

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Approved By / On	Grant Monaghan – Headteacher
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1.0 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022](#) (updated April 2023) guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). This policy also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance & Behaviour: Parental Responsibility Measures](#), updated May 2020 and the DfE guidance, [DfE Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance 2022](#) whilst acknowledging our obligations under both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Equality Act 2010.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)
- 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

2.0 EXPECTATIONS

In order for students to access all the opportunities that Horizons Academy Bexley provides, regular and punctual attendance is essential.

School attendance is everyone's business. Regular attendance ensures students have continuity of learning, can develop and maintain relationships with their peer groups and staff whilst also developing a pattern of commitment. This will create a positive attitude and support their transition into the world of further education, training or employment. Students who maintain regular attendance also benefit from participating in the attendance reward system which is designed to focus on recognition of, and praise positive sustained choices and also access the schools support mechanisms.

We acknowledge students on roll at Horizons Academy Bexley, may have had inconsistent attendance patterns throughout their recent educational history. These are typically for one of the following reasons;

- formal and informal suspensions (both fixed term and/or permanent)
- truancy
- undiagnosed medical conditions
- long term illness
- medical conditions such as depression or anxiety
- waiting for specialist school placements
- travel arrangements
- moving homes or area
- learnt behaviour
- young carer
- parents choosing to keep their children away from school
- family difficulties
- absence of value placed upon education.

In addition, although our students may have attended school, in some cases they may have spent time out of lessons for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to;

- Behaviour
- internal suspension
- relationship barriers

- undiagnosed needs (avoidance)
- refusal to enter a classroom.

Each and every one on these experiences has a clear and sometimes adverse effect on each child's educational progress, which compounds any difficulties they may already have or their perception of education.

In response, Horizons Academy Bexley creates a learning environment where students are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual. We assure they feel a valued member of the school community, where they are safe, secure and heard. We aim to improve and sustain their school attendance percentage and reduce unauthorised absence by offering students and parents/carers consistent support and advice and guidance on the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality whilst acknowledging the individual challenges families may face in achieving regular attendance. Horizons Academy Bexley will also work in partnership with agencies and support networks to identify and overcome the reasons to poor attendance with the aim of all students reaching their full academic potential and becoming productive members of our society.

We expect every student to achieve 95% attendance and above. Student attendance will be categorised at the following levels:

100%	<i>Excellent</i>
97%	<i>Good</i>
95%	<i>Expected</i>
90%	<i>Below Expected – Missing an average of 0.5 days per week of learning</i>
50% - 89%	<i>Classified as a Persistent Absentee</i>
0% - 49%	<i>Severely Absent</i>

3.0 INFORMATION OVERVIEW

3.1 REFERRAL, INDUCTION & ON ROLLING

Students who are referred through the Referral Panel which takes place fortnightly, you will receive a decision immediately to either long term secondary or Refocus secondary, primary or medical. If a representative from the referring school does not attend this may result in deferral to the next Panel Meeting.

Parents/carers and student will be invited to attend an Interview where the home school and associated professionals will be invited. If a student fails to attend for a Refocus Interview will be shared with the home school for them to address and liaise with Horizons Academy directly. If a parent/carer of a permanently excluded student does not attend 2 invites then notification will be sent to the home school and local authority. If they fail to attend a 3rd Interview then a request will be made to the excluding school to make a referral to relevant local authority CME Team. If the 15-day period has lapsed and the decision to permanently exclude has been upheld, Horizons Academy will refer to CME to avoid any student falling through the gap.

Following interview, all students will undertake an Induction which can vary between Key Stages but will include 'getting to know you' time, assessments and a tour of the school.

- Students who are attending Horizons Academy on a Refocus (non-permanent exclusion including an alternative to permanent exclusion) from a home school, will start their placement on a Monday unless exceptional circumstances as determined by Horizons Academy for example dynamics, school trips, inset days or logistical impact on the smooth running of the school.

- Should there be any time between Induction and the Monday start day the student will remain the responsibility of their home school.
- Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) will be placed on our roll, the day they complete their Induction.

Students who fail to attend Induction who are on a Refocus placement, the home school will be notified if the 1st Induction is missed and any subsequent appointments, with the expectation the home school will work in liaison with Horizons Academy to encourage attendance. At this point it is the Home school's responsibility to lead on monitoring attendance, referrals to external agencies, relating to absence as dictated within their own Attendance Policy. If a student is attending Horizons Academy Bexley following a permanent exclusion and fails to attend their induction, liaison with the relevant Local Authority Officers will take place including a referral to the Education Welfare Service or as a Child Missing Education, as deemed appropriate by Horizons Academy Bexley.

It is a clear expectation that Horizons Academy Bexley (Refocus including Helix staff, home school staff and all relevant linked agencies will work in partnership to achieve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality (with Professional Meetings being convened prior to placements commencing when deemed necessary by Horizons Academy Bexley). Professional Meetings are considered a crucial process in the management of students in a safe, appropriate manner. Failure of professionals, home or referring schools/academies to attend professional meeting may delay a students' start date, if Horizons Academy Bexley believes the professionals meeting is necessary to ensure the community safety and wellbeing of all learners is maintained

Once induction is completed all students, other than those permanently excluded (PEX) will be dual rolled with their home school. This means the home school will remain the 'Main' school and for the duration of the placement only, Horizons Academy Bexley will be recorded as 'Subsidiary' education provider.

