

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Approved by:	LAC
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Policy Information:

Date of last review	January 2026	Review period	Annually
Date approved	January 2026	Approved by	LAC
Policy owner	Headteacher	Date of next review	January 2027

Updates made since the last review:

Review date	Changes made	By whom
January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of reference to DfE statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' • Addition of support with attendance and punctuality section • Addition of appendices- PA letter 	SLT

Rationale

The Heights Academy places a high priority on achieving standards and are committed to ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential. To achieve this, a high level of attendance and punctuality are essential. The Heights Academy is committed to supporting pupils and families with regular school attendance to enable children to reach their full potential with good habits that will support them throughout their lives. The school adopts an inclusive attendance approach, recognising that attendance is influenced by a wide range of factors and must be understood within the context of the whole child. Inclusive attendance is a holistic, whole-school approach that focuses on creating a supportive culture where every pupil feels safe, valued and has a strong sense of belonging.

The school seeks to understand and address the underlying reasons for absence through tailored support, family engagement and collaborative working. Attendance is seen as a shared responsibility across the school community, supported by graduated and evidence-informed strategies to promote equity, wellbeing and positive outcomes for all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind academically, socially and emotionally and evidence shows that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary education. For pupils to achieve their full potential, they must be motivated to learn and feel confident, supported and eager to attend school. Regular and punctual attendance helps to establish positive routines and lifelong habits that will support pupils throughout their lives.

To achieve this, The Heights Academy is committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality. Parents and carers will be kept well informed of attendance expectations and supported to overcome barriers where they arise. While individual circumstances are always considered, the school seeks to discourage unauthorised absence, as statistics consistently show that the greater the proportion of sessions missed, the greater the negative impact on learning and progress.

The school participates in the Forward Education Trust attendance network meetings on a half-termly basis. This supports the sharing of best practice and ensures the school's attendance strategies remain aligned with the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance. The network has a strong focus on inclusive attendance practice, promoting a whole-school approach, early identification of barriers to attendance, and timely, proportionate support for pupils and families. Learning from the network informs the school's graduated response to attendance concerns, ensuring that high expectations for attendance are balanced with safeguarding responsibilities, pastoral support and reasonable adjustments for pupils with additional needs.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Pupils are admitted to the school only following a formal request for placement from Solihull Local Authority. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which identifies autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as a primary or significant area of need. Many pupils present with associated needs, including communication and interaction difficulties, sensory processing differences, anxiety, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school recognises that these needs can impact attendance and engagement and therefore adopts an inclusive, flexible and needs-led approach to attendance, ensuring reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are in place to enable pupils to access education consistently and successfully.

Aims

This policy is written in accordance with the statutory guidance on attendance in the DfE document, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024', to ensure that every child attends every day on time with the intention of establishing positive routines and attitudes towards education, progress well academically and socially and develop excellent habits for the future. In doing so, this policy aims to:

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at the school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents/carers, all staff and governors.
3. To provide support and advice (including medical advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils).
4. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
5. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To implement an effective monitoring and intervention strategy.

7. To highlight poor attendance and implement appropriate interventions to increase the attendance.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence through illness.
9. To promote an inclusive, supportive approach to attendance that recognises individual needs, removes barriers to school attendance and strengthens pupils' sense of safety, belonging and wellbeing.

The Importance of School Attendance at The Heights Academy

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- Academic Achievement: Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- Knowledge Acquisition: School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- Social Development: School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- Building Routine: School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- Teacher Interaction: Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.
- Preventing Knowledge Gaps: Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- School Engagement: Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.

- Legal and Parental Responsibility: Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to legal consequences.
- Community Well-being: High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

Inclusive Attendance

At our school, attendance is promoted through an inclusive, needs-led approach that recognises regular attendance as essential to pupils' learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding. We understand that barriers to attendance can arise from a range of individual, family, and contextual factors, and we are committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents, and carers to identify and remove these barriers as early as possible. Attendance concerns are addressed through supportive, proportionate, and evidence-based interventions, with a strong focus on early help, reintegration, and sustained engagement. Where attendance issues may indicate safeguarding or wellbeing concerns, these are responded to promptly in line with statutory guidance, ensuring that all pupils feel safe, supported, and able to attend school regularly.

