



# HASTINGS ATTENDANCE CHARTER

Hastings-wide Charter for Promoting Good Attendance for Children and Young  
People  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition- April 2021

HASTINGS WIDE CHARTER FOR PROMOTING GOOD  
ATTENDANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

East Sussex  
County Council



HASTINGS  
OPPORTUNITY  
AREA



Department  
for Education

The revised Attendance Charter is a collaborative approach to promoting good attendance within schools across Hastings and St Leonards, so that all children and young people can fulfil their potential. The Charter takes into account the new challenges in the context of Coronavirus (COVID 19) so that all Hastings schools are confident that the approach they are taking is shared.

All those signing the Charter agree to uphold a set of joint principles and to work together to implement the Charter. East Sussex County Council have agreed to support the Charter and work together with schools to ensure a partnership approach to the Charter implementation. The Charter will seek to strengthen support from key multi agency partners and further support our shared approach to school attendance.

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### **The Hastings Academy Agrees To:**

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- 1) Elect a senior leader, an Attendance Champion responsible for implementing the attendance strategy, and elect and train a Governor responsible for overseeing attendance;
- 2) Have in place a clear attendance policy whose effectiveness is regularly monitored and reviewed by senior leadership team and reported to Governors.
- 3) Appoint a member of staff who is responsible for managing attendance across the school and liaising with appropriate safeguarding leads.
- 4) Implement a robust approach to track and monitor pupil attendance, so that action can be taken swiftly for students whose attendance is causing concern, that 'patterns' and themes in respect of student absence can be analysed and non-attendance due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be managed appropriately.
- 5) Implement an enriched and engaging curriculum and enrichment programme for all pupils, that inspires children to attend school every day;
- 6) Implement suitable preventative and early interventions aimed at pupils and families at risk of poor attendance, alongside monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these;
- 7) Engage and involve parents / carers and the community in the developing attendance approaches, particularly those parents whose children are most at risk of ongoing or persistent absence issues;
- 8) Commit to multi-agency working to address underlying issues facing families and communities; including a commitment to active engagement with wider team around the child and whole family approaches to supporting children and families with more complex or entrenched needs.
- 9) Share and implement 'best and emerging practice' in respect of what is working to improve attendance particularly in the context of Coronavirus (Covid- 19) for those children and families most at risk of persistent absence.
- 10) Review the ESCC Attendance Guidance, taking note of the best practice recommendations around safeguarding pupils and following leavers/ deletion from role, expectations

## Schools agree to also implement the following common practices:

- Take their attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and once during the second session (in the afternoon). They will record if the pupil is:
  - Present;
  - Attending an approved educational activity;
  - Absent due to illness/medical appointment;
  - Absent – unauthorised; or
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances;
  - Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Contact pupil's parents/carers on a pupil's first day of absence, to establish the reasons for absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. Then contact the pupil every day that there are subsequent unexplained absences.
- Close their register 30 minutes after the start of the school day. All pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked with the code U or with another absence code such as I or M. Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded in line with current guidance.
- Headteachers across all Hastings schools will not authorise any holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers will also commit to communicate effectively with families in respect of planned absences, withdrawal from learning and quarantine periods, which may then impact a pupil's term time attendance.
- Monitor patterns of late arrival amongst pupils. Those pupils who are persistently late (late more than once a week for a period of a month) will be contacted and a plan put in place to address this;
- Monitor and track the attendance of all pupils on weekly basis.
- Where pupils have a concerning decline in attendance, over one term and/or have had 10 sessions of absence (unauthorised and/or authorised absence over a 6 school week period), schools will contact parents/carers and will consider holding an attendance meeting to review their child's attendance with them and that will set clear targets for improvement.
- Liaise with schools where children from the same/linked families attend, so that there is a shared approach to promoting good attendance and in respect of sanctions for families whose attendance is a concern.
- Where a pupil has had two sickness absences in a half term or has a sickness absence of three consecutive days, and if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
- For the school year 2020 to 2021 ensure the highest level of engagement with the national effort to track the effect of COVID 19 on educational settings. Complete and return the daily record of attendance in the educational settings status form.

**East Sussex County Council agrees to work proactively with schools on a core basis, through the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), to build capacity around supporting and managing attendance. This work will include supporting schools to:**

- prioritise attendance and put appropriate staff in place with dedicated time and training to do the role
- identify attendance issues early through data analysis
- take a holistic view of attendance issues and adopt an early intervention approach
- have challenging conversations to tackle attendance issues
- review communications about attendance, to make them as effective as possible
- use legal intervention as a last resort.

In addition, referrals for individual learners can be made through the ISEND Front Door and, where the core criteria for attendance support is met, ESBAS will allocate a practitioner to take forward the 10-week core attendance support.

Schools may also buy in bespoke early intervention attendance support for individual learners through the traded services available to all schools.

**Schools can continue to request penalty notices where appropriate for:**

- term time holidays (minimum of 10 sessions in total - 5 school days)
- persistent unauthorised absence (minimum of 10 unauthorised absences during a 10 school week period)
- persistent lateness (minimum of 10 unauthorised late absences within a 10 school week period)

**Hastings Opportunity Area will support schools to share their learning from implementation of the Charter to enhance our town wide approach to improving attendance. Hastings Opportunity Area will continue to work to resolve any barriers to implementation and will seek to enhance a multi-agency approach to improving attendance.**

Signed          Name Headteacher/Principal School	Signed      <b>Iona Wooderson</b> Senior Manager Intervention and Support Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (ISEND) ESCC	Signed          <b>Richard Meddings</b> Independent Chair Hastings Opportunity Area
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