



Attendance policy

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1. Policy Statement

Hawthorn Learning is committed to promoting regular attendance for all students, recognising that every child's experience is unique and that some may face barriers to attendance due to trauma or adverse experiences. We aim to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where all students feel they belong and can access education in a way that meets their individual needs.

2. Principles

- **Belonging:** Every pupil is valued, and their circumstances are understood without judgement.
- **Safety:** The school environment is a safe and predictable place for all students.
- **Collaboration:** Team members, students, and families work together to address attendance challenges.
- **Empathy:** All communication and interventions are empathetic, blame-free, and solution-focused.
- **Flexibility:** Responses to attendance are tailored to individual needs, recognising that trauma can impact attendance in non-linear ways.

3. Aims

- To support regular attendance while recognising and addressing the impact of trauma.
- To use restorative and supportive approaches instead of punitive measures.
- To build strong relationships with students and families, fostering trust and open communication.

4. Strategies and Procedures

a) Early Identification

- Monitor attendance closely using a whole-school approach.
- Identify patterns of absence that may indicate underlying trauma or emotional distress.
- Use conversations, observations, and behaviour monitoring to uncover potential barriers.

b) Trauma-Informed Response

- Meet with students and families in a non-judgemental, empathetic manner.
- Avoid punitive language or actions; focus on understanding and support.
- Use language such as:
 - "We've noticed you've been away. Is there anything we can do to help?"
 - "We're here to support you, and we want to work together to find solutions."

c) Individual Support Plans

- Develop personalised attendance support plans for students where trauma or wellbeing is a barrier.
- Plans may include:
 - Adjusted or part-time timetables (with regular review)
 - Flexible start/end times
 - Access to emotional literacy support or trusted adults in school
 - Support for transitions (e.g. from home to school)
 - Opportunities for social interaction and activities that foster belonging
- Engage external professionals (e.g. educational psychologists, counsellors) where appropriate.

d) Working with Families

- Build trust and open lines of communication with parents/carers.
- Use first names and take time to listen to their story and concerns.
- Offer regular, blame-free updates and opportunities for feedback.

e) Training and Support

- All team members receive ongoing training in trauma-informed practice and attendance strategies.
- Team members are supported with supervision and opportunities to debrief after challenging situations.
- Attendance is seen as everyone's responsibility, not just the attendance lead.

f) Multi-Agency Collaboration

- Work with local authorities and external agencies to ensure a joined-up approach for students with complex needs.
- Share information (with consent) to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil.

g) Review and Evaluation

- Attendance plans are reviewed regularly.
- Progress is celebrated, and setbacks are addressed with understanding and further support.
- The policy is reviewed annually in consultation with team members, students, and families.

5. Recording and Data

- All attendance data is analysed in context (e.g. SEND, gender, family circumstances).
- Absences due to trauma, mental health, or wellbeing are coded appropriately and sensitively.
- Data is used to inform targeted interventions, not to stigmatise.

Example: Trauma-Informed Attendance Plan Template

Pupil Name	Date of Plan	Key team members Contact	Review Date

Attendance Concerns:

(e.g., patterns, triggers, recent changes)

Known or Suspected Trauma/Wellbeing Issues:

(e.g., bereavement, family breakdown, anxiety)

Support Strategies in Place:

-
-

Agreed Actions:

-
-

Family/Carer Input:

(Notes from meetings, family suggestions, agreed communication channels)

Review Notes:

(Progress, what's working, next steps)