Horizons Academy Bexley staff will liaise weekly with home school staff and all related external agencies in relation to individual student punctuality, attendance and safeguarding and are expected to work in collaboration to remove attendance barriers. This may include co-ordinated external referrals for example Family Wellbeing when required. This process will be further embedded by the Welfare and Outreach Staff supporting Professional Meetings, Induction, Reviews and Final Meetings when required.

Students who have prolonged periods of non-attendance will, in most cases find it difficult to return to the expectations of a classroom setting. During all students' time at Horizons Academy Bexley, we endeavour to identify the individual needs of all students as well as any family barriers that effect punctuality and attendance through daily assessment, intervention and review. Our ethos is to work on an early intervention by promptly identifying barriers and initiating specific support and guidance to enable students and parents to fully benefit from what Horizons Academy has to offer. Working in partnership with families and carers is an essential element of our work. We adopt a consistent, robust and honest approach to communication to ensure parents/carers have information and access to the intervention and support we can provide.

It is the responsibility of our parents/carers to ensure we are kept up to date with contact details and change of address. Additionally, parents are made fully aware from the outset and whilst their child attends Horizons Academy Bexley, of the national and Horizon Academy expectations regarding their student's level of attendance and punctuality so that their child can achieve their full social and academic potential.

In order to ensure consistency, accuracy of recorded attendance and access to appropriate early help and intervention, all home schools are provided with weekly copies of their student's

attendance certificate, as well as receiving adhoc communication relating to safeguarding disclosures/concerns. This ensures legal processes remain insitu at the home school and that the evidence needed to access external support remains accurate.

For those students who are permanently excluded and placed at Horizons Academy Bexley through 6th Day Provision or have a permanent exclusion rescinded their attendance and safeguarding will be the responsibility of Horizons Academy Bexley and are managed as outlined in the relevant policies.

3.2 REFOCUS & REINTEGRATION

Students who are dual rolled and fail to attend a Refocus programme (Refocus Secondary, Primary or Helix) or present with a level of risk that is deemed detrimental to the safety of the school community or the smooth running of the learning environment, can have their placements suspended or terminated at the discretion of the Headteacher and in consultation with home school and Local Authority. The student is then expected to return immediately to their home school, returning to single roll solely.

A referral requirement of students referred to Refocus is above 50%.

All students attending Refocus are expected to maintain above 75% attendance, failure to do so may result in the termination of the placement and a return to the home school. This decision will take a multi-agency approach, considering the contextual factors on a case by case basis.

Students who fail to re-engage with their home school are the responsibility of that home school. Horizons Academy Bexley remains available to work in partnership to initiate referrals to statutory agencies including but not limited to; Local Authority Children Missing Education Teams, as the safety of the child remains paramount.

Students who reintegrate back into or move on to a new school following either a permanent or rescinded permanent exclusion will be removed from our roll on their agreed final day of expected attendance at Horizons Academy.

It is the responsibility of the receiving school to address and lead on non-attendance with the support of Outreach Service if required. Horizons Academy Bexley remains available to work in partnership to initiate referrals to statutory agencies including but not limited to; Education Welfare Service or the Local Authority Children Missing Education Teams, as the safety of the child remains paramount. Further guidance on Children Missing Education can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

3.3 TRAVEL

There are various ways in which students can travel to Horizons Academy Bexley which is the responsibility of the parents/carers.

Horizons Academy Bexley Refocus can have transport provided by their home school or the Local Authority to encourage attendance or as part of a risk management strategy. Both options fall out outside of Horizons Academy Bexley's remit and control and are decided by the Local Authority and/or home school. Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child is ready for collection from home each morning at a designated time. In consideration for other taxi passengers and in order to arrive to school promptly, students will be allowed a maximum of five minutes 'waiting time' at which stage the transport may leave and it will then become the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their student arrives to school on time. Students who are not ready in time for transport and do not attend school will be marked as an unauthorised absence; alternate decisions will be made at the discretion of the Headteacher and/or Assistant Head for Attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to notify Horizons Academy Bexley or the transport provider directly of any absence related to illness and/or medical appointments at their earliest convenience to ensure absence is recorded correctly.

If a student is waiting for transport to be implemented, the student absence may be authorised and in line with Bexley Local Authority agreement this period of time may be recorded as a B code.

Should the provider remove transport it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child is in school on time, daily. The removal of transport does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code).

Students who travel to and from school by an Oyster Card also need to be aware Transport for London (TfL) have devised a Behaviour Code which they expect all young people to adhere to at all times when they are travelling on public transport. This code is in place to ensure everyone travels safely with due respect for fellow passengers, staff and property. Failure to adhere to the expected behaviours can result in this free concession being withdrawn. The removal of an Oyster Card does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code). Student absence due to the removal of an Oyster Card as a result of poor behaviour may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service as it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure alternative transport methods are put in place to ensure regular attendance is maintained. It equally remains the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their student still attends school regularly and on time following the loss or damage of their Oyster Card. Failure to attend for this reason therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code).

