



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction, Context and Purpose

1. Any absence from School affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning: there is a proven link between absence and underperformance in public examinations. Some universities and prospective schools also require us to share information about a pupil's attendance.
- 1.2. Parents should seek permission for planned absence in advance. In the Lower School, parents should contact the Head of Lower School. In the Upper School parents should contact the House Master or House Mistress for a period of one day or less. If the absence is to be for more than one day, permission should be requested from the Principal Deputy Heads, who will liaise with the Head.
- 1.3. Parents should not expect permission to be automatically granted and should not make travel arrangements before receiving permission.

2. Understanding types of absence

- 2.1. Every absence from School has to be classified as either Authorised or Unauthorised. As well as in lessons, pupils will be registered formally twice during the school day (AM and PM) in both the Upper School and the Lower School and, if no prior permission has been sought, a pupil's absence should be registered as unauthorised.
- 2.2. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from School for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.
- 2.3. Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been previously authorised. These include:
 - 2.3.1. parents/carers keeping children off School unnecessarily
 - 2.3.2. truancy before or during the School day
 - 2.3.3. absences which have never been properly explained
 - 2.3.4. shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
 - 2.3.5. day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised.
- 2.4. If a pupil misses 5% or more schooling in an academic year, for whatever reason, considerable damage is being done to their educational prospects. When this level is reached the Head of Lower School or the Principal Deputy Heads will decide on whether any further action should be taken.

3. Absence Procedures

If a child is unable to attend school for a day **due to sickness or unforeseen circumstances**, parents and guardians must:

- 3.1. In Lower School, parents are asked to email the Class Teacher in the Lower School, before 7.30am on the first day of absence, and each day thereafter if the length of the absence is not predetermined, or permission has not previously been sought from the Head or Head of the Lower School.

3.2 In Upper School, parents should email by 8am on the day of absence to absencesus@harrowschool.hk explaining the reason for absence and cc your child's **Housemaster/mistress** and **Tutor**. Parents will receive an automated reply to confirm the email has been received.

3.3 In Upper School, should a child be off school with illness for three days or more, a doctor's note giving a reason for the sickness and a diagnosis (in English) must be sent to the child's House Master/Mistress and their tutor

3.4 Pupils must not send any emails requesting permission for absence from school on behalf of parents or guardians.

3.5 Requests for **planned absences** which will require your child to miss two or more days of school should be made directly to The Head of Lower School (for LS pupils) or the Principal Deputy Heads (for US pupils). House Masters/Mistresses may authorize planned absences of up to one day only.

3.6 Requests for a child to leave school before the end of the school day should be made to the Class Teacher or House Master/Mistress at least 24 hours in advance. Once permission has been granted, pupils should sign out with the LS/US Office.

3.7 The School has a duty to report unauthorized absences of more than 7 days to the EDB. This should be done using the online procedures in Appendix A.

4. Lower School Registration

4.1. All Class Teachers should register their classes twice a day – in the mornings and also after lunch. This will constitute 'session attendance'. All Specialist Teachers should register every class that they teach, every lesson. Every Class will register, in the morning and after lunch, in their classes and then move to any specialist provision. Any pupil who arrives late to School should report to the Lower School office to be registered. If a pupil arrives late to a class, the Class Teacher should check whether they have been registered on the School's MiS. If a student has not been registered at School by 8.20am, the Lower School Office will phone their parents to check their whereabouts and ensure the child is safe.

5. Upper School Registration (Session attendance)

5.1. All House Masters / House Mistresses must register their Houses twice a day, at Morning and Lunchtime Call-over (boarders should also be registered after supper and at lights out). This will constitute 'session attendance'. Any student arriving after morning Call-over must report to the Upper School Office to be registered. If a student has not been registered at School by 8.20am, the Upper School Office will phone their parents to check their whereabouts and ensure the child is safe.

5.2. In the Upper School, any pupils leaving the site for a sporting activity, CCA or trip will be pre-populated by the individual in charge or with the assistance of the Upper School office where applicable. It is the responsibility of the individual leading the sport/trip to notify the office of any pupil who does not attend so that the registers can be altered accordingly. Where the activity is an irregular occurrence (i.e. not weekly) the organiser should also email a list of the participants to all teachers.

6. Upper School Lesson Registration (Class Attendance)

6.1. Staff must take a register every lesson on the School's MiS. If a pupil is not 'Present', staff should only use one of three registration codes: Present; Absent; Late. If a member of staff is unsure why a child is absent, they should enter 'Absent'. Colleagues should not take other pupils' word for the whereabouts of an individual and if there is any doubt, they should input 'Absent'. House Masters and House Mistresses may then subsequently change the School's MiS entry to ensure that it is accurate. Teachers should allow an appropriate length of time (approximately 10 minutes) and check the HCC register before sending an alert which will notify individuals to search for the missing pupil.

6.2. If there is an activity occurring off site, the registers for these lessons must be pre-populated by the staff member in charge with the assistance of the Upper School office, prior to leaving the site, so that we are always aware of who is on site.

7. If a member of the Prep or Senior School is absent, it is their responsibility to catch up with missed work, which should be posted on the online classroom for each subject. Staff are expected to be understanding and use their professional judgement when setting deadlines for work, bearing in mind the range of activities that all of our pupils are involved in.

8. Lateness

8.1. The Lower School day starts at 8.15am and pupils are expected to be in class at that time. The Upper School day begins with Call-over at 8.00am. If a pupil does not arrive in School by 8.20am in the Lower School or 8.00am in the Upper School, they should be registered as late.

8.2. If a child has a persistent late record the parents will be asked to meet with the Head of Lower School or one of the Principal Deputy Heads to resolve the problem after going through the appropriate process of escalation.

9. Illness

9.1. If the absence is for three days or more, parents should send a doctor's note giving the reason for the illness and the diagnosis (written in English). House Masters / House Mistresses and Class Teachers are responsible for following this up and liaising with the School's Health Care Centre.

Any diagnosis, regardless of length of absence, should be shared with the School.

10. Scheduled absence for Co-curricular activities

10.1. If a pupil has a scheduled activity (music lesson, sports fixture etc), the supervising teacher or relevant administrator should pre populate the register to this effect in advance of the lesson in order that absences are correctly recorded.

11. Counselling

11.1. If a pupil has a scheduled counselling session, the Counselling team should register the pupil as absent for medical reasons ('In School Medical') in advance of the lesson (with the assistance of the US office if necessary). Absence should be followed up with HMs, Matrons, the US or LS Office.

12. Pupil attending the Health Care Centre

12.1. If a pupil has had to visit the Health Care Centre during lessons, the HCC staff should register the pupil as absent for medical reasons ('In School Medical') as soon as possible to ensure teachers do not send alerts for absence. Should a pupil leave the site directly from the HCC, it is the responsibility of the medical staff to mark them as 'ill' in the School's MiS for the remainder of the day. The HM will then be responsible for subsequent days if applicable. Teachers can also check the live HCC log to see if an absent pupil is there.

13. External Training or Coaching Outside of School

13.1. Pupils are expected to participate fully in the SCA, CCA and pastoral programme which takes place within the timetabled school day. As a commitment to Harrow, pupils are expected to represent the School in team sports and other co-curricular activities as a priority over external training. Any training, coaching or lessons which take place externally within the school day do not take precedence over the school provision although we recognise the important role external clubs and private lessons play in the development of a pupil's growth and encourage pupils to continue to commit to these outside of the timetabled school day.

13.2. The only exception to a pupil training or taking lessons externally within school time is if they are performing in a particular activity as part of an elite selective team within a Club or beyond (eg. national age group representative level for which the required training hours total more than 4 per week.) In these cases, application for support within our Games programme, during SCA time or during pastoral time may be considered. If a pupil does not fall into the above category then they will be expected to be present in school for all of their lessons including for Games, SCAs, Facing Challenges and pastoral periods.

13.3. Pupils who request early leave for additional external lessons in other subjects (eg Music, Art, Drama) will only be granted early leave under exceptional circumstances, to be determined by the School on a case-by-case basis. It is expected that all of our pupils commit to the full school day.

13.4. For school activities which take place offsite (eg. Riding, Golf), pupils are expected to travel on school

transport unless prior written permission has been granted by the Director of Sport. It is encouraged that pupils apply to join the School programme if they wish to use the Games lessons for riding or golf training. Permission will not be granted for pupils to continue private riding lessons at a different stables during the school day.

135. Pupils should expect to be charged for lessons unless 48 hours' notice is given for exceptional absence or a doctor's note is provided after an unplanned illness. If a pupil misses more than three lessons in a row, their place may be offered to another pupil on the waiting list.
136. Pupils who are given permission to leave school early to attend an external training session must sign out via the Lower School or Upper School Office. Pupils will only be allowed to leave the school site if their name is on a list which has been approved by the relevant member of SLT.
137. Applications to attend any external lessons during school time should be made in writing directly to the pupil's HM. If the HM thinks they hit the criteria detailed in 12.2 they should refer it to the Deputy Head Co-Curricular and Organisation who will then explore the application to ensure it hits the criteria and the parents will be contacted within 5 working days of the application with a response.

14. Holidays In Term Time

141. All applications for holiday leave must be made in advance, either to the Principal Deputy Heads or the Head of the Lower School, and it is at the School's discretion. Any requests received by Class Teachers or House Masters & House Mistresses should be forwarded to them. In making a decision, the School will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and the stage of a pupil's education.
142. Parents should not expect permission to be automatically granted and should not make travel arrangements before receiving permission.
143. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the School, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

15. Absence due to Examinations

151. Any requests for extraordinary absence relating to exams or university interview should be directed to the HM for a one-day absence or the Principal Deputy Head (Curricular) and the Principal Deputy Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing) in case of longer absences.
152. If permission for taking an exam is granted, it is recorded as Authorised Absence. Time will only be granted for the morning or afternoon preceding the exam unless it is on a Monday morning when no absence will be granted. Any exceptional requests will be considered on an individual basis.
153. Permission will not be given for 'preparation time'. If a student misses school to prepare this will be recorded as an 'Unauthorised Absence'.
154. All attendance data may be referred to in any school or university application reference/letter of recommendation.
155. The School will not authorise absence to sit examinations for subjects being studied at the School for any examination series. This includes:
 - 155.1. Sitting examinations for different boards in a subject being studied at school (eg. Sitting an International A-level when studying for a UK A-level in school)
 - 155.2. Sitting a different version of the same subject (eg. sitting Chinese Foreign Language when studying for Chinese Second Language in school)
156. The School will consider authorising permission to sit examinations in subjects that are not being offered at the School but the School should be aware at the earliest possible stage that a pupil is studying for and will be entering an extra subject outside of school. This information should go to the Deputy Head (Academic).
157. The School does not support the sitting of early public examinations and will not authorise this absence.

16. Absences for University Matters

- 16.1. Admissions test for UK universities

16.1.1. Pupils applying for certain university courses (e.g. Medicine, Law, courses at Oxford and Cambridge) may be required to take admissions tests (e.g. UCAT, LNAT, ESAT). These are not exams requiring preparation other than familiarisation with the exam format and past papers from official admissions test websites. Pupils should register in good time for these admissions tests at an available test centre, minimising absence from School as far as possible.

For each such test, a day's absence from lessons will be authorised.

16.1.2. In the event that an admissions test is due to be taken in School, a half-day's absence from lessons will be authorised. Usually this will be the morning before the exam in the afternoon.

16.2. SAT and ACT for US colleges

16.2.1. Pupils applying to US colleges may be required or recommended to take the SAT or ACT. Pupils should take their first attempt at the SAT /ACT in the first term of Year 12 at the earliest. Permission will not be granted for absence earlier than Year 12. The School will authorise a half-day's absence for a pupil to prepare for the SAT or ACT on one occasion. Requests for multiple absences to sit the SAT or ACT will not be granted.

16.2.2. Pupils should be wary of taking the tests too many times. Some colleges allow schools only to report the best scores; some will require all attempts to be reported.

16.3. Interviews

16.3.1. For UK universities, pupils are usually given around 10 days' notice of an interview, which will often take place online. Pupils should attend lessons on the day of an interview but should not be expected to undertake formal assessments. Pupils will be excused from their commitments an hour in advance to collect their thoughts ahead of an interview.

16.3.2. Some US colleges require applicants to have an interview. These are very informal, take place in Hong Kong, and are conducted with a recent alumnus rather than an academic member of staff. Pupils should be conscious not to take time out of School for these: such interviews can be arranged for evenings or weekends. The School will not authorise absence for a pupil to prepare for a US alumni interview. However, we will consider giving a pupil the afternoon or morning off school if the interview cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.

16.4. Other Universities

16.4.1. Some overseas universities insist on testing taking place in person. In these circumstances, or any other where it is deemed necessary for the pupil to travel out of school for testing, a maximum of five days' authorised absence in any school year may be granted by the Principal Deputy Heads.

16.5. University Visits

16.5.1. Visits for in-person testing or visiting overseas universities should as far as possible be arranged in holiday time. If this is unavoidable, a maximum of 5 days may be authorised.

16.6. All absence requests for university matters must be made well in advance. The School reserves the right not to authorise absence for overseas visits if less than two weeks' advance notice is given.

16.7. Extended absence during exam years is to be avoided as far as possible. The School reserves the right not to authorise absence for a pupil in an exam year group whose academic progress may be impacted negatively by the absence. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

17. Absence for Interviews and Tests for Overseas Schools

17.1. Many schools in the UK and other overseas countries will be prepared for pupils to be tested at Harrow Hong Kong. In the first instance, families should try to arrange for testing and interviews to be undertaken at school, to minimise absence. Testing in School takes place on the last Friday of each month and incurs an administration cost to the parents.

17.2. Some overseas schools insist on testing taking place in person. In these circumstances, or if it is deemed necessary for the pupil to travel out of school for testing, a maximum of 5 days' authorised absence in any school year may be granted by the Principal Deputy Heads.

173. Visits for testing or visiting overseas schools should as far as possible be arranged in holiday time. Again, if this is unavoidable, a maximum of 5 days may be authorised.
174. It is important that requests are made well in advance. The School reserves the right not to authorise absence for overseas visits if less than 2 weeks' advance notice is given.
175. Extended absence during exam years is to be avoided as far as possible. The School reserves the right not to authorise absence for a pupil in an exam year group whose academic progress may be impacted negatively by the absence. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

18. Online Learning Protocols

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the School has developed the ability for pupils to access lessons by Zoom. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, based on the Online Learning Protocols which can be found in the Staff Handbook

Reviewed: October 2024

Next review: June 2025

Owner: Principal Deputy Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing)

Appendix A: Reporting Unauthorised Absences of more than 7 days

This should be done using the online mechanism at the link below

https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/spa-systems/student-info-management-system/eF_A_EN.pdf