



## INTRODUCTION

This policy references the best practice outlined in the Scottish Government Guidance of 2019, [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: A Positive Approach to the Promotion and Management of Attendance in Scottish Schools \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/schools/attendance)

Every young person has the right to be fully engaged in their learning experience and to be treated with respect. Fostering a positive school ethos and culture is essential for building strong relationships and promoting positive behaviour both in the classroom and throughout the school community.

We recognize that lower levels of attendance can negatively affect a student's participation, academic achievement, and future opportunities. Therefore, it is crucial that we take every step to promote and ensure good attendance for all students at Hutchesons' Grammar School. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to promote and support good attendance. The foundation for this is built on fostering positive relationships and cultivating an inclusive ethos and culture that encourages and supports good attendance. Attendance should not be considered in isolation.

## DAILY ATTENDANCE

1. Recording of attendance takes place via the school's Management Information System (MIS) in every taught lesson to enable the school to note attendance and absence. Pupils in the secondary school should be in school by 8.40am for pupils in S1-S5 and by 9.15am for S6 pupils. Any pupil leaving during the school day **MUST** sign out at reception and they will not be permitted to leave without a parent notifying us with their consent. Any pupil who is unwell must report to Matron who will contact home if needed and notify office staff if the pupil is sent home. This will be entered into the MIS. This applies to all pupils from S1-S6.
2. Parents/carers of all pupils are asked to let the **school office (secondary@hutchesons.org)** know by **9.00am** if their child will not be attending school on **every day** of absence. If a pupil leaves school for an appointment and the decision is made to not return them to school following the appointment, parents/carers should inform the school office. All data will be entered into the school MIS.
3. If there is no note of absence reason, a pupil is then classed as unexpectedly absent. A text message will be sent to parents/carers informing them that their child is not in school. This will be done by 9.15am for pupils in S1-3 and by 9.30am for pupils in S4-6. Parents/carers should then contact the school to inform us of the reason for absence, either by email ([secondary@hutchesons.org](mailto:secondary@hutchesons.org)) or by telephone (0141 423 2933).
4. If a pupil is unexpectedly missing from class, teachers will email the relevant absence email to alert. Office staff are responsible for checking with Matron, SOCS, bulletin etc for any event attendance such as music lesson, and also the sign-out book at reception. If the pupil cannot be located, office staff will then alert House staff to search – firstly, the relevant House staff, then any House staff if House-specific staff are unavailable, then any member of SLT if no House staff are free. This step may involve internal cover as the priority should be locating a missing pupil. Parents/carers will be informed by telephone by either House staff or SLT if a pupil is unexpectedly missing from class and cannot be located. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contact information should be used. If the pupil cannot be located by either school or family, Police Scotland may be contacted.





5. Staff who have pupils with them when those pupils should be in a class must email the absence email immediately. If an absence alert is sent, then the pupil turns up, staff must notify the absence email immediately.
6. S6 pupils may leave during lunchtime once the Senior Depute Rector has issued permission to all pupils in the first term, but they MUST sign out and back in at the main reception office. S6 pupils may leave school at 2.40pm if they do not have a class period 6 and they must also sign out at reception.

## PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE

Children and young people may be absent for a variety of complex reasons. Pastoral staff will conduct a thorough assessment and align this with any existing staged intervention procedures. It is important to consider underlying causes of absence, such as family circumstances, school-related factors, or potential mental health issues. For instance, some students may show signs of anxiety about attending school due to concerns about their family or other external factors. Identifying these possible reasons for absence allows the school to implement appropriate support measures.

The school records patterns of attendance. House Staff regularly monitor attendance and when it drops below 80%, parents/carers will be contacted. The pupil will be informed that this is going to happen.

If there are ongoing health concerns the parents/carers must provide information from a GP or healthcare provider.

If there are no health issues, parents/carers/pupils must be made aware that continued non-attendance at school without explanation from a GP/healthcare provider may be treated as a wellbeing concern. This may include referral to other agencies.