Transport for London (TfL) outline their expectations and rules which can be found at;

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/rules-of-travel-for-under-18s>

Further information regarding TfL Cycle Skills can be found at;

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/cycle-skills#on-this-page-3>

3.4 GOVERNING BODY AND MANAGEMENT/SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Teams take a daily active role in student attendance and punctuality, with Mrs Baldwin Assistant Head leading within this area. Horizons Academy maintains 'live' Attendance Action Plans which reflect both our cultural and data aims for academic year 2023 – 2024 and is based upon an incentivisation approach.

Horizons Academy leaders promote a culture of where we actively listening and endeavour to understand the challenges faced which can enable us to facilitate appropriate support with the aim of treating the root cause and removing any barriers.

Senior Leaders will receive, participate and review attendance information, data and reports on a regular basis and support the embedding of our attendance ethos. All members of the Operational Management Team will participate in regular Review Meetings for their areas of responsibility. Additionally, the Assistant Head for Attendance along with the Welfare staff will regularly liaise and review individual student attendance in partnership with the allocated Education Welfare Officer. This is to aid early identification of attendance barriers whilst actioning legal processes when deemed appropriate. Attendance will remain a standing agenda item on weekly senior leadership meetings. Adhoc strategic/review meetings will also be convened to address unforeseen attendance and punctuality themes occurring and changes in local/national policy and guidance, which may trigger adaptations to the Attendance Action Plan and school processes.

The Trust Board will receive and review regular attendance data included in the Academic Reports in addition to any other reports requested, to allow challenge, analysis and review of overall implementation and impact. We further share data with the Trust relating to both persistent and severely absences aligned with safeguarding. Annual attendance targets will be recognised within the School Development Plan and will also form part of individual relevant staff's performance management targets where appropriate.

3.5 PARENTS/CARERS

School Attendance and Behaviour Responsibility Measures 2013 (updated May 2020), describes a parent/carer as:

- *All natural parents, whether they are married or not*
- *Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person*
- *Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.*
- *Any person who has day to day responsibility for a child.*

The Department for Education (DfE) states parents/carers are legally obliged to:

- Secure education for their children of compulsory school age whether at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and
- Ensure regular attendance once the pupil has been registered (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition, parents/carers have a duty to support the importance and value of education as a whole. The Department of Education (DfE) guidance recommends: -

'Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore, they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education - and for those who deliver it - and ensuring that pupils complete homework on time. Parents should impress upon their children the need to observe schools code of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home.

In line with the DfE School Attendance and Behaviour Responsibility Measures (May 2020), parents/carers of all our students are expected to support their child's prompt and regular arrival to school. Appropriate support and interventions are made available following assessment, to families where attendance is a concern and deterioration or patterns of change are evident.

Attendance is everyone's business with specific internal support and intervention offered by;

- Welfare Officers
- Behaviour Learning Mentors
- Progress Coaches/TA's
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant (Maths & English specific)
- SENCO/SENCO Assistant
- Outreach Team
- Form/Class Tutors
- Heads of Key Stage
- Charlton Athletic
- Seconds Out Boxing
- Bexley Young People Drug and Substance Service

External support and intervention can include but is not limited to;

- Early Help (Family Wellbeing)

- Targeted Youth Service
- School Nurse
- Education Welfare Service
- Community Safety Team
- Schools Police (PC Lucy Gashi)
- Community Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Children's social care (CSC)

Referrals may be made by the school without parental consent when it is deemed necessary to ensure the wellbeing and/or safety of a child and where a child is deemed Gillick competent. Designated staff are however encouraged and expected to work alongside parent/carers to engage the student by identifying and working towards addressing barriers to learning to encourage, increase and maintain punctual and regular attendance.

Parents/carers are actively encouraged to instil the value of education and the importance of regular school attendance on future aspirations and goals. They are further encouraged to talk about their child's school day and take a positive interest in their child's work and progress. Parents/carers are supported in seeking help and guidance if their child is experiencing challenges.

Parents/carers **must** contact the school on the first day or absence and keep the school updated on a regular basis throughout the absence period. Should a student be absent from school parents/carers are expected to **inform the school before 8.30am daily** and we will notify parents/carers formally in writing should such time arise that medical evidence is required to authorise an absence.

**If we do not receive communication from home and are unable to contact home when a student is absent we may undertake a home visit in order to fulfil our safeguarding duty. Our aim is to maintain visual contact with students on our roll and establish any barriers preventing attendance that we can work in partnership to overcome.*

It is important and helpful to keep the school informed of any changes in family circumstances. This will enable Horizons Academy to appropriately support the child whilst in school or as part of their transition.

Recording attendance is a daily responsibility, with registration coding decisions are made in line with [Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022](#) (update April 2023) and overseen by the Assistant Head for Attendance. Parents/carers are encouraged, wherever possible, arranging appointments outside of school hours and notify the school of any change in circumstance that may impact on a student's attendance.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to provide the school with up to date home contact details to enable absence calls to be completed daily and contact in case of emergency. The school's inability or failure to make home contact to confirm a student's absence can result in a home visit from a member of staff until contact is made and/or the absence is addressed. Home visits will only be undertaken if the risk assessment deems it safe to do so and staff will be accompanied wherever practically possible. Should staff undertake a home visit on their own, they must follow lone working protocol by gaining line manager consent, informing a member of staff when leaving, providing time frame, sharing location and contact details. Additionally, we may collaborate with associated agencies where vulnerability or risk is high.

