



# HEARTWOOD HOUSE

## Policy document control box

Policy title	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
Policy owner (including job title)	Cathy Taylor (Executive Headteacher)
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1.03	20/9/2022	Executive Headteacher	Minor updates	Policy review to reflect the appropriate roles for Executive Headteacher/Centre Headteacher
1.04	20/3/2024	Executive Headteacher	Review and rebrand	

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## **Purpose**

Guidance issued by the DfE (August 2013) includes the following assertion:

*“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”*

All Heartwood House staff will work to:

- promote good attendance of all students;
- ensure every student has access to full-time education;
- support parents to enable students to attend well;
- enable students to arrive punctually at lessons.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Heartwood House students.

## **Policy statement, provision and safeguards**

### Responsibility for Implementation

The Executive Headteacher must ensure that Heartwood House has clear practice guidelines for encouraging attendance, including a response to non-attendance. A designated administrator is responsible for ensuring that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with this policy.

## **Admission and Attendance Registers**

The law requires all schools, including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined. Heartwood House will maintain up-to-date, accurate admission and attendance registers.

### The Admission Register

The admission register must contain the personal details of every student in the centre, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the centre.

The information to be entered (and updated as necessary) in the admission register includes:

- full name of student;
- sex;
- date of birth;
- date of admission / readmission;
- name and address of all parents / guardians and one telephone number (with an indication as to which of those the student normally lives with and who has parental responsibility);
- address of new or additional place(s) of residence of child and date child began to reside there;
- full name of parent the student lives with;
- name and address of last school attended;
- emergency contact details of parents and carers;
- name of destination school;
- start date at new school;
- any necessary information concerning communication with parents (such as hearing impairment, requirement for information in Braille, language preference).

A student will only be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended Sept 2016).

#### Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admission register and attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made;
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Where a parent notifies Heartwood House that a student will live at another address, Heartwood House will, in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance (Children Missing Education Sept 2016), record in the admission register: the full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live, the new address, and the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.

#### Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and section 458(4) and (5) of the Education Act (1996) every entry in

the admission register and attendance register will be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### Children at risk of missing education

Heartwood House will always inform both the commissioning agent and the local authority (in many cases these will be one and the same) when a student ceases to attend. In the extremely unlikely event that Heartwood House excludes a student permanently or for a 'fixed term', the Executive Headteacher will ensure that both the commissioning agent and the local authority are informed and that requisite local practice is followed.

As required by statutory guidance (Children Missing Education Sept 2016), when Heartwood House notifies a local authority that a student's name is to be removed from the admission register, Heartwood House will provide the local authority with: the full name of the student; the full name and address of any parent with whom the student lives; at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the student lives; the full name and address of the parent who the student is going to live with, and the date the student is expected to start living there, and, if applicable, the name of the student's destination school and the student's expected start date there. Heartwood House will also provide the ground in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register (updated Children Missing Education 2016).

- student has ceased to attend and is to be home educated;
- student has moved out of the area;
- student has been certified as medically unable to continue attending;
- student is detained under a court order;
- student has been permanently excluded;
- student stops attending school named in school attendance order;
- student stops attending one school while registered at two schools;
- student has not returned for 10 days after authorised absence, is not believed to be unwell, and neither the school nor the local authority knows where the child is (NB The school and LA will also now be required to work cooperatively in investigating);
- student has been absent from school for 20 days (continuous) without authorisation;
- student has died;
- student stops attending other types of school;
- student reaches end of compulsory school age and will not be returning to school...

or the student is removed by the commissioning agent.

## Children who meet considerable difficulty in maintaining regular attendance

Since students are most usually referred to Heartwood House because they have self-excluded from their previous educational provider, or have experienced extreme anxiety when forced to attend, they may have been out of school for some time prior to referral (some of our students have been out of education or non-attending for two years or more), thus a pragmatic approach to initial engagement is required. With the agreement of the commissioning agent, parent/carer and student we may adopt a staged integration or share attendance with another provider. In any such case we will aim for full attendance as soon as possible.

To ensure that attendance figures are in line with legal requirements, Heartwood House will mark a student present or absent on each day that is requested or purchased by the commissioning agent. Thus, if a commissioner requests a shared placement with, for example, three days a week attendance at RB, Heartwood House will record attendance on that basis, but in any case where a full-time placement is requested, Heartwood House will record a presence or absence on each of the ten sessions in the week.

Attendance figures will be reported to commissioning agents in line with their requirements, and any concerns about a particular student will be highlighted.

## Helping students to attend regularly

Heartwood House seeks to provide a supportive, nurturing environment, and all staff help students make positive informed decisions about their education and their life in general. While it is hoped that this will help students to attend regularly, the need for prompt action should they not attend is acknowledged, particularly the need to ensure that the student is 'safe'.

At the point of referral Heartwood House will ensure that students and parents/carers are aware of the need to report the reason for any absence immediately.

If the reason given for absence is considered to be legitimate, no further action will be taken. Should the absence continue (legitimately) for more than two weeks, the Executive Headteacher will ensure that liaison takes place with medical or other professionals working with the student and family to find ways of enabling the student to access education. If, for example, the student is housebound because of illness, RB would consider sending work home and/or using online learning to maintain the student's access to education.

If Heartwood House receives no information regarding an absence, or a student 'self certifies', then a 'first day' response is adopted and the student's tutor will contact the parents/carers to:

- identify the reason for absence;
- ensure that the student is safe.

Depending upon the circumstances the action that may be taken includes:

- making an immediate home visit;
- contacting the family by phone, email or SMS;
- notifying appropriate local agencies if the child is believed to be unsafe for whatever reason.

In any case where there is prolonged unauthorised absence Heartwood House will always ensure that commissioners and appropriate local authority staff (eg social worker, EWO, YOS officer) are notified, and will work with them to attempt to re-engage the student in accordance with any local agreements that have been reached.

*It is up to the commissioning agent to decide the point at which they cease to commission a place for that student.*

NB. Given the nature of our student body (ie most students will have met considerable difficulty in attending education prior to referral to Heartwood House), we will seek to provide informative detail to back up our statistical attendance returns. Given the small number of students attending, if a Heartwood House has a persistent non-attender or poor attender and the commissioning agent deems the placement to be a worthwhile one and therefore continues with it, there will be a significant impact on the overall average attendance. Provided (with the agreement of the commissioner) we respond rapidly and supportively to non-attendance, liaise effectively with all appropriate local agencies and professionals, and remain in frequent contact with the student and family, the student will be safer and more likely to re-engage in the future. We believe this to be a more 'student centred' approach than to cease the placement simply to protect our attendance statistics. It would be unreasonable for an inspecting body to criticise us for our attendance rates without considering the individual circumstances of each student.

## **Marking the attendance register**

Heartwood House will ensure that the attendance register is marked accurately twice a day in accordance with the following guidelines, taken from the August 2013 Regulations.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity;
- absent;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

## **Legislation / guidance that informs this document**

- Education Act (1996) - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006, amended Sept 2016... see 'Children Missing Education')
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2010)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2011)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2013)
- Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE - Sept 2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Gov.UK Sept 2023)

## **Other Heartwood House policies to be read in conjunction with this one**

- Admissions