If a pupil is absent for five continuous days (even if explained) the form Teacher will alert House Staff who will call the parents/carer. At this stage Depute Rector (Pastoral) should be informed.

If a pupil is absent for ten continuous days House Staff will call home and inform the parents/carer that we require a note from the GP/healthcare provider. This should be copied and given to the Depute Rector (Pastoral). If the parents/carers refuse to seek a note from the GP, the pupil will be referred to the Rector and consideration given to the submission of a wellbeing concern to Children and Families to make them aware that this young person is absent from education without explanation.

The importance of promoting good attendance is underscored by concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children who are not in school. Child protection is a top priority, and absence from school may be a warning sign that a child is at risk.

Patterns of non-attendance could be picked up by a teacher and submitted as a wellbeing/academic concern. This should be followed up by House Staff by speaking to the parents/carer and the pupil. If there are well-being issues for that pupil and they require an action plan, House Staff will complete an assessment of need.



## OUR RESPONSE

### **Medical Reason**

If there is a medical reason for non-attendance, then the school should (if appropriate) organise work for the pupil to complete in school or hospital. This should only happen if the pupil is fit enough to complete the work and, in some cases, will involve liaison with Outreach teaching. Examples whereby this would be appropriate: chronic illnesses or surgery that requires long term care at home. Any work set will include clear instructions and deadlines. The work can be submitted and distributed via House Staff.

After a long-term absence House Staff, the Depute Rector (Pastoral), the pupils and parents/carers will meet to organise a return to school plan. The Depute Rector (Pastoral) will consult with any health professionals involved.

### **Pastoral Care**

All staff in school have a role to play in promoting good attendance and helping to reduce absence from school. Staff with a pastoral care responsibility should:

- identify early warning signs or concerns that could lead to absence, allowing for timely intervention and the development of appropriate support plans and adjustments
- prevent absence from becoming a repeated pattern or habit after a specific issue arises
- establish positive, trusting relationships with students and parents/carers to pre-empt potential challenges and address them effectively when they occur.
- act quickly in response to absences to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students
- follow up on absences to help the school and its partners respond appropriately
- assist students in transitioning back into their learning environment after an absence

Once below the 80% threshold a pupil will be regularly monitored and their attendance reviewed. If they are absent House Staff and the Depute Rector (Pastoral) (with advice from any agencies involved with the young person) will meet to formulate a care plan either single or multi-agency.

If there are pastoral reasons the House Staff team will conduct a home visit to identify the barriers to returning and create a return to school plan. This could be facilitated by exploring with the young person all the thoughts and worries currently being experienced in relation to school. They are then asked to rank these in terms of significance and a series of solutions/options are generated for each.

If appropriate the pupil will then be referred to external agencies and a multi-agency children's planning meeting held.

## EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Where a child goes missing from education, the school will make such enquiries to try and locate the child including, where relevant, the education service within their local authority and the authority where the child is resident, if different. If these are not successful, the school should make a referral to Children Missing from Education (CME) through their local authority.

In cases where there are concerns about levels of attendance below 70% and parental support is not forthcoming, the Rector will make a decision about referring the case to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. Further information can be found at <https://scra.gov.uk>



If absences persist the school may (if the pupil is under 16) submit a well-being/child protection concern to Children and Families to make them aware that this young person is vulnerable and not accessing education.

These referrals would be made in the event that the young person and/or family refuse to engage with the school and other agencies in terms of accessing support.

In some circumstances, if appropriate and the young person is absent without explanation from a GP or other health professional it will be treated as truancy and dealt with by the Rector.

## HOME EDUCATION

Section 35 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that parents whose children have attended a local authority school must seek the education authority's consent before withdrawing their child. Section 35 also provides that the education authority must not unreasonably withhold consent.

Parents are not required to seek the consent of the education authority in order to home educate their child if:

- their child has never attended a public school,
- their child has never attended a public school in that authority's area,
- their child is being withdrawn from an independent school,
- their child has finished primary education in one school but has not started secondary education, or
- the school their child has been attending has closed

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