Staff will adopt a solution-focused approach when making home visits to;

- Facilitate wellbeing checks when a child is unseen for a period of time
- Listen and understand

- Identify areas for support to ensure their child attends school on a regular basis.
- challenge reasons for absence
- continually improve attendance
- investigate regular patterns of unauthorised absence
- Discuss next steps and potential sanction (enforcement)

Home liaison and support is expected to initially take the form of supplying parents/carers with basic, practical advice and may involve early morning 'wake up' calls before the start of the school day and on rare occasions collecting and transporting students into school when deemed absolutely necessary. However, it is expected intensive home support has to be time limited to allow families to develop their own coping strategies and build resilience in their child. Working with families and students to help identify and adopt their own solutions is a key element of a Welfare Officer. Where specialised support is required Welfare Officer will initiate external referrals whilst they continue to offer school-based support.

If contact via telephone or through a home visit is unsuccessful, a Welfare Check can be requested from police or children's social care. Prolonged failure to provide current contact details, failure to make direct contact, a child not being 'seen' or a concern for student wellbeing can also result in a safeguarding concern being raised. This can be actioned through a referral/consultation with social care and/or police in addition to the Welfare Check by the Police.

Should the school be made aware a student has left for school in the morning but has failed to arrive in school, a report to Police and/or social care may be initiated in partnership with parent/carer or on behalf of the parent/carers. Equally the same process will be followed if a student decides to leave the school premises without permission or has permission to leave but fails to return home. However, should a parent/carer, in any circumstance refuse to notify relevant agencies e.g. reporting to the Police (missing/101) that the child's whereabouts are unknown, Horizons Academy reserves the right to notify all relevant agencies (including but not limited to Police and children's social care) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student remains our priority.

**We mandatorily share student attendance information with statutory agencies upon formal request (in particular Bexley Education Welfare Service), who are currently working with the family/child including but not limited to social care, police, community safety and youth offending service in line with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Storage of information is also in line with UK GDPR.*

3.6 STUDENTS

Students are expected to value their education and themselves, with staff and parents/carers helping students to understand that an education will provide future post statutory choices and opportunities. All students are expected to arrive to school on time, ready and prepared for the day ahead, firstly by handing in their bags and phones at their respective entry points. Failure to adhere to this expectation will result in immediate communication with parent/carer and will enter school site once the student fully complies with the Behaviour Policy 2023 and then remain on site for the length of their timetable.

If a student chooses to leave the school site, parents/carers will be notified and they will be marked as unauthorised absence until they return. Students are never expected to leave school site without pre-agreed notification from parent/carer and agreed by a manager or senior member of staff, in partnership with home. We have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people (Section 175 of the Education Act 2002) and registering children is one of our fundamental safeguarding processes therefore we must ensure the registration marks are recorded correctly. Furthermore, should a student leave the school site and they are deemed at risk, their whereabouts

are unknown or we have a concern for their wellbeing, then we may notify statutory agencies including but not limited to, social care and/or police as it is our duty to ensure their safety, irrespective of consent. This may further include reporting a student missing either with or without a parent/care consent.

Students will be regularly rewarded for attendance improvements including certifications, positive calls home, vouchers and school trips and are further encouraged to talk to staff regarding any issues that may affect their attendance. This will provide staff with an opportunity to deal with matters quickly, appropriately and collaboratively to prevent a student from missing any learning and patterns becoming embedded.

3.7 STAFF

Some of our student's parents/carers do not value the purpose of education and will therefore fully see the importance of regular attendance. Improving attendance is a whole school approach and everyone's business, therefore we expect all staff to encourage and promote punctual, regular attendance.

Horizons Academy has high expectations for student attendance which are role modelled first and foremost, by our own excellent attendance. Discussions with students regarding absence or punctuality should always reflect our high expectations and in cases of doubt should be referred to our Welfare Officers in the first instance.

1. Our high standard for attendance is expected to be emphasised by staff to students at the initial interview/entry stage with both parents/carers and most importantly with the student at their initial interview and during Induction.
2. Staff are expected to regularly discuss the importance of attending school punctually and consistently, primarily during daily Tutor Time.
3. Attendance and individual student attendance visual displays should be present in Tutor Rooms to help staff promote and embedded attendance awareness.
4. Daily telephone calls, emails and letters will be undertaken to raise parent/carer awareness and improve attendance.
5. Staff are not permitted to allow or facilitate students leaving school site during the school day without a member of the Senior Leaderships consent and parent/carer permission.
6. If a student is unwell or suspended, designated staff will request the student is collected from site. A parent/carer may provide email consent or verbally (witnessed) consent but must agree to confirm their child has arrived home.
7. Staff are expected to relay to parents/carers and students, all help and support that is available.
8. Staff are expected to hold positive conversations with students, focusing on effort and improvement – 'focus on the positive'.
9. Tutor or learning staff are expected to call their students when they are absent, to explain their presence has been missed and they will be welcomed back.
10. Attendance is everyone's business and a joint partnership responsibility between the students, parent/carer, home school (where applicable) and Horizons Academy and we are all expected to make every effort to engage families in understanding and supporting the value of good attendance.
11. Staff are expected to encourage participation in Breakfast during Time in Tutor, especially for those travelling a distance every day.
12. Staff are expected to discuss attendance concerns with the Welfare Officer and Behaviour Mentor team to promote a preventative and early help approach to absence.

