

Attendance Policy



Approved by: Gordon Muir

Date: 12/05/22

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Muir", is placed over a white rectangular background.

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Howard Park Community School

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Attendance Policy

Purpose

It is important that parents and children hold a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in schoolwork and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term truancy.

We work closely with our partners to ensure this policy is fulfilled and including the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Social Work Service.

Aim

We are committed to meeting our 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.

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:

- › 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](#)

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

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- › Attend school every day;
- › Attend school punctually;
- › Attend appropriately prepared for the day;
- › Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- › Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- › Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- › Ensure that they the school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

Example:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genuine illness of the pupil;• Hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil;• Major religious observance;• Visit to prospective new school;• External exams or educational assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shopping/daytrip/visit to theme park;• A birthday treat;• Oversleeping due to a late night;• Looking after other children or other family member;• Appointments for other family members• No school uniform/shoes• Bullying• Family holiday• Travel problems

- › Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school;
- › Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- › Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that school will:

- › Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- › Provide a safe learning environment;
- › Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns;

- › Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- › Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- › Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- › Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- › Inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils on the school report;
- › Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- › Consult and meet with parents where there are concerns regarding their child's attendance. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

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:

- › 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
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- › Monitors attendance data across the school and at an 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.

School Office Staff

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

Recording Attendance

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

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

Please see details for the school timetable on the school website with regards to the time children must be in school.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can inform school about their child's absence by:

- › Phoning the school office
- › Emailing the school via erica.hudson@howardpark.co.uk
- › Using the Arbor app.

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 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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 can notify school of a planned absence by:

- › Phoning the school office
- › Emailing the school via erica.hudson@howardpark.co.uk
- › Using the Arbor app
- › Calling in at the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

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.

Lateness and Punctuality

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. This time can be important because information is often given out which allows for the smooth running of the day and helps pupils feel part of the school community.

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
- › School registers close 15 minutes after the school's start time.

School manages persistent lates in the following manner:

- › 'Late marks' are monitored daily to identify pupils who are persistently late.
- › If pupils are late for school twice in a week, or where noticeable patterns form, contact with parent/guardian is made.
- › If no improvement is made then the parent/guardian is invited to a meeting with school staff to discuss the situation and offer support if appropriate.

Following Up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- › Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by [add details of how and when your school will do this]
- › Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting To Parents

Parents are informed of their child's yearly attendance via the annual written report at the end of each academic year. Parents can also see their child's attendance on a daily basis by using the Arbor app

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval For Term Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments
- › If a parent is service personnel and is 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.
- › The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- › Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- › To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- › 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.
- › Where a leave of absence during term times may be restricted owing to working commitments, such as not being allowed time off during school holidays.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher reserves the right to authorise if they feel the circumstances justify it.

Applications for periods of absence can be made by either completing a form that can be collected from reception or completing the form available on the school website.

Emergency Contact and First-Day Calling Procedure

As part of our commitment to safeguarding procedures, school implement a first day calling and contact procedure. In the event of a child being absent from school and contact from a parent/guardian has not been received by 9:30am, our procedures are as follows:

- › Step 1 – Calls are made to the first contact on the list.
- › Step 2 – If no reply is received, all other contacts are phoned until an answer is received.
- › Step 3 – If no replies are received, a text message will be sent to the child's parent/guardians.
- › Step 4 – If no reply has been received by 10:30am, a home visit will be made to check on the welfare of the child/family. (This will be the result of a conversation between the Headteacher and DSL)
- › Step 5 – If no contact can be made, the police will be contacted to initiate a 'safe and well' check. This will be done using the 101 number.

Persistent Absence

Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% are referred to as 'Persistent Absentees' by the DfE and will be considered for referral to Pupil Attendance and Pupil Support Service. School staff will then begin a programme of monitoring and support:

- › Step 1 – Parent/guardian and school staff meet to discuss the absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- › Step 2 – A letter summarising the discussion and a copy of the action plan is posted to the parent/guardian.
- › Step 3 – After 6 weeks the attendance of the child is reviewed by school staff.
- › Step 4 – If the percentage has improved to above 90%, half-termly monitoring is implemented.
- › If the percentage remains below 90%, the parent/guardian is invited to a second meeting with school staff to discuss the absences where further, more formal actions are outlined. At this time, if appropriate, a referral to social care may be made.

Where there is persistent failure to adhere to a plan to improve attendance, legal action may be considered. If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel, the matter is heard in the Magistrate's Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

Legal Sanctions – Leaves of Absence

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. For this to occur, there must be a minimum consecutive absence of 10 school sessions – this can be split over weekends or school holidays – before triggering a penalty notice request.

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

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 a leave of absence taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

Where there may be repeated offences of leave of absence, this may result the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' court.

Suspended/Excluded Pupils

If a pupil has been suspended or excluded, that pupil may not be in a public place during the period of suspension/exclusion without just cause (such as attending a medical appointment). If that pupil is seen in a public place, a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will also receive a criminal record.

Religious Observance

Three days leave of absence are permitted within a 12-month period where a religion other than Christianity is practised and the day falls on a usual school day.

Strategies For Promoting Attendance

Promoting good attendance is an important part of encouraging pupils to attend. A weekly award is presented in assembly to the class that has had the best attendance for that week. Additionally, termly awards are given out to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance.

Additionally, good attendance promotes a range of positive rewards as a result of developing a good work ethic, strong peer relationships and enhanced life chances.

Attendance Monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

Parents are expected to contact school on the first and each day of absence unless informed not to do so by the school attendance officer.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving Attendance and Pupil Support.

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 will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is tracked and recorded using the school's MIS. This information is used to:

- › Track the attendance of individual pupils
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- › Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

Links With other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- › Behaviour Policy

Review Schedule

The Governing Body reviews this policy every three years. They may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government, or the LA, introduces new regulations, or receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.