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| **Approved by:** | **Mrs Pat Kerton Chair of Governors** | **Date: September 2023** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | September 2023 | |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2024 | |

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**



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# Aims

This document is the Attendance Policy for High Close School. It applies to the 2023-24 academic year.

This policy will be updated at the start of each academic year. As part of this update, young people and parents/carers will be able to give feedback on this policy and suggest improvements, via an online survey.

This policy is published on the school website: <https://highclose.org.uk/policies>

This policy aims to address paragraph 17 in the DfE guidance document - ["Working Together to Improve School Attendance"](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance).

For ease of reference, here is the summary from paragraph 17 of the guidance:

“An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, all schools are expected to have a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this guidance.”

# Point of Contact

In the first instance, please contact your key worker / link worker to discuss attendance.

The Acting Principal, Mrs. Gosling, is the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

Mrs. Gosling can be contacted either via email ([wgosling@highclose.org.uk](mailto:wgosling@highclose.org.uk)) or by calling the school.

# Expectations of Young People

Our young people need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational (and other) opportunities available to them.

# What is Good Attendance

An attendance rate of 95% is generally considered good; this allows for young people to miss 9.5 days across the school year. However, to take into account of additional medical and other needs we will consider good attendance to be at least 93% attendance for the academic year.

Good attendance is being absent for fewer than 13.5 days during the academic year.

# What is Poor Attendance

Poor attendance is 90% attendance or below for the academic year.

Poor attendance is being absent for at least 19 days during the academic year.

# Expectations of Parents/Carers

A letter about attendance clearly setting out the expectations of young people and parents/carers will be sent out at the start of each academic year.

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s good attendance. Poor attendance can result in sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices.

Parents/carers should telephone the school office, as soon as possible, to notify the school of their child’s unexpected absence.

Parents/carers should write to the Acting Principal (Mrs Gosling) to request a leave of absence. If permission is granted then this will be an authorised absence. Otherwise, it will be unauthorised.

# Improving Attendance

High Close will work with parents/carers and also with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all young people are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

High Close staff will remain vigilant that absence from school can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues and that absence from education can increase safeguarding risks within the family and the community. Follow up on absence will be timely and persistent including alerting and updating the relevant professional bodies. Follow up may also include following safeguarding procedures – staff should refer to High Close Missing Persons Policy and High Close Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further guidance.

# Ending Place on Roll

In the case of a non-standard transition, High Close will notify the Local Authority of the removal from roll.

In the case of a standard transition, High Close will not notify the Local Authority as it is known the placement is ending. However, the school will respond to reasonable requests from the Local Authorities to notify placement end.

# Celebrating Attendance

Tutors will celebrate attendance with their own tutor groups and offer praise and support to their tutees.

Certificates will be used to celebrate improvements in attendance and given to the young people during the Friday celebration assembly.

# Attendance Register

High Close is required by law to keep an attendance register for all of our young people.

High Close has a responsibility to record attendance in the register and follow up on all absences.

Every half-day absence has to be categorised by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

The Local Authority may ask for attendance information to be shared with them about specific students as part of the information sharing in the National Contract.

The Department of Education will ask for whole school attendance information to be shared with them as part of the school census

# Types of Absence

Authorised absences are for valid reasons such as illness, medical appointments and other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which High Close does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been granted. Both authorized and unauthorized absences are included in the absence percentage.

If requested, a family holiday could be authorized in advance of the holiday, however, it would still be counted as an absence from school and may trigger the absence protocol listed in this policy

If a young person is suspended from school for a fixed time, this does count as an absence and could be a trigger for absence protocol. However, the school would take this into account when putting together an action plan to improve attendance.

# High Close School Day

* Monday 8.50 am – 3.20 pm
  + Morning register closes at the end of tutor time (9.10am)
  + Afternoon register closes at the end of lesson 5 (2.30pm)
* Tuesday 8.50am – 3.20pm
  + Morning register closes at the end of lesson 1 (10am)
  + Afternoon register closes at the end of lesson 5 (2.30pm)
* Wednesday 8.50 am – 3.20 pm
  + Morning register closes at the end of tutor time (9.10am)
  + Afternoon register closes at the end of lesson 5 (2.30pm)
* Thursday 8.50 am – 3.20 pm
  + Morning register closes at the end of tutor time (9.10am)
  + Afternoon register closes at the end of lesson 5 (2.30pm)
* Friday 8.50 am – 1.40 pm
  + Morning register closes at the end of lesson 1 (10am)
  + Afternoon register closes at end of lunch (1:40pm)

# Traffic Lights

High Close uses a simplified system of “traffic lights” to help us to monitor and improve attendance.