13. Staff must raise any safeguarding concerns impacting on student attendance through CPOMS and direct discussion with a DSL on the same day as the concern materialises.
14. Staff will discuss and plan daily interventions to address and overcome poor punctuality and absence weekly.
15. Assistant Head will meet fortnightly with Heads of Key Stage to review attendance data and discuss and plan attendance strategies.
16. Assistant Head and the Welfare Officers will meet fortnightly with allocated Education Welfare Officer Jo Moulton to review impact and plan actions on an individual student basis.

Area	Key Staff
Head KS4	Mr Sheaf
KS4 Operational Behaviour Manager	Mrs Barton
Head of Primary	Mr Ashby
Primary Operational Behaviour Manager	Mrs Clarke
Head of KS3	Mr Stephen
KS3 Operational Behaviour Manager	Mr White
Welfare Officers	Miss Slater
Welfare Officer	Miss Sabourn
Assistant Head (Attendance)	Mrs Baldwin
Headteacher	Mr Monaghan

4.0 DAILY SYSTEMS

4.1 REGISTERS AND ACTIONS

Horizons Academy must ensure student attendance and absence is recorded (AM and PM) on Arbor MIS, these recordings constitute the official register, which is a legal document (The Education (Pupil's Registration) Regulations 1995 and (Amendment) 1997). Registers will be taken as students arrive on school site. Each student is expected to arrive on time and in full correct uniform, ready for the day ahead. Every student has access to Breakfast in their Tutor Group to assist our students to be nutritionally fit for the school day and provide valuable time for staff to communicate with students to help build positive relationships and prepare for the day ahead.

If a valid, acceptable reason is provided for a student's absence the school will ensure the appropriate code is entered on the register. All codes are utilised in line with DfE [Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022](#) and reviewed regularly by Bexley Education Welfare Service with whom we share data on a regular basis.

Horizons Academy Bexley Morning	Horizons Academy Bexley Finish	Student Registration Codes
Refocus Primary (KS1/2) Arrive from 8.30am Monday – Friday Start 9am	2.30pm	8.30am-9am = Present (/) 9am-9.45am = Late Mark (L) 9.45am Onwards = Unauthorised Late Mark (U)
Refocus Satellite Centre Arrive from 8.30am Monday – Friday Start 9am	2.30pm	8.30am-9am = Present (/) 9am-9.45am = Late Mark (L) 9.45am Onwards = Unauthorised Late Mark (U)
Refocus Secondary Arrive from 8.45am Monday – Friday Start 9am	2.45pm	8.45am-9am = Present (/) 9am-9.45am = Late Mark (L) 9.45am Onwards = Unauthorised Late Mark (U)

Long Term KS3/KS4 Arrive from 8.45am Monday – Friday Start 9am	3pm	8.45am-9am = Present (/) 9am-9.45am = Late Mark (L) 9.45am Onwards = Unauthorised Late Mark (U)
<p>*A U Code means the student is in school and present, however they have arrived unacceptably late without an authorised reason and although the student is now in school the mark is not counted against the overall attendance percentage.</p> <p>*Any student who arrives late and receives a Late Mark or Unauthorised Late Mark (L/U Code) will be expected to make up learning/ time lost in their break or lunch period depending on how late, as outlined in the Behaviour Policy. Please note an Authorised Late Mark (U) equates to an absent mark and will detrimentally affect a student's overall attendance which can alone trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.</p>		

- Students with acceptable reasons for absence will be marked accordingly which is determined at the discretion of Assistant Headteacher and with reference to [Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2023](#) (updated April 23).
- Students with absence related to a medical or mental health and wellbeing diagnosis will be marked appropriately.
- We may determine no further absence will be authorised unless medical proof is provided and will send a letter notifying parents/carers of this decision.
- Horizons Academy Bexley is permitted by the Bexley Local Authority to use the B Code to support a student's attending any external appointment which endeavours to improve behaviour, engagement and overall attendance of school but the reasons why must be clearly defined when the register is recorded.
- All Attendance is recorded on Arbor MIS in line with UK GDPR 2018 and is shared with Bexley Local Authority
- It is the responsibility of the staff with specific attendance administration duties and staff undertaking related communication, to ensure attendance data is recorded accurately on Arbor, with relating comments evidentially logged.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by telephone to confirm a student's absence on a daily basis.
- If we are unable to make contact and we are not aware of a reason for absence, a Welfare Officer will endeavour to make a Home Visit, to again verify the absence and ensure student wellbeing.
- If contact cannot be made during a home visit we will request a Welfare Visit to the home address, in liaison with the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher and/or Operational Manager.
- If a student's whereabouts is unknown we may report a student missing if a parent/carer is unable or chooses not to. This decision is always made in the interest of the child's welfare and may take place without parent/carer consent. This process will also be undertaken with associated statutory agencies that maybe allocated e.g. children's social care and school's police.
- Prolonged failure to make contact or a concern for student's welfare may result in a consultation/referral to social care or Police in line with our Safeguarding Policy, in addition to above process.

