



Attendance policy

Date approved by Governing body	January 2019
Date of next Review	September 2019

This policy has been reviewed; to the best of our knowledge we do not feel it impacts negatively on any specific group or individual within our school community

Introduction

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age (between 5 years old and 16 years old) registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence and punishable in law. In the event of regular unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Education Welfare Service. An offence is not, however, committed if it can be evidenced that:

- The pupil was absent with agreement of the school
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending school by an unavoidable cause – this must be evidenced by a medical report or other suitable documentation
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong

Only the school, within the context of law, can approve the absence, not the parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note (or phone call/email/text) in explanation does not in itself oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. **If, after investigation, doubt remains regarding the absences or no reason is provided for the absence it must be treated as unauthorised.**

Why must my child go to school?

Having a good education will ensure you provide your child with the best start in life and the best possible opportunities for their future. If your child does not attend school regularly they will fall behind with work and may lose friends, causing them to lack in essential social skills.

What does the law say?

By law, all children between the age of 5 and 16 must receive full time education, from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and to the last Friday in June of the academic year in which he/she turns 16 years old. During this time your child must strive to remain above the school attendance target (around 95-97%) and attend school as regularly as possible. If your child's attendance falls below 90% they are deemed in law as a 'persistent absentee' and your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service. It is the school who must give permission for your child to be absent, not the parents. If your child does not attend school regularly your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service and legal action (under The Education Act 1996 – Section S7 444 (1) and 444 (1A)) may be taken.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 States:

“The parent/s of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- a) to his age ability and aptitude and***
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”***

If found guilty of your child not attending school on a regular basis the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500.00 and/or a custodial sentence of up to three months. If a parent is being prosecuted under Section 444 (1A) defendants are required to attend court as a custodial sentence may be imposed, if they fail to do so a warrant may be issued.

Registration & the responsibility of the school

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked as either present or absent. Registers must be completed by an allocation time on each morning and afternoon by law. Registers must also show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school.

Accurate registration and the preservation of security of registers are the responsibility of the Headteacher. Registers may be needed as evidence in court where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences and inappropriate authorisation of absences could compromise proceedings.

Registers will usually be maintained and completed in SIMS/Arbour or Integris. Should manuscript registers be necessary they must be completed in black ink and any corrections/amendments made in such a way that the original entry, and the correction/amendment, are clearly distinguishable. Correction fluid MUST NOT be used on legal documents such as registers.

Reporting Absences

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible. This communication should ideally be made before the morning registration is taken. Parent contact on the first day of absence should be the normal expectation. One of the following methods should be used:-

- Call the school office on 01708 342453
- Email the school on office@hilldene.sch.uk
- Text the school on 07542 760033
- Inform the classroom teacher

Please make sure you leave the following information:-

- Child's name and class
- Detailed information regarding why the child is unable to attend school
- Estimated time that the child will be absent from school

If the school have not been notified by mid-morning of a child's absence a telephone call or text message will be made to the parent requesting the reason. If no contact is made by the parent and the school cannot make contact with the contacts provided for the child a home visit may be completed by the school staff or Education Welfare Service. It is essential that you keep the school updated on a daily basis should you child be absent for more than one day.

Punctuality

It is important for your child to arrive at school on time as lateness is detrimental to their learning and the learning of others. It is important to note that persistent lateness constitutes irregular school attendance in law. Registers will be taken at 8:55am in the infants and 8:50am in the juniors, your child should arrive to school around 5-10 minutes before this time. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as 'L' (late before registers have closed). Arrivals after 9:25am for infants and 9:20am junior will lose their mark and will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence – late after registers have closed). If your child arrives late for school they will need to be signed in via the main office by an adult giving the reason for their lateness. Parents of children who travel to school on their own will be contacted by the Attendance mentor for the reason for lateness. Figures of lateness will appear on their school report and attendance certificates. Below is a graph showing how arriving late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



Illness, medical and dental appointments

If a school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness, the absence must be treated as authorised. If a child is off for 5 days or more due to illness then medical evidence must be provided. Without medical evidence the absences will be unauthorised. The school may request medical evidence for recurring illness eg sickness and diarrhoea or patterns of absence due to illness eg Fridays and Monday. A parent/carer must phone the school on the child's first day of absence to inform them of the reason. A note should be supplied on the child's return to school. If no note is received, one reminder letter will be sent requesting the reason for absence. If no note is forthcoming within 2 weeks' following the reminder letter, the absence is likely to be marked as unauthorised.