Recognition-Based Approach

Our attendance philosophy is rooted in a recognition-based approach that recognises both personal and collective achievements. This approach serves to thwart isolation, prevent victimisation, cultivate positive environments, nurture relationships, foster inclusivity, and ultimately cultivate intrinsic motivation among our children, families, and staff.

Registration

A register of attendance for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day: once at the start of the morning registration session and once during the afternoon registration session.

For each pupil, the register will be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register will say whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

Morning registration opens at 8.45am and closes at 9.15am in the morning and afternoon registration opens at 1pm and closes at 1.15pm. During registration, a mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration to log and monitor attendance. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for

absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. School staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes (see Appendix A). In the case of unavoidable delay for pupils using school transport, arrival after 9.20am will not incur a late mark.

Authorised & Unauthorised

The school are not allowed to authorise holiday for any reason. Authorised Leave is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence (e.g. illness). Only the school may authorise the absence. Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from an authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Authorised absences may include the following:

- Illness – medical and dental appointments (evidence of appointment required)
- Unavoidable religious observances (parents/carers are requested to notify the school well in advance with documentary evidence)
- Dual registration
- Exceptional compassionate circumstances
- Suspension

Holiday in Term Time

The Heights Academy does not allow absence for holidays. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as unauthorised:
(G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised.

The Heights Academy follows Solihull Local Authority guidance on leave during term time which states that permission from the school must be sought prior to a leave of absence being taken. Any absences that are not authorised by the school may be referred to the Attendance Enforcement Team for a fine or prosecution. Late arrival to school in certain circumstances may also be included. For further information please view Solihull's guidance.

Parents/carers may choose to complete an 'Exceptional Circumstances Pupil Term Time Leave Request Form' stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Headteacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised on a case-by-case basis. (For a list of examples of exceptional circumstances – See Appendix B). If an 'Exceptional Circumstances Pupil Term Time Leave Request Form' is rejected the absence, should the parent still proceed

with the removal of their child during term time, the absence may be dealt with under Leave in Term Time Penalty processes.

First Day Contact and Persistent Absence

Parents/carers will be contacted by telephone on the first day of absence if no message has been sent into school giving reasons for the absence. Attendance which falls below 90% during a term, will trigger investigative action by the school. If further action is required, a model of escalation will be followed, beginning with a supportive phone call, a possible meeting with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and the Local Authorities Attendance Officer.

During this process, agreed strategies will form an action plan for improving attendance where appropriate. Where structured intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the school may consider taking legal action where this is deemed necessary. Attendance is monitored regularly through individual summary sheets and analysis of data trends. Parents/carers are encouraged to communicate with the school via telephone or Class Dojo. Transport escorts may provide the first point of contact between parents/carers and the school.

Support with Absence and Punctuality

The Heights Academy are committed to supporting pupils and families with encouraging high levels of attendance and punctuality. Support with attendance and punctuality at The Heights Academy is underpinned by an inclusive attendance approach. This recognises that barriers to attendance are not the same for every pupil and require a graduated response.

The school uses a tiered approach to attendance support:

- **Universal support** for all pupils through a welcoming school culture, consistent routines and positive relationships
- **Targeted and individualised support** where emerging attendance concerns are identified
- **High-needs support** for pupils with persistent or severe absence, involving multi-agency working and personalised planning

Support is evidence-informed and developed in partnership with families, with a focus on wellbeing, engagement and sustainable improvement. For persistent absence (attendance under 90%) or severe (under 50%) school may seek advice and guidance from the Local Authority to attempt to break down barriers to attendance. In partnership with Solihull Council, The Heights Academy will work with the Attendance Elective Home Education and Advisory Team to support

children and families to attend school. This partnership approach is underpinned by the principles of Inclusive Attendance, ensuring that barriers to attendance are identified early and addressed through supportive, proportionate and child-centred interventions. The school, Local Authority and advisory services work collaboratively with families to promote engagement, wellbeing and access to education, recognising the individual needs of pupils and prioritising inclusion, safeguarding and positive outcomes.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