5.0 POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

Early identification of issues is a faster and more effective way of seeing improvements in student attendance. When a student is working formally with an external agency, we actively encourage their involvement to support the sustained improvement of regular school attendance. Meetings will be convened outside of learning times wherever possible and with parental consent (outside of statutory social care and police investigations). Times of meetings will always aim to minimise impact and disruption of learning for all our students, we also recognise the impact on the social emotional

wellbeing that some meetings can have on behaviour and will always endeavour to plan post meeting support with relevant staff.

5.1 POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT

Horizons Academy Bexley take a solution-based approach, aiming to implement strategies as early as possible to unpick and tackle poor attendance and/or lateness and we have specific designated skilled members of staff to deliver the strategies as detailed below;

1. Welfare Officers – first day calling, home visits/support, 1:1 session, small group work, parent/carer partnership working, home school and voluntary/statutory agency collaboration, initiating referrals to external intervention.
2. Outreach Support – for students who will reintegrate back to mainstream school (or new school following permanent exclusion) working in partnership with home school staff.
3. Behaviour Learning Mentors – offering targeted support to address behaviour that may impact on attendance or classroom engagement.
4. Progress Coaches/Teaching Assistants – focusing a student on achieving their potential and supporting students to overcome learning needs.
5. Careers & Transition Officers – working across the school to support work experience (year 10), exploring post 16 options, encouraging focus and ambition and highlighting the value of education and grades through the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks. Partnership working with Welfare and Key Stage 4 staff to encourage punctuality & regular attendance in line with maintaining wellbeing.
6. Form Tutors/Teachers – utilising daily Tutor Time. Offering daily support to positive encouragement to inspire regular attendance and a positive approach to education.
7. External Agencies – allocated agencies are actively encouraged to work in collaboration with all school staff, students and parents including facilitating mentoring on site.
8. Education Welfare Officer – to provide independent advice and guidance, working in partnership with Horizons Academy staff and external agencies to aid action plans in a holistic manner.
9. Schools Police – working both on and off site to provide advice and guidance to students, staff and parents as an extension of our safeguarding support.

Examples of rewards:

- Weekly/termly/yearly certificates
- Positive calls/letters home
- Friday Breakfast
- Recognition Assemblies
- Inter Tutor Competitions
- Vouchers
- Tutor group rewards – activities/reward lunches
- Reward activities

5.1A ADAPTED TIMETABLE

Our Academies may also implement a Support Plan in the form of either a Welfare or Risk Support Plan – RSP/BSP and are applied as a short-term intervention as follows:

- ✚ **Risk Support Plans** are utilised to support improved attendance or to break the cycle of risk by providing allocated time for interventions and targeted support to take place. A Risk Support Plan can be implemented following a fixed term suspension to support reintegration or when a student's decision making may be deemed to expose others, the environment or

themselves to harm. This may also initiate an escalation of the level of support from universal to targeted or high level which may include external referrals

✚ **Welfare Support Plans** are applied to meet a student's current change in emotional, mental, physical or social needs. A WSP may also be implemented whilst a student's education health care plan (EHCP) is being finalised, if a student is in crisis or a child is subject to bail conditions or victim of an alleged/actual crime.

Welfare and Risk Support Plans are initiated by Horizons Academy, in partnership with the parent/carers and statutory agencies when appropriate.

By consenting to a Support Plan both parents/carers and Horizons Academy accept that when the child is absent for either part of the day this will be recorded as an absence but will be considered when reviewing the child's overall attendance %.

Support Plans are an internal interim intervention with the overall aim of a student successfully returning to full time education. Regular review of Support Plans takes a collaborative approach, again with parents/carers, external agencies if relevant, and the student.

Support Plans will be implemented for Looked after Students (LAC) or students on the Child Protection Register (CP), in liaison with all relevant statutory agencies and with Virtual School support. This will be further recorded/reviewed in the Personal Education Plan (PEP).

If the student is attending Horizons Academy Bexley on a Refocus programme, Support Plans are conveyed to the student's home school and reflected in both the weekly attendance certificates that are shared and any review meetings.

5.2 PUNCTUALITY CONSEQUENCES

Students who do not arrive on time will be expected to make up the time lost during their social time as follows:

Student arrives from 9am-9.30am	10 min Break Time Detention
Student arrives from 9.30-9.45am	25 min Lunch Time Detention
Student arrives after 9.45am	Both a 10 min Break Time Detention & 25 min Lunch Time Detention

**This process would not impact on students having access to lunch.*

All parents/carers and home schools where applicable, are made aware of the process at the start of academic year 2022/2023 or through their initial interview/induction period.

5.3 EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Horizons Academy Bexley works in close partnership with an allocated Education Welfare Officer as designated by Bexley's Education Welfare Service including allocated LAC Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer will meet weekly, fortnightly, monthly or half termly depending on the level of need. Bexley Education Welfare Officers work in close partnership with Horizons Academy, parents, carers and other relevant external agencies to support, improve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality. Successful outcomes depend upon effective collaboration, communication and the commitment of all concerned including students, parents and carers to always work in the best interest of the child.