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|  | **RED**  **Below 90%**  19 days off or more over the entire year | * Attendance is significantly below expected levels and must improve * A detailed analysis of the absence to look at causes, known reasons and patterns * A letter home to highlight concern including full attendance history * A meeting with parents/carers to create an attendance action plan * Three week close monitoring * In some cases school will inform EWS to help support attendance * Improvements and good spells in attendance are celebrated |
|  | **AMBER**  **90% - 93%**  14 – 18 days off over the entire year | * Attendance is slightly below expected level and must improve * A detailed analysis of the absence to look at causes, known reasons and patterns * A letter home to highlight concern * Three week close monitoring * Improvements and good spells in attendance are celebrated |
|  | **GREEN**  **93% or above**  13 days or less over the entire year | * Attendance is at expected levels * Verbal recognition of attendance by tutors * Attendance Raffles in Celebration assembly * Reasons for absence logged on MIS in usual way |

Progress through the traffic lights will be used to guide updates to the Attendance action plan.

# Attendance Action Plan

The Deputy Principal is responsible for creating and monitoring the attendance action plan for any individual young person. It will detail the responsibilities and actions of the young person, the parents/carers and the school in improving attendance. Reasonable targets for improvement will be set and monitored using the plan. Social Care, SEN, Education Welfare may be alerted as part of the plan to help support attendance.

The following activities allow the school to appropriately target efforts to improve attendance:

* The Deputy Principal will monitor weekly attendance registers
* The Deputy Principal will update the attendance action plan termly, using the “traffic lights” as a guide
* The Education Leadership Group (ELG) will review the attendance action plans termly (6 times per year)

# Monitoring Attendance

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum each academic year. The policy will be shown to governors at each update.

# Appendix A – Sample Letters

AMBER LETTER

Our ref: WG/xx

<date>

Dear <parent/carer>,

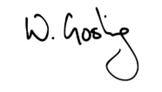
I would like to bring to your attention that <young person>’s attendance is currently XXX%. Our threshold for good attendance is 93% and we must work together to bring <young person>’s above the expected 93%.

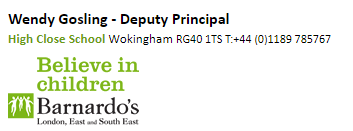
Whilst I understand that students may be ill from time to time, poor attendance does have a negative impact on their education.

I will be monitoring <young person>’s attendance over the next two weeks and I hope to see an improvement.

If you would like to meet to discuss ways in which we can support better attendance please speak to your link worker.

Yours sincerely,





[wgosling@highclose.org.uk](mailto:wgosling@highclose.org.uk)

RED LETTER

Our ref: WG/xx

<date>

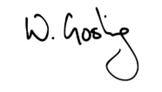
Dear <parent/carer>,

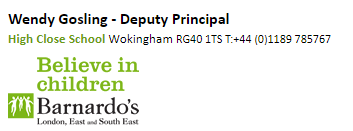
I would like to bring to your attention that <young person>’s attendance is currently XXX%, which is a drop since the last time I contacted you. We classify attendance below 90% as poor attendance.

I have included a summary of <young person>’s attendance over the year. I would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this further and put in place an action plan to help improve attendance, your key/link worker will be in contact to arrange a suitable time.

If the low absence rate continues I will need to report their attendance to the Local Authority Welfare Office which may result in a fixed penalty notice.

Yours sincerely,





[wgosling@highclose.org.uk](mailto:wgosling@highclose.org.uk)

IMPROVEMENT LETTER

Our ref: WG/xx

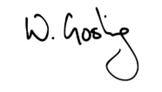
<date>

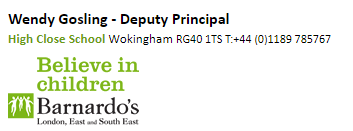
Dear Parent/Carer

I wrote to you earlier in the term regarding <young person>’s attendance, which at that point was % for the year.

I am pleased to report that <young person> has had % attendance for the subsequent two week period. Thank you for supporting <young person> and the school to help make this happen. I will continue to monitor attendance and I hope that this improvement continues for the rest of the year.

Yours sincerely





[wgosling@highclose.org.uk](mailto:wgosling@highclose.org.uk)