If a child goes missing from education, it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the Local Authority procedures for dealing with children that are missing from education. All Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 5 school days. This attendance policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the schools Safeguarding Policy and the Behaviour and Welfare Policy which support the wellbeing of our children. Regulations 8(f) and 8(h) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries to try and locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

This might be:

- A child who is not at their last known address and:
 - has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or:
 - has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.
 - The family moving within the area, but the parents fail to inform the school of the house move or transfer to a new school.
 - The family move out of the area and relocate to a new area within the UK, but parents fail to inform the school.
 - The family relocate abroad and fail to inform the school of their destination.
 - The family is displaced because of 'crisis' e.g. domestic violence, homelessness.
 - Parent/school disagreement and parents withdraw the child from school.
 - Family separation.

Where a child cannot be accounted for the school may carry out a home visit or a health and wellbeing concern may be raised. Any child whose whereabouts are

known but continues to have unauthorised absences, should be assessed to determine if they have additional needs and require support such as a referral to Early Help, or to the school nurse or the Local Authority's Safeguarding Team. If there are no additional needs and the parent does not consent to additional support, or support has been put in place and it has not impacted on attendance, the school should seek advice from the local authority attendance team and sanctions may be implemented.

Parents who wish to educate their child at home

Where a parent notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority. Pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs / Education Health and Care Plan can be educated at home providing the Local Authority (Special Education Needs team) judges the arrangements to be appropriate for the child's age, ability and aptitude. The EHCP will need to be amended so that the child is no longer on role at the school.

If you home school your children, or if you are thinking about home education, call for advice from Solihull Local Authority (0121 704 8001) or the Solihull Elective Home Education team (0121 704 6959) for advice and support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance at The Heights Academy is a whole-school responsibility. All staff play a role in promoting inclusive attendance through positive relationships, early identification of concerns and consistent communication with families.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are key partners in promoting inclusive attendance and supporting their child's engagement with school. In line with statutory requirements and the school's Inclusive Attendance approach, parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure Regular Attendance**
Have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually, recognising the importance of consistent attendance for learning, wellbeing and progress.
- Inform the School of Absence**
Contact the school directly and without delay when their child is absent, providing timely and accurate information to support safeguarding and appropriate attendance recording.
- Engage in Inclusive Attendance Support**
Work collaboratively with the school when attendance is identified as a concern, engaging in open and constructive communication to explore barriers to attendance and agree supportive, proportionate strategies.

- **Work Effectively in Partnership with School**

Participate in meetings, reviews and agreed plans, including multi-agency support where appropriate, to help remove barriers to attendance and promote positive, sustained engagement with education.

This partnership approach ensures attendance concerns are addressed early and in a way that is inclusive, supportive and focused on the best outcomes for each pupil.

Teachers

Teachers play a key role in promoting inclusive attendance by fostering positive relationships, monitoring engagement, and supporting pupils to access learning. Their responsibilities include:

- **Maintain Accurate Attendance Records**

Keep a precise and up-to-date attendance register, ensuring that any absence or late arrival is recorded correctly and in line with school procedures.

- **Report Unexplained Absences**

Inform the school office promptly if no explanation has been received for a pupil's absence, contributing to safeguarding and early intervention processes.

- **Identify and Raise Concerns Early**

Highlight attendance concerns to the Safeguarding and Leadership team at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that barriers to attendance are addressed in a supportive and inclusive manner.

- **Support Inclusive Attendance Strategies**

Engage with pupils to understand any factors affecting attendance, applying reasonable adjustments and differentiated approaches to encourage engagement and sustained attendance for all pupils, including those with additional needs.

- **Promote Positive Relationships and Wellbeing**

Foster trust and communication with pupils and families, recognising the importance of pastoral support alongside attendance monitoring.