In relation to attendance, under the Education Act 1996 Local Authority actions may include;

- The issuing of fixed penalty notices in accordance with their code of practice (applied to both unauthorised absence and unauthorised holiday)
- Attendance Surgeries (applies to punctuality and unauthorised absence)

- Fast Track Process including reviews
- Pre-Court Meetings
- Parenting Order
- Referrals to statutory external agencies
- Court action where necessary (Section 444 (1) and (1a) 1996 Education Act)
- Overseeing of Education Supervision Orders (Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989)
- Child employment and performance licences
- Links and liaison with the Elective Home Education Service advisers

5.3A ATTENDANCE REVIEW

Regular Attendance Review Meetings will take place with our allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO - Jo Moulton Bexley Education Welfare Service) to identify patterns, review and initiate legal action to formally address sustained absence or lateness after the registers are closed.

5.3B PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Working in partnership with the EWO, we will identify and review emerging patterns within the school. Actions will be agreed and implemented with the aim of preventing sustained and entrenched absence with the child's best educational interest remaining at the heart of all decision making.

5.3C ATTENDANCE SURGERY

Attendance Surgeries also take place on a termly basis at Horizons Academy Bexley for students with less than 90% attendance and those who are receiving unauthorised late marks (U codes) and despite our daily actions and support, no improvement has been made.

The Attendance Surgery process is deemed as an additional form of early intervention and a further means to identify and support improved attendance but it also has the capability to legally address continual decline.

Attendance Surgeries are usually a pre-requisite to statutory referrals Local Authority Statutory Education Welfare Service unless absence is a potential safeguarding issue and parents/carers fail to attend their given date/time. Attendance Surgeries take place on an allotted time and date, with the allocated Education Welfare Officer and Assistant Head (Attendance, Safeguarding, Behaviour & Careers). Operational Managers and/or Tutors will also be present to provide additional information, context, review expectations, initiate support plans and also provide positive guidance to students, parents/carers and School staff.

Parents will be provided with appropriate notice of the meeting time/date to ensure attendance however an Attendance Surgery can go ahead in the parents/carers absence when efforts have been exhausted to encourage parental/carers attendance. Home schools and any related external agencies may also be invited to attend in order to create a positive team around the student to overcome attendance barriers.

5.3D ATTENDANCE CONTRACTS

Attendance Contracts can be implemented at the Initial Surgery and reviewed if attendance or punctuality is not improved. Parents/Carers can also give signed consent to allow the Education Welfare Officer to liaise with GP's and/or medical professionals. Attendance Contracts can be used as evidence should a student's absence continually decline and escalate to a formal court process or equally as a basis to apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice.

All formal processes are equally applied to students who have Looked after Child (LAC) status, however this will take place in partnership with relevant statutory agencies including but not limited to Children Social Care and relevant Virtual School.

There are occasions when intervention, Support Plans and ongoing support unfortunately does not improve attendance. When avenues of applicable support and intervention has been utilised and there has been no sustained improvement to a student's attendance, then we will use the legal processes that are available through the Education Welfare Service (Bexley Local Authority).

5.3E LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY LOCAL AUTHORITY

In accordance with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022](#), (update April 2023) the London Borough of Bexley (Local Authority) has a requirement to primarily:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

For further information and guidance on Bexley Education Welfare Service please visit;

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-attendance/education-welfare-service>

Bexley Education Welfare Service

Allocated Education Welfare Officer: [Jo Moulton \(Senior Education Welfare Officer\)](#)

Telephone: [0203 045 4351](tel:02030454351)

Email: educationwelfare@bexley.gov.uk

6.0 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

We have a safeguarding duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate unexplained student absence. We robustly monitor absence through daily registers, home communication, home visits and welfare checks (police/children's social care). We equally have a duty to liaise with relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Services if a student is regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. This process may be initiated earlier than 10 days, when we deem it is in the best interest of the child to do so or there a concern for student wellbeing or safety including but not limited to; radicalisation, county lines, exploitation and gang association. Any immediate concerns for a student's safety will be reported to police and/or social care in line with our Safeguarding and Prevent policies, as well as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) statutory reporting and standards outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022).

We notify Local Authority CME Team and all relevant agencies of all children who leave the area but will undertake our own validation and tracking if forwarding address, new county or name of proposed new school is provided. Horizons Academy will always also endeavour to validate any move to a new school via a casual admission within 7 days and additionally report to the appropriate CME Team (not limited to Bexley), if there is no evidence this transfer has taken place. Horizons Academy records and tracks all students who meet the criteria of CME when a student is removed from roll and will make all necessary referrals in addition to formal CME referral, when deemed in the best interest of the child.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers refuse to attend 6th day provision at Horizons Academy Bexley, are expected to put this in writing. This will then be forwarded

to the home school who will be advised to make a referral to their own Education Welfare Service and also as a Child Missing out on Education if this take place prior to the 15-day Panel Hearing. We would request confirmation of these actions and record this information on our internal CME tracking for students who do not take a place with us. If the decision to permanently exclude has been upheld, the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies including CME, will become that of the Horizons Academy Bexley.

Bexley Child Missing Education Co-ordinator – Susan Garner

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: Susan.Garner@bexley.gov.uk

7.0 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is an option that parents/carers may choose for their student as an alternative to education within a school setting.

There is no requirement for any formal qualifications, or to be a teacher to educate your child at home and parents can choose to engage Private Tutors or other suitable adults to assist then although it is not a requirement to do so. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

'It is the duty of the parent of compulsory school age to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- a) To age, ability and aptitude, and*
- b) To any special needs they may have,*

Either by regular attendance at School or otherwise.'

