



Attendance policy

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| Date approved by Governing body | |
| Date of next Review | September 2022 |

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

Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school 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.

2. 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.

3. School procedures

3.1 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

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Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health. You must notify the school by one of the following methods:-

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

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

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. The school may request medical evidence for recurring illness eg sickness and diarrhoea or patterns of absence due to illness eg Fridays and Monday.. 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 in advance.

3.3 Absence due to 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.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Your child needs to arrive at school on time, infants 8:55am and juniors 8:50am. If your child is due to arrive late for school the school office must be informed. Your child 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.

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.

3.5 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 weekly 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

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- 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.

3.6 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 a member of the pastoral team and support may be put in place to improve the attendance.

Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance drops below 93%.

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

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for a leave of absence during term-time

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.

If leave of absence during term time is needed please contact the school office and the Headteacher will contact you to discuss your request. Ideally this should be submitted 2 weeks prior to the time off needed to allow for consideration and paperwork to be completed. Each case will be considered on an individual basis. You will be notified by letter whether the time off has been authorised or not.

Unauthorised Absence

Children should attend school, unless they are unwell or have a medical appointment. Family trips and holidays during term time will not be approved.

4.2 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority 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 is made by the Local Authority in consultation 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.

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5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Rewards are awarded as follows:-

- Weekly class rewards are given for 96%+ attendance.
- Termly awards are given for 100% attendance.
- Termly awards are given for 96%+ attendance.
- 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.

6. 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.

Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority works closely with the school and 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.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 The attendance mentor

The attendance mentor:

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- 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

7.4 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.

7.5 Office staff

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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

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Appendix 1: 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 |

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| 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 |