Administration Staff

Administration staff play a vital role in supporting inclusive attendance by ensuring accurate records, timely communication, and effective monitoring. Their responsibilities include:

- **Accurate Data Management**

Input attendance data promptly and accurately via BROMCOM, ensuring records reflect pupil presence, absence, and any relevant notes.

- **Generate and Monitor Reports**

Produce attendance reports weekly to support monitoring, early identification of concerns, and timely intervention by staff and leadership.

- **Manage Signing In/Out Procedures**

Oversee pupil signing in and out processes, ensuring that all arrivals and departures are recorded accurately for safeguarding and attendance monitoring purposes.

- **First-Day Absence Communication**

Make first-day absence calls to parents and carers, recording reasons for absence, and ensuring clear communication that supports safeguarding and inclusive attendance practices.

- **Support Early Intervention and Inclusive Practice**

Contribute to a needs-led approach by flagging patterns of absence, liaising with teachers and leadership, and ensuring follow-up is carried out sensitively and in line with inclusive attendance principles.

Safeguarding, Attendance and Family Support Assistant

- Support the Safeguarding, Attendance and Family Support Lead in promoting inclusive attendance and safeguarding
- Assist with early intervention through wellbeing calls, family contact, and follow-up where attendance causes concern
- Support and assist with home visits where required, in line with agreed procedures
- Support pupil reintegration following periods of absence, promoting wellbeing and engagement
- Monitor attendance concerns and share information with relevant staff to support coordinated action
- Maintain accurate records of contacts, visits, and interventions

Safeguarding, Attendance and Family Support Lead

- The Safeguarding, Attendance and Family Support Lead has responsibility for promoting inclusive attendance and ensuring attendance concerns are addressed early and proportionately.
- **Attendance Leadership**
Support the Head teacher to lead and oversee the school's attendance strategy in line with safeguarding and inclusive attendance principles.

- **Target Setting**
Set clear and realistic attendance targets as part of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- **Early Intervention**
Identify and respond promptly to individual attendance concerns to prevent escalation.
- **Monitoring Attendance and Lateness**
Monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality to identify emerging concerns.
- **Family Engagement**
Communicate and meet with parents and carers to discuss attendance concerns and agree supportive actions.
- **Attendance Thresholds**
Monitor pupils below **95%** attendance and implement action plans where attendance falls below **90%**, where appropriate.
- **Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Working**
Liaise with the Special School Nursing Team and other agencies as required to support pupil wellbeing and attendance.
- **Home Visits**
Arrange home visits where necessary, in line with the school's agreed procedures, to support safeguarding and engagement.
- **Legal Action**
Initiate statutory or legal action only when supportive interventions have been exhausted and where required by legislation.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is accountable for ensuring attendance practice is effective, inclusive, and contributes to strong safeguarding and pupil outcomes.

- **Strategic Oversight and Accountability**
Provide clear leadership and oversight of attendance, ensuring systems are robust, well-understood, and consistently applied.
- **Trust Assurance and Reporting**
Ensure accurate attendance data and concerns are reported to the Trust, enabling appropriate challenge, support, and accountability.
- **Staff Training and Professional Development**
Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to fulfil their attendance, safeguarding, and pastoral responsibilities and understand their role in promoting regular attendance.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
Meet regularly with the Attendance team to review attendance data, evaluate the impact of interventions, and ensure timely and appropriate actions are taken.

- **Collaborative Practice and Improvement**

Work collaboratively with other schools within Forward Education Trust (FET) to share effective practice, improve consistency, and strengthen outcomes for pupils.

Promoting Good Attendance

At The Heights Academy, we believe in promoting good attendance through positive relationships, high expectations and an inclusive, supportive approach. We recognise that for our pupils, progress in attendance may look different, and therefore we prioritise **recognition and encouragement over reward-based systems**. All approaches align with the school's Inclusive Attendance policy and are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Good attendance is promoted through the following:

- **Home–School Partnership**

Clear expectations around attendance are shared with parents and carers as part of an ongoing home–school partnership, reinforcing shared responsibility for supporting regular attendance.

- **Regular Communication**

Attendance expectations and positive messages are shared through school newsletters and wider communication, promoting consistency and engagement with families.