Horizons Academy Bexley respects parents' rights to opt for EHE. However, if the decision has been made as a result of a dispute, we will actively encourage and support contact the allocated Education Welfare Officer or Local Authority Elective Home Education Officer for impartial advice on resolving the issues in order that a child remains at, or return to Horizons. In line with Bexley Local Authority guidance Horizons Academy provides a 15 days opportunity for a parent/carer to rescind their decision and return to our school role where viable.

Special attention will be paid by us to EHE applications for students/families that hold formal safeguarding status. Although any status does not remove a parental right to educate at home, any EHE applications will be actioned when relevant agencies have been notified and a plan of support has been requested by us to ensure the students best interest and welfare remains paramount.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers decide to EHE prior to attending 6th day provision at Horizons Academy Bexley will be requested to put this in writing addressed to their home school. We will then forward this to the home school that will be advised to make a referral to the LA EHE Officer if the 15-day period of appeal has not yet concluded. We would request confirmation that these actions have taken place and record this information on our internal CME tracking. If the decision to PEX has been upheld (15-day period), the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies will become that of Horizons Academy.

Before a parent makes the final decision to remove their child from the school roll, it is strongly advisable they contact the Local Authority's EHE Liaison Officer for an informal, impartial discussion regarding further information, including the procedure to be followed and guidance on the law.

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-attendance/educating-your-child-home>

8.0 OFF ROLLING

Removal of compulsory-school-aged children from roll is permitted under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Horizons Academy does acknowledge the importance of this decision, whilst adhering to our safeguarding duty therefore no student will not be deleted from a school roll without authorisation from the Assistant Head (Attendance, Safeguarding, Behaviour & Careers) or Headteacher.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 8 sets out the criteria under which compulsory-school-aged children can be removed from school roll. We summarise and will apply the following criteria to remove students from roll and make all relevant notifications and referrals:

- 8 (1) (d) The parent(s) have elected to home-educate (EHE). Parents have a right to withdraw their child from a school in favour of home education. The child must not be removed from the school roll until the parent has given written notification of their decision to educate the child at home.
- 8 (1) (e) The student has ceased to attend and is no longer residing within reasonable distance to the school (not limited to being out of Borough). Students can be deleted from roll where the distance to school is deemed unreasonable and the parent has no intention of maintaining the school place. Distance also comprises ease of access. A public transport journey time in excess of 75 minutes for secondary school pupil would be unreasonable. A walking distance exceeding two miles would be unreasonable for a primary school pupil. Schools may remove a child from roll under this criterion without waiting for confirmation of a school transfer. However, the school must obtain details of the child's new address. Where a parent has notified the school that the child is leaving the country and the school has reason for concern, such as a history of poor attendance or safeguarding issues, the parent should be asked to provide proof of travel and make all relevant referrals including mandatory reporting under PREVENT if considered relevant.
- 8 (1) (f) The student has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday. A student who has failed to return following extended authorised leave of absence can be removed from roll providing all three of the following three conditions are fulfilled:
 - i. The student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.*
 - ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.*
 - iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.*
- 8 (1) (g) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 days or more continuously Schools may remove missing children from roll providing all three of the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - i. At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school*
 - ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause*
 - iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.*

- 8 (1) (h) The student has been given a custodial sentence for four months or longer as a result of a final order. A child who is taken into custody for four months or more as a result of a final order can be taken off roll, unless the school has reason to believe that he/she will return to the school at the end of the period. Schools must not deregister a pupil who is remanded in custody and awaiting a trial or hearing at a future date.

If a child moves out of Borough and has resided there for a period of more than 20 school days and they have either failed or had minimal attendance, they may be removed from the school roll. This may result in a referral to both Bexley and the new Borough CME team and when deemed appropriate may also include a referral to children's social care and/or request for police welfare check. Students who are off rolled are recorded on our internal CME Log.

9.0 TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

In September 2013, the DfE amended the regulations governing requests for student holidays during terms time. These regulations make it clear the Headteacher may not grant holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

However due to the recent outcome of a relevant court case where the refusal to authorise a term time holiday was challenged and that challenge upheld, Bexley Local Authority has acknowledged consideration can be given by the Headteacher only (in his absence this responsibility will be delegated to Assistant Head Mrs Baldwin), where there are exceptional circumstances and the student has above 90% attendance on the date the application for leave is made. In order for leave to be considered under exceptional circumstances all requests must be made in writing in at least 7 days prior to the first day of proposed leave to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will consider the request on an individual basis and you will be notified of his decision in writing.

If a child is attending on a Horizons Academy Refocus placement at the time the holiday is taken (dual registered with their home school), the Refocus programme will be suspended for the duration of the holiday and re-started upon the students return from holiday (for periods of 5 days or more). During this time students will revert back to home schools' roll and responsibility. This approach ensures that students attending our Refocus programme receives access to the full intervention timeframe.

Parents/carers of students on roll at Horizons Academy through an alternative to permanent exclusion or as a result of a permanent exclusion and decide to take students out of school during term time without permission, may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice via an application to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service. **Permission will not be given unless the child's attendance is above 90% on day of application.** Penalty Notice fines are currently £60 per parent per student, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If you have any further questions regarding Penalty Notices please contact Bexley Education Welfare Service:

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-attendance/education-welfare-service>