



Hidelow Grange School

Attendance Policy

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Written: January 2019	Sam Goodchild
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Role: Head teacher	
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CareTech's children's education services provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which young people are always offered a fresh start, and empowered to achieve and fulfil their unique potential

Description and Ethos of Hidelow Grange School

Hidelow Grange is an Independent School operating within the Branas Isaf Company, a subsidiary of CareTech Community Services Ltd., who are the proprietors.

Hidelow Grange is an independent school providing specialist education to boys aged 11 to 18 years with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and who are Looked After Children. The school specifically caters for boys who present with a range of complex interpersonal, emotional and behavioural issues.

For a more detailed description of what the school offers see “Statement of Independence” and School Prospectus.

OUR PUPILS

All young people at Hidelow Grange School have a history of harmful behaviours, including harmful sexualised behaviours and social, emotional and mental health needs often accompanied by a range of additional learning needs.

Most of the pupils have had interrupted histories in education and care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission. All have fragile self-esteem and demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. Many have experienced loss and trauma, leading to attachment difficulties. As a result, many experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with others and have a limited ability to work cooperatively.

Pupils are:

- aged 11 to 18;
- boys only;
- placed within the residential setting of Branas Isaf;
- residents from placing authorities throughout the United Kingdom;
- all present a range of harmful behaviours;
- most are in receipt of an EHC plan.

THE VISION

Our school aspires to become a centre of excellence renowned for making outstanding educational provision for the very special pupils we teach.

This vision drives everything we do and will be achieved through...

- A rich, deep and personalised education designed to meet the needs of each pupil;
- A pupil centred, skills focused curriculum that is relevant to the 21st century and inclusive of all;

- Encouraging all members of the school community to strive beyond expectations and develop a lifelong love of learning;
- Offering a broad range of learning experiences within a curriculum that values academic attainment as well as social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of education;
- Providing personalised careers education and guidance, with aspirational next steps planning, preparing pupils for their future;
- Recognising that time is precious: working quickly to turn around pupils' attitudes towards education so they enjoy their time at school and make the most of the opportunities on offer;
- Working collaboratively with our professional partners to support the needs of each individual pupil.

Pupils will:

1. Be challenged to engage in learning and achieve meaningful qualifications that will enable them to take their next steps in education, employment or training;
2. Develop into healthy, resilient and confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society;
3. Create, nurture and maintain healthy positive relationships with others;
4. Experience success, whatever form it takes;
5. Become enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work;
6. Celebrate diversity and develop into ethical, informed young people who are ready to be citizens of the world.

OUR MISSION

Our mission statement is:

We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that nurtures mutual respect and encourages reflection so that our pupils develop the knowledge skills and confidence to enable them to achieve their potential in all aspects of their lives.

OUR VALUES AND INTENT

Our values

- **Aspiration** : We encourage each other to be the best we can be
- **Curiosity**: We never stop learning and wondering about the world
- **Independence**: We think for ourselves and determine our own future
- **Innovation**: We look for new and creative solutions to problems
- **Reflection**: We learn from our experiences
- **Tolerance**: We value difference and respect other people's opinions
- **Trust**: We believe in the honesty and reliability of others

Our Curriculum Intent

For our staff: Everyone at Hidelow supports and challenges pupils to invest in education as a priority for a successful placement

For all learners:

- To undergo an initial 6-week assessment so we fully understand their needs for effective learning;
- To achieve at least 95% attendance in school;
- To engage in creative learning experiences appropriate to their needs, supported by an accurate individual learning plan;
- To achieve nationally recognised academic awards in core subjects;
- To achieve accreditation in a wide range of subject areas;
- To become independent learners;
- To learn how to keep themselves safe, and build positive relationships with those around them;
- To take part in decisions that shape their lives, the school and the community in which they live;
- To demonstrate the behaviours needed to stretch themselves and cope with the challenges of learning;
- To attend and participate in regular therapy sessions;
- To learn strategies to manage their feelings and know where to go for help when things are difficult;
- To have the opportunity to participate in work experience and work related learning opportunities;
- To develop the Literacy skills they need for adult life;
- To learn the skills to apply mathematical concepts;
- To learn the skills to use digital technologies creatively and safely in preparation for the world in which they will live;
- To lead healthy, active lifestyles;
- To develop as social, moral, spiritual and culturally aware individuals who are ready to make a positive contribution to society as adults.