- **Recognition of Improved Attendance**

Improvements in attendance are acknowledged and celebrated in line with individual starting points, recognising effort, progress and increased engagement rather than solely focusing on 100% attendance.

- **Whole-School Recognition Opportunities**

Attendance recognition may take place within assemblies or class-based activities, where appropriate, ensuring these are inclusive and do not disadvantage pupils with additional needs, medical conditions or anxiety-related barriers.

- **Flexible and Inclusive Celebration Activities**

Where attendance celebration activities are used, they are carefully considered to ensure fairness and accessibility, avoiding punitive or exclusionary practices and maintaining a focus on wellbeing and inclusion.

- **Positive Communication with Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are contacted to acknowledge and celebrate improved or sustained attendance, reinforcing positive relationships and shared success.

All recognition approaches are implemented in line with Inclusive Attendance principles and Department for Education guidance, ensuring that attendance promotion remains supportive, equitable and focused on long-term engagement rather than compliance.

Appendix A

Attendance codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Code		Code for Statistical Purposes	
/	The session is a morning session, and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending	
/	The session is an afternoon session, and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending	
B	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity.	Attending approved educational activity	
C	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose.	Authorised absence	
C1	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	
C2	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the proprietor that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	Authorised absence	
D	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil.	Not a possible attendance (to avoid double counting)	
E	The pupil is excluded from the school for any other reason	Authorised absence	
G	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday	Unauthorised absence	
I	The pupils is unable to attend because of sickness	Authorised absence	

J1	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence	
K	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(1) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.	Attending approved educational activity	
L	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Attending	
M	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	
N	The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established	Unauthorised absence	
O	None of the other rows of this table applies, or this code is required to be used by paragraphs (7) and (9)(b).	Unauthorised absence	
P	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity within paragraph (11) that is a sporting activity	Attending approved educational activity	
Q	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them within paragraph (12) or (13)	Not a possible attendance	
R	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs	Authorised absence	
S	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	Authorised absence	
T	The pupil is a mobile child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent	Authorised absence	

U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	
V	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff	Attending approved educational activity	
W	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity within paragraph (11) that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the proprietor as part of the pupil's education.	Attending approved educational activity	
X	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.	Not a possible attendance	
Y1	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the proprietor, or a local authority is not available.	Not a possible attendance	
Y2	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency	Not a possible attendance	
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use	Not a possible attendance	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.	Not a possible attendance (not on leg)	
Y5	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal	Not a possible attendance	

	justice detention within paragraph (14)		
Y6	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be— (a)contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or any body or authority exercising equivalent functions in relation to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; or (b)prohibited by any enactment relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease or any instrument made under such an enactment.	Not a possible attendance	
Y7	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admissions register	Not collected for statistical purposes	
#	Planned whole school closure	Not collected for statistical purposes	

Appendix B

Exceptional Circumstances

We recognise that, on rare occasions, families may need to request leave during term time due to significant and unavoidable circumstances. In a specialist school context, attendance decisions must be sensitive to the individual needs, wellbeing, and vulnerabilities of each pupil. Head Teachers may therefore exercise professional judgement where there are genuine and exceptional circumstances, considering each request on its own merits rather than applying a blanket ban on term-time leave.

Examples of circumstances that *may* be considered exceptional include, but are not limited to:

- The death of a parent/carer or sibling
- A life-threatening or critical illness affecting a parent/carer or sibling
- A period of recuperation or convalescence for a parent/carer following critical illness or major surgery
(Requests should normally be made within six months of recovery and supported by appropriate medical evidence)
- Leave for parents/carers serving in the armed forces where operational commitments prevent leave being taken at other times

In making decisions, the school will carefully balance the importance of regular attendance with the emotional, mental health, and safeguarding needs of the pupil. For some pupils, particularly those with additional or complex needs, school can offer vital stability, routine, and trusted relationships during times of family difficulty. In other cases, time with family may be in the pupil's best interests and support their overall wellbeing.

