Take appropriate action where parents fail in that duty; (Sect. 444 Education Act 1996) See Code of Practice

New Horizons Federation works in close partnership with an allocated Education Welfare Officer as designated by Bexley's Education Welfare Service including allocated LAC Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer will meet weekly, fortnightly, monthly or half termly depending on the level of need within individual New Horizons Federation Schools. Bexley Education Welfare Officers work in close partnership with all New Horizons Federation Schools, parents, carers and other relevant external agencies to support, improve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality. Successful outcomes depend upon effective collaboration and the commitment of all concerned including students, parents and carers.

In relation to attendance, under the Education Act 1996 Local Authority actions may include;

- The issuing of fixed penalty notices in accordance with their code of practice (applied to both unauthorised absence and unauthorised holiday)
- Attendance Surgeries
- Pre Court Meetings
- Parenting Order
- Referrals to statutory external agencies
- Court action where necessary (Section 444 (1) and (1a) 1996 Education Act)
- Overseeing of Education Supervision Orders (Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989)
- Contact with families to advise on exclusion procedures and management of data on exclusions
- Child employment and performance licences
- Links and liaison with the Elective Home Education Service advisers
- Advice on child protection issues

For further information and guidance on Bexley Education Welfare Service please visit;

<http://www.bexley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5693>

Bexley Education Welfare Service

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: educationwelfare@bexley.gov.uk

3.3 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

New Horizons Federation schools have a safeguarding duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate unexplained student absence. We robustly monitor absence through daily registers, home communication and daily home visits. NHF has a duty to liaise with relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Services and Local Authority CME Teams if a student is regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. This process may be initiated when we deem it is in the best interest of the child to do so or there a concern for student wellbeing or safety including but not limited to radicalisation, exploitation and gang association. Any immediate concerns for a student's safety will be reported to police and/or social care in line with the NHF Safeguarding Policy, Prevent statutory reporting and standard Keeping Children Safe in Education responsibilities.

NHF notify Local Authority CME Team and all relevant agencies of all children who leave the area but will undertake our own validation and tracking if forwarding address, new county or name of proposed new school is provided. Where a student is dual rolled, NHF allocated staff will liaise with the home school to ensure appropriate notification and tracking procedures are followed to prevent any child becoming missing from education and protect them from potential harm. NHF Schools will also validate any move to a new school via to a casual admission within 7 days and

additionally report to the appropriate CME Team, if there is no evidence this transfer has not taken place. NHF record and track all students who meet the criteria of CME when a student is removed from roll and will make all necessary referrals in when deemed in the best interest of the child, which is also verified through the NHF Safeguarding Internal Audits.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers refuse to attend 6th day provision at Pathways Short Stay School are expected to put this in writing. This will then be forwarded to the home school who will be advised to make a referral to their own Education Welfare Service and also as a Child Missing Education. We would request confirmation of these actions and record this information on our internal CME tracking. If the decision to PEX has been upheld the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies will become that of the Federation and we will implement our daily attendance and safeguarding procedures to encourage engagement and attendance.

Bexley Child Missing Education Co-ordinator – Susan Garner

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: Susan.Garner@bexley.gov.uk

3.4 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is an option to parents may choose for their student as an alternative to school.

There is no requirement for any formal qualifications, or to be a teacher to educate your child at home and parents can choose to engage Private Tutors or other suitable adults to assist then although it is no a requirement to do so. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

‘The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- a) To age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) To any special needs they may have,

Either by regular attendance at School or otherwise.’

NHF Schools respects parents' rights to opt for EHE. However, if the decision has been made as a result of a dispute with one of our Federation schools, we will actively encourage and support contact the school's Education Welfare Officer or Local Authority Elective Home Education Officer for impartial advice on resolving the issues in order that your child can remain at, or return to school.

Special attention will be paid by NHF to EHE applications for students/families that hold formal safeguarding status. Although any status does not remove a right to educate at home, any EHE applications will not be actioned until all relevant agencies are notified and a plan of support in place to ensure the students best interest and welfare remains paramount.

EHE applications for students who hold an Education Health Care Plan will not be actioned until an Emergency Annual Review takes place and a statutory plan agreed in liaison with relevant Local Authority Special Education Needs Departments and all other relevant agencies.

