

Attendance Policy

This policy has been formulated using: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations Act, 2016; School Attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, independent schools and local authorities, DfE November 2016; NAHT Guidance on authorised absence in schools (October 2014)

Attendance at school, every day, also provides the opportunity for social and emotional growth; to be a part of a community and engage in all the learning conversations that help students develop social skills and all the dispositions of the IB Learner Profile – such as being a risk-taker, or being open-minded. A strong attendance record allows each student the opportunity to reach their unique potential at Halcyon.

For educational reasons, it is Halcyon's expectation that students will attend school every day, unless they are ill. The legal requirement is that the school cannot authorise any absence from school during normal term time, *unless* there are exceptional circumstances (see below).

Attendance, our community and UK law

Halcyon is bound by UK law and follows UK public holidays. While our highly mobile international community will be familiar with a range of different national holidays, *none of these is an exceptional circumstance* and students are expected to be in school on those days. In addition, the school cannot authorise absences from school for extended vacations; while our international families may wish to take their children out of school to coincide with other, national, vacations *these are not exceptional circumstances*. All students are expected to remain in school until a holiday begins and to be present on the day and time the school re-opens.

Any intended absence not related to illness will require prior written explanation and authorisation from the Director.

If permission for a requested absence is *not* given by the Director and the student does not attend school, *the family is in breach of the law* which states that parents are obliged to ensure that students of school age are attending full-time education. The Government's school inspectorate require Halcyon to make available attendance figures, including unauthorised absences.

Please note that medical, dental and other appointments should be made outside school hours or during holidays (unless there is an urgent care need).

Punctuality

All families should ensure their children arrive on time at school. Students should arrive after 0845 to begin their first class at 0900 promptly. Punctuality is vital in ensuring the smooth running of the school and late arrivals impact negatively on student learning.

Students not in class by 0900 are recorded as "late". In cases of students arriving persistently late, a warning email will be sent to parents. If the issue persists an action plan will be created to ensure the student arrives on time.

Authorised absence

To seek authorisation for a planned absence, a written request must be made to the Director as soon as possible and *at the very latest two full weeks before the first day of the requested absence*, explaining the circumstances. The Director will decide whether or not the absence can be authorised. A meeting with parents may be requested by the Director for further clarification before the authorisation is granted. *If* leave is granted, the Director will determine the number of days the student may be away from school.

Minimum attendance requirements

Each student is required to have a minimum 90% AM/PM attendance. A high level of absence will result in the following actions:

- A letter of concern sent to the student's parents
- A meeting to discuss the reasons for the persistent absences with the parent/s and to explain the short and long-term effects of absence
- Creation of an action plan to ensure an increased level of attendance

If necessary

- a student may not be promoted to the next Grade level, based on an assessment of the impact of their absences on their learning across the curriculum, and their preparedness for the following year's curriculum
- a report may be made to social services, particularly in cases where patterns of absences have been identified.

Illness

If a student is unwell and not able to come to school, their parent should contact the School via the Halcyon App, **or** call Reception by phone 020 7258 1169 **or** email reception@halcyonschool.com before 0830 each day to confirm the child's absence and provide the reason.

For our statutory obligations with record keeping, parents should forward us a doctor's certificate relating to any absence of their child if the illness exceeds more than five school days. The doctor will be able to provide a note that includes an expected date of return to school.

Long-term illness

Parents must notify the school in the case of long-term illness. The school will do its best to ensure a child is given work to do at home/in hospital that includes, as far as reasonable, the learning that is being missed by being unable to attend school.

Records of Attendance

The school is legally required to record student attendance twice daily and report these figures to the Department for Education. Absence records will be stored on a student's file and taken into consideration if and when further requests for absences are made. Each student's attendance and punctuality records are reviewed weekly by the Wellbeing Team, and parents will be notified should there be any unusual or concerning patterns of

absenteeism or lateness.

Parents should note that it is common practice for schools to review attendance records when considering applications.

Definitions of “exceptional circumstances”

An “exceptional circumstance” is when a request is rare, significant, unavoidable and short. “Unavoidable” in this context means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of school time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.

Exceptional circumstances where authorisation for absence is likely to be granted	Circumstances where authorisation for absence is unlikely to be granted
Absence for a bereavement of a close family member (for the funeral service, not extended leave)	Absence during term time for holidays/vacations
Absence to visit seriously ill relatives (where this cannot be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours)	Absences to visit family members (not normally granted during Term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours)
Absences for important religious observances (for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave). This relates to individual one-off situations not regular or recurring events.	Absence to stay home to complete coursework due.

The examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

*Approved by Board of Trustees 21 April 2015. Revised 5 October 2015.
Revised 20 January 2016. Approved by Board of Trustees 17 February 2016. Amended September 2016.
Amended April 2017. Reviewed August 2018. Approved by Board of Trustees September 20 2018.*

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in statutory requirements and legislation.