Where leave is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the length of authorised absence, considering the individual circumstances of the pupil and the potential impact on their education and wellbeing. The school will work in partnership with families to support pupils before, during, and after any period of absence wherever possible.

Appendix C – Examples of attendance letters

Absences from school awareness letter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to share an update regarding your child's attendance at The Heights Academy. In line with current government guidance, schools are required to notify families when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.

At present, [child's name]'s attendance is [percentage]. We recognise that attendance can be affected by a range of factors, particularly for pupils with additional or complex needs, and this letter is intended to offer support rather than concern.

Regular attendance helps pupils to access learning, maintain routines, and benefit from the relationships and support available in school. Where attendance is reduced, it can sometimes impact learning and progress, and we are keen to work with you to minimise any barriers and address any gaps that may arise.

We understand that every family's circumstances are different. Your child's wellbeing and welfare are always our highest priority, and we value working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that each pupil is supported to engage with education in a way that is right for them.

We welcome the opportunity to talk with you about how we can best support [child's name], including any adjustments, interventions, or additional help that may be beneficial.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact the school. We are here to help.

Yours sincerely, The Heights Academy

Absences from school

Dear Parent of [Pupil Name],

We are reaching out to you regarding an important matter concerning [Pupil Name]'s school attendance. To date, [Pupil Name] has been absent for a total of [total number] days during this academic year, which amounts to [total number] missed lessons.

At [Your School's Name], we employ a simple yet effective system for monitoring support levels for our children. When a child is designated as Persistently Absent (PA), we adhere to the procedures and guidelines outlined by the Local Authority. If a child accumulates a total absence of 10 days or more, they are identified as being at Risk of Persistent Absence. In these cases, we proactively activate internal school support systems before seeking external guidance from the Local Authority.

We understand that there are times when children need to stay home due to illness, and we fully support this. Medical advice indicates that children with mild illnesses, such as a cough or a cold without a temperature, can often attend school. The NHS offers a useful resource, "Is my child too ill for school?" on their website, which can assist parents in making informed decisions regarding mild illnesses.

It's essential to recognise that when children miss school, they may fall behind their peers. At [Your School's Name], our commitment is to minimise missed educational opportunities. We firmly believe that a strong community is one where all our children are present in school, on time, every day. By adhering to this principle, we not only impart valuable life skills and foster enduring friendships but also prepare your child for future success.

We acknowledge the significant role you play in [Pupil Name]'s attendance this academic year, and we genuinely appreciate your support in promoting consistent school attendance. This, in turn, empowers [Pupil Name] to achieve the best possible outcomes. We are here to collaborate with you and encourage you to reach out, call, or arrange a meeting with [Pupil Name]'s class teacher or tutor if there is anything we can do to support you and your child. We understand that each family's circumstances are unique.

Should we continue to have concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch to schedule a meeting with you.

OR

We would like to now schedule a meeting with you to discuss how we can work together to ensure absence does not increase. We will be contacting you in the near future to agree on a suitable time and date.

Please find attached the certificate of registration for (Pupils Name), if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Warm regards, The Heights Academy

Unauthorised absences from school

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to let you know about [child's name]'s recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school. Our intention in contacting you is to ensure we understand the situation fully and to offer support where needed.

[Child's name] has been recorded as absent without authorisation for a total of [number] sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

We recognise that every family's circumstances are different, and there may be underlying factors affecting attendance. Our aim is always to work in partnership with parents and carers to support each child's engagement with school and ensure they are able to access education in a way that meets their individual needs.

Your child's wellbeing and welfare are of paramount importance to us. Regular attendance helps pupils to maintain routines, access learning, and benefit from the relationships and support available within school. Where attendance concerns arise, we are keen to work together to identify any barriers and agree appropriate next steps.

We are required to make you aware that continued unauthorised absences over the academic year may result in further action, including the potential issue of a penalty notice, in line with local authority guidance. Further information about penalty notices can be found on Solihull Council's website, and our attendance policy is available on the school website.

We would appreciate you contacting the school office on 0121 269 6000 as soon as possible so that we can arrange a discussion and explore how we can best support [child's name] moving forward.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

The Heights Academy