EHE application for students who have Looked After Child status will not be actioned until an Emergency Review Meeting has taken place with social care, Virtual School and parent/carer holding parental responsibility and an agreed decision is made in the best interest of the child.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers decide to EHE prior to attending 6th day provision at Pathways Short Stay School will be requested to put this in writing addressed to their home school. We will then forward this to the home school that will be advised to make a referral to the LA EHE Officer. We would request confirmation of these actions and record this information on our internal CME tracking. If the decision to PEX has been upheld the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies will become that of the Federation and we will implement our daily attendance and safeguarding procedures to encourage engagement and attendance.

Before a parent makes the final decision to remove their child from the school roll, it is strongly advisable they contact the Local Authority's EHE Liaison Officer for an informal, impartial discussion regarding further information, including the procedure to be followed and guidance on the law.

Bexley Elective Home Education Liaison Officer – Julie Merryweather

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: julie.merryweather@bexley.gov.uk

3.5 OFF ROLLING

Although removal of compulsory-school-aged children from roll is permitted under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, NHF acknowledges the magnitude of this initiating this process and the importance of this decision as we would not aim to compromise a student's wellbeing or breach legal duties. Students will not be deleted from a school roll without authorisation from the Inclusion Manager.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 8 sets out the criteria under which compulsory-school-aged children can be removed from school roll. NHF summarises and will apply the following criteria to remove students from roll and make all relevant notifications and referrals:

- 8 (1) (d) The parent(s) have elected to home-educate (EHE) Parents have a right to withdraw their child from a school in favour of home education. The child must not be removed from the school roll until the parent has given written notification of their decision to educate the child at home.
- 8 (1) (e) The student has ceased to attend and is no longer residing within reasonable distance to the school. Students can be deleted from roll where the distance to school is deemed unreasonable and the parent has no intention of maintaining the school place. Distance also comprises ease of access. A public transport journey time in excess of 75 minutes for secondary school pupil would be unreasonable. A walking distance exceeding two miles would be unreasonable for a primary school pupil. Schools may remove a child from roll under this criterion without waiting for confirmation of a school transfer. However, the school must obtain details of the child's new address. Where a parent has notified the school that the child is leaving the country and the school has reason for concern, such as a history of poor attendance or safeguarding issues, the parent should be asked to provide proof of travel and make all relevant referrals including mandatory reporting under PREVENT if considered relevant.
- 8 (1) (f) The student has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday. A student who has failed to return following extended authorised leave of absence can be removed from roll providing all three of the following three conditions are fulfilled:

- o i. The student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.
- o ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- o iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- 8 (1) (h) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 days or more continuously Schools may remove missing children from roll providing all three of the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - o i. At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school
 - o ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause
 - o iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- 8 (1) (h) The student has been given a custodial sentence for four months or longer as a result of a final order. A child who is taken into custody for four months or more as a result of a final order can be taken off roll, unless the school has reason to believe that he/she will return to the school at the end of the period. Schools must not deregister a pupil who is remanded in custody and awaiting a trial or hearing at a future date.

3.6 TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

In September 2013 The Dfe amended the regulations governing requests for student holidays during terms time. These regulations make it clear the Executive Headteacher may not grant holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

However due to the recent outcome of a relevant court case where the refusal to authorise a term time holiday was challenged and that challenge upheld, Bexley Local Authority has acknowledged consideration can be given by the Executive Headteacher where there are exceptional circumstances and the student has above 90% attendance on the date the application for leave is made. In order for leave to be considered under exceptional circumstances all requests must be made in writing in at least 7 days advance of the first day of proposed leave to Jo Southby, the New Horizons Federation Executive Headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher will consider the request on an individual basis and you will be notified of her decision in writing.

If a child is attending a NHF respite provision at the time the holiday is taken and is dual registered with their home school, the respite programme will be suspended for the duration of the holiday and re-started upon the students return. During this time students will revert back to home school role and responsibility. If the home school has not authorised the holiday leave then it will be the responsibility of the home school to implement their absence process in relation to their Attendance Policy. This ensures that students attending a NHF respite provisions receives access to the full intervention programme.

Parents/Carers, who decide to take students out of school during term time without the Executive Headteachers permission and have below 90% attendance on the day the application for leave was made, may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice via an application to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service in accordance with their Code of Practice. This is currently £60 per parent, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.



For information please go to:
www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance

DOCUMENT REVISION

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