



# Attendance Policy

Adopted Date: **20/01/2020**

Review Date: **20/01/2023**

*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.  
The terms of the Safeguarding Policy are to take precedence over the  
guidelines set down in any other policy.*



## AIM

The aim of Hadleigh Community Primary School's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, students and all school staff and Governors.

The school meets its obligations with regards to attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- 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
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.



## The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Ensures that attendance registers are kept promptly and accurately
- Differentiates appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence
- Responds to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care
- Contacts parents when they are concerned about a student's absences, and recording the contact
- Consults with the Education Welfare Service if a student's attendance continues to give cause for concerns
- Promotes regular school attendance (all staff)
- Monitoring attendance and lateness (Headteacher and Governors)

## 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.

## Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## Parent's Responsibilities

The school's policy is to remind Parents/Carers of their responsibilities regarding attendance of their children:

- The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually.
- "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence". (NB where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")
- If a pupil/student is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's/student's absence. This should be by telephone on the first day of absence and on any subsequent days.
- If absence is required for reasons other than illness, an absence request should be submitted in advance, in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.
- If late, pupils must be signed in at the main office. If a pupil has to leave during the school day for any reason, he/she will be signed out at the main office.
- Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance, the school may, following Local Authority guidelines and at the Headteacher's discretion, grant up to two weeks' term-time absence in any academic year.

Attached to this policy is a 'Guide for Parents' which sets out parental responsibilities indicated above. This may be updated at any time without needing to review this policy.

## Pupil's Responsibilities

Pupils should ensure they are in school by the correct time in the morning and after breaks, ready to learn.



## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

### Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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 the attached DfE attendance codes at the end of this policy.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:50am-9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:50 and will be kept open until 09:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 01:00pm for Key Stage 1 and will be kept open until 01:15pm and 01:15pm for Key Stage 2 until 01:30pm.

### Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:00am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents must notify the school of an unplanned absence by telephoning or email/School Gateway. This contact must be made on the first and subsequent days of absence, leaving an appropriate message detailing the nature of the illness and details such as the name of child and name and relationship of the person calling.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

### Medical or Dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.



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

## **Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

## **Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## **Reporting to parents**

Pupils' attendance is reported to parents every term in their written report and is available to parents on their School Gateway account.

## **Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

## **Legal Sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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



If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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



## APPENDIX - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school by 9:00am but not before 8:40am unless otherwise arranged to be ready to go into class between 8:50am and 9:00am. The register is taken at 9:00am. Afternoon school starts at 1:00pm for Reception and Years 1 and 2 and at 1:15pm for Years 3 and above.

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Registers close at 9:15am – pupils arriving after 9:00am but before 9:15am will be marked as Late – Authorised. Pupils arriving in the morning after 9:15am will be marked as Late – Unauthorised.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

### 3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence due to illness. As part of our Safeguarding procedures, if no reason for absence has been given and your child has not arrived in school by 9:30am, we will telephone listed contacts until we are able to confirm the child's safety.

For absences, other than illness, an email or school gateway message should be completed, preferably in advance. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

### 4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Any routine appointments should be after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Extended family visits abroad (only when prior approval has been given – see question 7)
- Leave granted in advance for participation in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the LA
- Off-site approved educational activities
- Other extreme and unavoidable circumstances

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

### 5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays. The school reserves the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices if deemed appropriate.

### 6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should put in a written request by email or via School Gateway, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:



- your child's age
- the time of year
- overall attendance pattern of your child

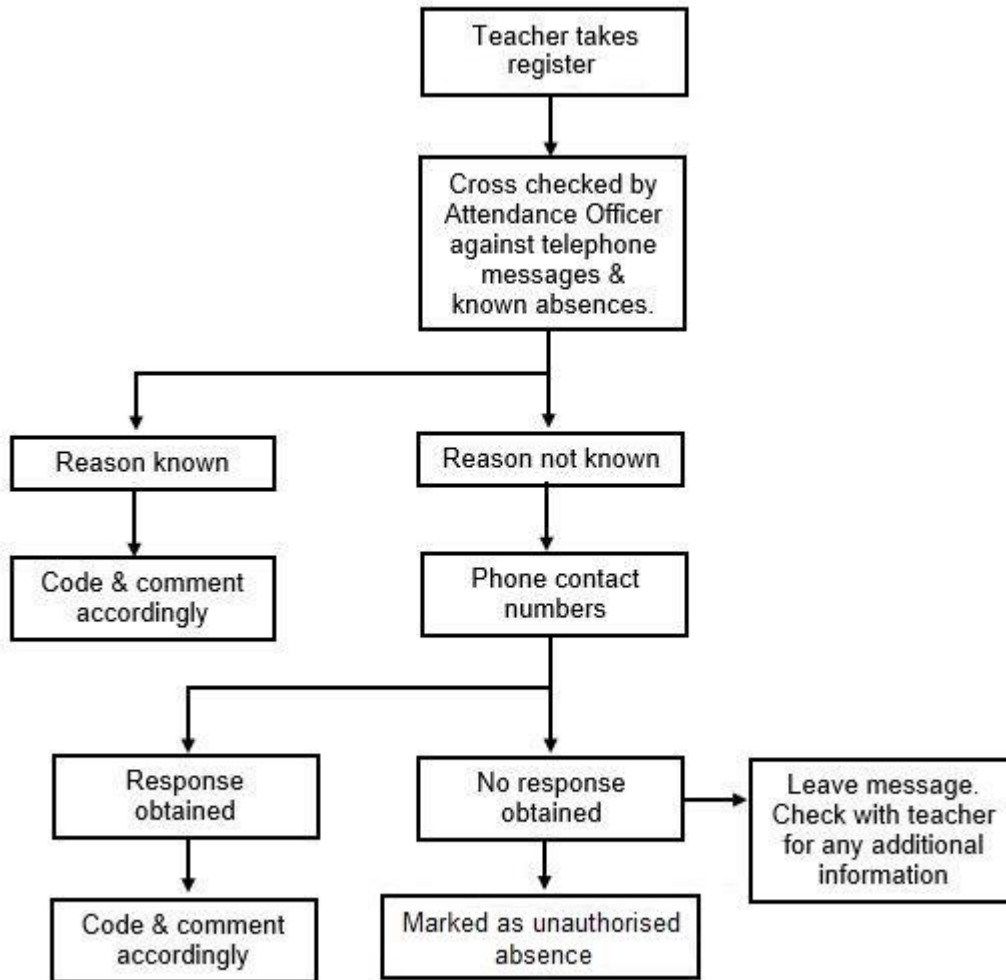
The Headteacher will not approve your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with SATs.

## **7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.



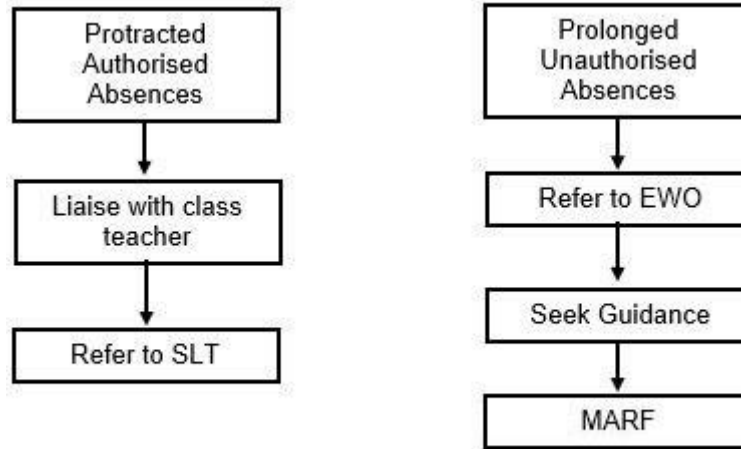
ABSENCE ACTION STEPS



Half termly meetings are held with EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and information is passed to Headteacher.



PROTRACTED/PROLONGED ABSENCE STEPS





## ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

| CODE | DEFINITION                    | SCENARIO  |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| /    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| \    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| B    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |