Attendance Policy

October 2024

Approved by:	Jacqueline Mowat Graham Blair	**Date:** 17.10.2024
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to improve school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Board of Trustees

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor responsible for attendance is Debra Coldwell and can be contacted via debra.coldwell@hareside.school

2.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- The Head Teacher is Jacqueline Mowat and can be contacted via Jacqueline.mowat@hareside.school

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jacqueline Mowat and can be contacted via Jacqueline.mowat@hareside.school

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Deborah Coates and can be contacted via Deborah.coatees@hareside.school

2.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

2.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher or attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The afternoon register will open at 1:00 and close at 1:10pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

There is a dedicated school absence line which parents and carers can access via the main school telephone number – 01670 712440 option 1.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents and carers may request leave of absence during term time for their children via the application form available outside the main school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session
- Late arrivals will be monitored and, if persistent, will trigger a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss any barriers and offer support to improve punctuality.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will initiate 'First Day Response'. This will follow the outlined procedure below:

1. If any child is not registered as present after registration closes at 9:00am, a list will be made.
2. Staff will listen to any voice recording messages on the designated absence line
3. A visual check will be made around school in case register codes have been submitted in error
4. Phone call made to parents/carers to confirm reason of absence and to discuss procedures and provide support for families if needed
5. If no contact is made following the phone call, a message will be recorded on MIS system around no contact.
6. The school will decide if other emergency contacts are to be contacted in order to ascertain reason for absence and safeguarding of child/children
7. If there is still no contact or reason given then we will carry out a home visit and liaise with other agencies if necessary.
8. If at any point we have any concerns around the absence then we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

Upon making contact with parents or carers, we will

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will report on children's attendance annually to parents through the child's annual school report.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if they do not meet expectations (i.e. if attendance falls below 95%). We will work closely to support families should this occur.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be **'exceptional circumstances'**. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher/principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as including situations such as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during a terminal illness or death of a family member (compassionate grounds).

Please note **evidence would be required.**

Circumstances that are NOT considered exceptional include:

- Parents' employment restrictions
- Visiting family and friends who have different school holidays
- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Celebrations of birthdays etc.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, unless there are extenuating circumstances, at least 2 weeks before the absence. This should be in accordance with our leave of absence request form (a hard copy is available in front of the main school office).

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may also include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address.

4.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

· The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

· One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

· Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

You should be aware that **failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school** can amount to offence contrary to s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with current guidance, this period of absence is capable of triggering a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Team for a Penalty Notice. Should a referral be made and the Local Authority decide to issue a Penalty Notice, then: you will be required to pay:

For **a first offence**, the Penalty Notice will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid after the 21 days – it must be paid within 28 days.

For **a second offence**, the amount is £160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.

Please note that a third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. Prosecution / other interventions will be considered (you should also be aware that a Penalty Notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.

A penalty notice may also be issued

- where parents allow their child to be **present in a public place during school hours** without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period suspension or permanent exclusion. These penalty notices are charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- for **irregular attendance**, such as holidays within term time without permission

If issued a fine, or penalty notice:

- **The first penalty notice** issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **A second penalty notice** issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- Please note that a third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child **within three years** of the date of issue of the first. Prosecution / other interventions will be considered (you should also be aware that a Penalty Notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each week, during our celebration assembly, we award a cup to the class with the highest attendance in each key stage.

6. Attendance monitoring

Our school attendance officer, Deborah Coates, monitors and analyses school attendance daily, half termly, termly, and annually. She meets regular with our Educational Welfare Officer, Carol Barnfather. Together we look at barriers to attendance, family support and promotion of both the negative and positive impact attendance can have.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- meet regularly with our Educational Welfare Officer, Carol Barnfather

We formally contact parents as soon as attendance drops below 95%, alerting parents and carers to our concerns about the child's attendance and offering our support. We monitor closely, looking at family needs as well as those of individual children. We request medical evidence if there is no improvement or a continued decline after our initial contact and offer of support. If there continues to be no improvement or a continued decline, we will refer to the Educational Welfare Officer for additional action.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024'

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of travel arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day