



## 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](https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-and-involved/part-1/pages/1-1.aspx) ([www.gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot))

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 pupil's participation, academic achievement, and future opportunities. Therefore, it is crucial that we take every step to promote and ensure good attendance for all pupils 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) during morning (8.50am) and afternoon (1.10pm) registration. Pupils in the primary school should be in school before 8.45am. Any pupil who is unwell must report to Matron who will contact home if needed and notify relevant staff via absence email if the pupil is sent home. Office staff will enter this into the MIS.
2. Parents/carers of all pupils are asked to let the school office know before 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 phone call will be made, or a text message will be sent to parents/carers informing them that their child is not in school. This will be done by 9.30am for pupils in the Primary School. If a text message is sent, then Parents/carers should contact the school to inform us of the reason for absence.
4. Class teachers are responsible for informing Specialist staff of any pupils absent that day. If a pupil is unexpectedly missing from any class during the day and cannot be found, teachers will contact the Primary Office. Office staff are responsible for checking with the Sign-out book, Matron, SOCS, bulletin etc for any event attendance such as music lessons. If the pupil cannot be located, office staff will then contact a member of SLT. Parents/carers will be informed by telephone by SLT if a pupil is unexpectedly missing from class and cannot be located. If the pupil cannot be located by either school or family, Police Scotland may be contacted.

## 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 pupils 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. Primary Office staff regularly monitor attendance (each half-term) and when it drops below 90%, parents/carers will be contacted from the Head of Primary.

If there are on-going 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 class teacher will alert the relevant Depute Rector (Upper/Lower Primary) and Matron.

If a pupil is absent for ten continuous days, Matron 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 (Upper/Lower Primary). If the parents/carers refuse to seek a note from the GP, the pupil will be referred to the Head of Primary 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 speaking to the parents/carer and the pupil. If there are well-being issues for that pupil and they require an action plan, the Depute Rector (Upper/Lower Primary) will help complete an assessment of need.

## OUR RESPONSE

### **Medical Reason**

If there is a medical reason for non-attendance, then the school encourages rest and recovery (in such cases no work will be set). For extended absences, some work may be set to complete at home but only if the pupil is fit enough to complete the tasks set. Examples whereby this would be appropriate: chronic illnesses or surgery that requires long term care at home.

After a long-term absence the class teacher, the Depute Rector (Upper/Lower Primary), the pupils and parents/carers will meet to organise a return to school plan. The Depute Rector (Upper/Lower Primary) and Matron 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 should:





- identify early warning signs or concerns that could lead to absence (e.g. pastoral concerns, social or emotional difficulties, change in behaviour or attitude to learning), 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 by addressing any issues or concerns with the Head of House or their respective Depute Rector,
- establish positive, trusting relationships with pupils 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 pupils,
- follow up on absences to help the school and its partners respond appropriately,
- assist pupils in transitioning back into their learning environment after an absence.

Once below the 80% threshold, as identified by Primary Office each half-term, a pupil will be monitored closely and their attendance reviewed weekly by the class teacher and Depute Rector (Upper/Lower Primary). If the pattern of absence continues, the Head of Primary, with advice from any agencies involved with the young person, will meet to initiate a care plan either single or multi-agency. This will include staff (e.g. class teacher, Head of House, Matron and Depute Rectors), parents and the pupil. 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 necessary, the Senior Leadership Team will arrange a home visit to identify the barriers to returning to school, informing the care plan.

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 the parental support is not forthcoming, the Head of Primary and 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 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.



# ATTENDANCE POLICY: PRIMARY SCHOOL



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.

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Mr A Cornfoot, Depute Rector
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	February 2025
<b>Version Control</b>	Version 1
<b>Approved By</b>	Mr M Ronan, Rector
<b>Date Approved</b>	-
<b>Location(s)</b>	Website, Parent Portal
<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2026

The Governors of Hutchesons' Educational Trust, Registered Charity Number SC002922, is the governing body of Hutchesons' Grammar School.