Advance notice of medical/dental appointments needs to be given to the Attendance Mentor, for these absences to be authorised the school will need a copy of the appointment letter or appointment card. Pupils leaving/returning to the premises in session time must report to the school office where such movements are recorded for safety reasons. Where possible, medical/dental appointments need to be made out of school time.

If your child is absent due to sickness they must be absent for 24 hours following the last time they were sick.

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. If you fail to inform the school of an absence the child will receive an unauthorised absence code. These codes are followed up within 2 weeks with a letter home requesting the reason for the absence.

First day calling:-

- To take place before 11am
- Call everyone on the contact list
- If an overseas ringtone, consider that the family may have taken a holiday without explanation
- Leave a message if there is a voicemail facility and send a text message
- If not reply, consider whether the children have additional agency support, such as a Social Worker, and contact them
- Consider any in school intelligence. No explanation from a supportive family is very concerning, so don't just concentrate on children who you already know to be vulnerable
- Make a home visit. Put a note through the door if there is no answer
- Contact 101 for a police welfare check

The school will follow the Local Authority agreed procedures for any child missing from education for over 20 school days. However, the actions listed above would be carried out from the first day of absence.

Leave of absence during term time

The school takes a firm view on any absence during term time. Under new legislation introduced in 2013 the school cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time. If a student is absent prior or does not return after a school holiday (half term, Christmas, Easter or Summer) the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and such this will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. All absences are shown on school reports and copies are passed onto secondary schools/colleges/sixth form schools.

There are rare occasions which may be deemed as 'exceptional circumstances', where such the leave would be authorised by the Headteacher. These circumstances would usually be something which cannot be planned for in advance. Therefore weddings, family holidays, birthdays, parties and surprise trips, etc. will not be authorised. If you believe your circumstances fit this description you must put this in writing to the

Headteacher and/or arrange a meeting with them at your earliest convenience. The decision of whether the leave is deemed as 'exceptional' is the Headteachers.

If you are planning to take leave during term time you must book an appointment with the Attendance Mentor to complete a 'leave of absence' request form. If a request is refused and the parent/carer decides to take their child out of school the details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued. The Penalty Notice will be issued at £60 per child, per parent. This amount will increase to £120 per child, per parent if it is not paid within 21 day.

Unavoidable Closures

Unavoidable closures through bad weather, difficulties associated with the premises, elections, etc. should be indicated on the school registration system. Pupils will be marked as a 'Y' (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances), this mark will not affect the child's attendance figure.

Traveller Absences

If your child is unable to attend school due to travelling you must provide the school with evidence of the fair, event, etc. which you will be attending in advance. If the details are not given to the school before the leave is taken it will be marked as unauthorised and your child may be considered as 'missing in education' and referred onto the relevant agencies. The school must know the whereabouts of all children, at all times, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each individual child.

Travellers and Show People are granted, by law, up to 200 sessions (100 whole days) 'travelling' each academic year. During this time the child will be marked on the register as a 'T' (Travelling Absence), if evidence of the event where the family are working is given to the school in advance. Once a child reaches the 200 allowed sessions the parents will be notified and any further leave will be marked as unauthorised. If you are travelling with a registered tutor please notify the school of this and information of your child's current curriculum can be shared to ensure the correct work is completed.

Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents 3 times a year at parents evening. A copy of your child's attendance record is sent home at the end of every academic year along with the school report. If there is a concern with your child's attendance you will be contacted by the Attendance mentor and support may be put in place to improve the attendance.

The Attendance Mentor will contact parents if their child's attendance drops below 93%.

The Educational Welfare Officer will work with parents if their child's attendance drops below 90%.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Rewards are awarded as follows:-

- Weekly class rewards are given for 96%+ attendance.
- Termly awards are given for 100% attendance.
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- Class Amazing Attendance awards for 100% attendance
- Weekly attendance is displayed in the school hall and celebrated in the school assembly on Mondays.
- All pupils with 100% for the academic year will receive a certificate and a reward trip.
- School will consider other incentives, eg weekly incentives for PA pupils who manage to attend for a full week.
- Weekly attendance percentage for the whole school is visually displayed around the school.

- Letters home for improved attendance.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance mentor monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

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.

The Attendance Mentor and the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority will be working with families of pupils who fall below the threshold.

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.

Attendance data is collected and stored in order to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a concern, and to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board 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 mentor

The attendance mentor:

- 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

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.

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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		

C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been 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	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	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	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	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	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
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