1. Pupil Attendance

Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure good progress and enable pupils to reach their potential.

The purpose of this document is to establish our expectation that all students attend school every day. It outlines the steps we take to promote good attendance at school and tackle absence.

The Government sets a clear expectation of at least 95% attendance for all students in all schools. At Hidelow Grange School we believe every lesson and every school day counts. We expect children to attend school every day and on time, unless absence is authorised by the Headteacher. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend full-time. Once a child is enrolled at the school, their attendance is recorded on the Attendance Register.

1. Absence from school

Legal Background and DfE Guidelines

This policy is in line with the following documents:

School Attendance: Department for Education (DfE), September 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education: DfE September 2024

Children Missing Education: DfE September 2016

The Education Act 1996

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Whilst schools are required to consider parental requests for absence from school in term time, it remains the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure the regular attendance of a child of compulsory school age. Therefore every session of unauthorised absence could constitute a criminal offence.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

An 'authorised absence' is one that has been approved by the Headteacher.

'Unauthorised absences' are those which the Headteacher does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. to go shopping, to care for a sibling, a pupil's/parent's/sibling's/relative's birthday
- Truancy/refusal to attend
- Absences that have not been properly explained
- Illness without medical evidence
- Holidays in term-time
- Arriving late after 9.30 when the register has closed- without adequate explanation
- If an absence has been authorised and subsequently parents/carers keep their child away in excess of the agreed period, the extra time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.
- Removing a child from school without the permission of the Head teacher

Consideration of Absence from School requests

DfE guidelines clearly state that absence from school can be taken in exceptional circumstances and this means that the parent/ carer must make a strong case for taking a child out of school in an academic year. Exceptional circumstances must be explained fully to the Headteacher who will then consider the request. Any medical appointments/procedures during school time are always authorised but school encourages carers to make these outside school hours.

Parents/carers should not expect that schools would automatically agree to an absence from school during term time. All requests are at the discretion of the Headteacher and can only be authorised by him or member of staff with designated authority in his absence.

An absence request for a holiday can only be made by the carer with whom the child lives or by the person with parental responsibility. In some circumstances this person may have to request an absence on behalf of other adults. This safeguards against an estranged parent or other adult making a request without the knowledge of the parent/carers who has care and control.

The Headteacher will treat each application individually and will consider the following factors when making a decision:

- The reason given for the absence
- The child's overall attendance record
- Whether the absence falls during a year when public examinations are due
- The effect on the child's continuity of learning
- The family circumstances

Hidelow Grange School will immediately inform the Care team if a child goes missing from school. The school holds an emergency contact number for more than one person. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. This provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Children Missing Education (CME) and removing a child from the school roll ('off-rolling')

Children Missing Education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. For this reason, Hidelow Grange School will not remove a child from the admissions roll without the full knowledge and agreement of the Placing Local Authority (LA) and through discussion with all relevant professionals including the Care team.

Hidelow Grange School will notify the Placing LA when we are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the Pupil Registration regulations (Annex A). This includes when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school. When removing a pupil's name, the notification will include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register.

2. Timing of school day and registration periods

The school day starts at 8.50. Morning registration is between 8.50 and 8.55. The register will stay open until 9.30 – any pupil arriving without good reason between 8.55 and 9.30 will be marked 'L'. This means they have arrived late to school before the register has closed. Their time of arrival and the reason for lateness will be noted in the register. Any pupil arriving in school after 9.30 without good reason will be marked 'U'. Their time of arrival and the reason for lateness will be noted in the register. The 'U' code means that a pupil is in school but has arrived after the register closed. This counts as unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration period is between 1.00 and 1.05.

3. Daily absence procedures

When a pupil is absent, the Headteacher will record the absence in the register, using the national attendance and absence codes.

It is the responsibility of the Care staff to inform the school if their child is unable to attend school. This should be done before the start of the school day and can be done by telephoning or visiting the school. As part of our safeguarding procedures, when a child is absent without explanation, the Headteacher or tutor will contact the care team and/or Registered Home Manager to ascertain the reason why the child is absent by 9:30am.

The school has a duty of care to all pupils and will make first day absence contact for all children for whom no explanation has been received and every subsequent day until a reason is obtained. **This call will be made after 09:00 but before 09:30.** If school is not able to ascertain the reason for the child's absence the tutor or Headteacher may visit the child's home to find out the reason for their absence.

Every effort will be made to know the whereabouts of the child (including contact with external agencies) and, if necessary, school will refer the child to the Local Authority as Missing in Education in conjunction with statutory guidance.

Care staff are expected to keep the school informed when they have received advice that their child will be absent for a prolonged period for example due to illness or changes in personal circumstances. In these cases the school will work closely with the Care team to support the child back into school and if appropriate provide work for them to complete at home during the absence.

The school monitors patterns of absence and works with the Care and Therapy teams, and with the Placing LA when absence falls below government expectations. At the end of every half term, the school informs the Social Worker and Virtual School of the Placing LA of the attendance figures for any students from that LA. The school reports attendance to the Placing LA following the arrangements of that particular LA.

A failure to provide an adequate explanation for absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school has a duty to monitor patterns of absence and reasons for absence. The school reserves the right to request medical evidence (this can be a label from prescribed medication, or a signed appointment card for the GP/ dental surgery etc) in order to authorise an absence from school.

4. Arriving in school late/ Leaving school early

It is the responsibility of Care staff to ensure their children are at school on time and ready to learn. When a child is transported to school, Care staff must ensure they leave in good time and take reasonable account of traffic. Pupils should not have to arrive late or leave early in order to access transport.

Care staff should try to make medical appointments outside school hours.

All children arriving late must be signed in and provide a reason as to why they are late. Failure to provide an adequate explanation for a late arrival may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. All reasons are recorded and monitored regularly as part of our normal school practice. The school will inform the Social Worker and Registered Home Manager when a child has a pattern of late arrivals.

In some exceptional circumstances, children may have to be collected early from school. Care staff who wish to do this must inform the school by telephone or in writing, stating clearly the reason why the child is leaving school. Requests and collections may only be made by the Care team. This safeguards against an estranged parent/carer making a request without the knowledge of the parent who has care and control. If there are other arrangements for the child to leave the school premises, such as another adult will collect the child, the school must be informed. It is the responsibility of the Care team to keep the school fully aware of contact details of named and responsible adults. When the child is collected, they must be signed out. This allows the school to protect the child and to ensure robust procedures for health and safety and wellbeing as well as safeguarding against an estranged parent/carer making a request without the knowledge of the parent/carer who has care and control.

School Admissions Register- 'School Roll'

In accordance with the School Attendance Guidance (DfE 2019) Hidelow Grange School fulfils statutory requirements to hold and maintain an accurate school roll. This records personal details of each pupil, their date of admission (which is date they are entered on the attendance register); contact details for parents and carers; and the address of their previous educational placement. The school notifies the relevant Local Authority when a child is added to the school roll and shares the details the school has recorded about the child on the roll. The school roll is updated with details of changes of address.

A child will only be removed from the school roll when the school is notified that the child has started at another educational provision; or when the child has moved beyond reasonable travelling distance to the school and agreement has been given by the relevant Local Authority that the school should remove them from their roll. When a child is removed from the school roll, the school informs the Local Authority that they have done this, giving the full name, date of birth and address of the pupil, the date when they were deleted and the address of their next educational provision if applicable.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every 12 months. The date of next review will be **January 2026**.

Roles & Responsibilities

Teaching Staff	Qualifications
Sam Goodchild Headteacher; DSL; LAC; Teacher: PE	BSc (Hons) in Sports Studies; PGCE: Secondary Education
Charlotte James DDSL; SENCO; Exams Officer; Teacher: Maths, ICT, Art	BA (Hons) in Primary Education specialising in SEND
Mark Maddock 0.6 FTE Teacher: Science, DT	B.SC. (Hons): Applied Zoology (with Agriculture); PGCE in Biology and Science (Distinction in Teaching Practice) Post-Graduate Certificate of SEN
Victoria Cooper Teacher: English; Enrichment	BA (Hons) English Literature and minor Religious Studies; Dip (HE) Diploma in Community, Youth and Play Work; PGCE Secondary English
Juliet Smith Teacher: PSHE; Humanities; Art; Enrichment	BA (Hons) in Humanities with History; PGCE Secondary Geography

Links to other Policies and Procedures

For further information on aspects of this policy please refer to:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Admissions Policy

Curriculum Policy

Supporting Learners in Education- Guide for Support Staff

Registration Codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM **
\	Present PM **
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present **
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration) **
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances **
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview **
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity **
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip **
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience **
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
X	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances **
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances; this code is used under the Covid-19 restrictions for when a child cannot attend school because they are self-isolating
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances **
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances **