



AUTISM & ADHD SUPPORT
for parents/carers of children with
ADHD and/or on the Autistic Spectrum

Some information for Parents about Attendance Issues in Herts Schools

1. In line with DfE Guidance and Herts Guidance on attendance, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher whether or not to authorise absence.
2. The guidance suggests that Head teachers cannot request medical evidence unless they do not believe the parents that their child is really ill.
3. The guidance suggests that Schools should avoid using the Penalty Charge route if there are “mitigating circumstances” such as bereavement, SEND provision not being met, evidence of genuine ill health.
4. Schools are judged by Ofsted on their attendance, but Ofsted do not expect blanket high levels of attendance, they expect schools to be able to demonstrate they are working with parents and taking steps to ensure the student is well supported in cases of Persistent Absence. This does not necessarily have to mean that they have issued Penalty Charges.
5. Schools can phone the Attendance Helpline run by HCC Attendance team to get advice on how to proceed, but the advice they get will depend on the information they share with the Attendance Officer. It is just advice – the Attendance team cannot insist on a course of action.
6. Schools can request “Statutory Intervention” from the Attendance Team. This is different from the Penalty Charge route. The “Statutory Intervention” route is the route that leads to prosecution of parents by HCC. However, it means that Attendance Officers will thoroughly investigate the case and identify any SEND, whether needs are being met and whether provision is adequate. While it therefore sounds a scary threat for parents when schools say they are going to refer to the Attendance Team, actually this is a positive move for parents of children with SEND. It is very rare that Herts have prosecuted the parents of a child with SEND and have usually found other solutions.
7. The Attendance team will not encourage EHE as an alternative in situations where a child is not able to attend school, particularly for children with SEND. This would only be suggested in very specific circumstances where it is agreed by all to be in the best interests of the child.
8. Parents can ask for support from the Attendance Team if they are in dispute with the school over Attendance. They can call the HCC Children’s Services Customer Call Centre on **0300 123 4043** and ask to speak to someone from the Attendance Team.