

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2024



**Limitless Potential**

**Ignite Passion**

**Embrace Difference**

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Chair of Governors

School Policy

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**Hazlewood Community Primary School**

*Date: September 2024*

*Date for Governors Review: September 2025*

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Introduction**

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs she/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Hazlewood Community Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that staff know the reasons for a child's authorised absences.
- To ensure that children with unauthorised absences are quickly identified.
- To ascertain why certain children have frequent absences, long periods of absence or a developing pattern of absence and to overcome the problem.
- To ensure that parents and support agencies are alerted to any pupil lateness and absences which give cause for concern.

### **The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:**

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

### **Statements of Expectation**

#### **Pupils**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

#### **What is expected of the pupils:**

- To respect themselves and others.
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time.
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied.
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy.

## Parents

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, attendance & placement service and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **What is expected of the parents/carers:**

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence, by calling the School Office 01919178545 before 10 o'clock or emailing office@hazlewoodprimary.co.uk
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and ready to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- Any parent collecting their child early or sending their child late **must** report to the School Office to provide the reason.
- To work closely with the school and the Attendance and Placement Service to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be unauthorised and may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued. This is a fine of £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent per child if paid after this date but within 28 days, except in cases of special/exceptional circumstances. This will be entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. You will need to complete a leave of absence form, available from the School Office, clearly stating the reasons. (See section below Requests for Holidays during Term Time for more information)
- To arrange medical appointments e.g. doctors and dental appointments outside of school hours at evenings or weekends.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regard to attendance during important academic times such as SATS.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

## The School

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance and punctuality will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken, once at the start of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved

educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **What is expected of the school:**

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- To meet the legal requirements.
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act.
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Attendance and Placement Service.
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

### **The Local Authority**

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children and to provide support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The Education, Placement & Welfare Service is the enforcement agency of the Local Authority and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers, may take action upon parents not fulfilling their duty under the Education act 1996.

Local Authority (LA) has a duty to satisfy themselves that children are in the school system or receiving education otherwise. If the LA believes that a child is not getting a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school, it has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a school attendance order on a parent. The notice requires the parent to satisfy the LA that the child is receiving a suitable education while the order requires the parent to register the child at a named school.

A penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

The LA also has responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty would be exercised through The Education, Placement & Welfare Service. They also have the following legal powers to enforce attendance:

- school attendance orders
- prosecution for irregular attendance

- penalty notices for irregular attendance
- Education supervision orders.

The Attendance and Placement Service can also use parenting contracts in their efforts to improve a pupil's attendance.

### **Governors**

Governors will receive information about attendance in school (no individual pupils will be named) in the Headteacher's termly reports. Governors will agree annual targets for attendance with the School Development Partner.

### **School Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance**

1. Registers will be kept accurately and will be closed at 9.30am for morning sessions. They will be closed at 1:20pm for EYFS / KS1 and KS2 for afternoon sessions.
2. All attendances are recorded manually in class and then entered electronically by the school Attendance Lead.
3. Authorised absence will be recorded in each class register by the school Attendance Lead using the correct code.
4. Parents are encouraged to telephone, email or write a note explaining the absence of their child as unexplained absences give cause for concern and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This contact should be made by 10am.
5. Attendance Lead will inform teaching staff of the absence reason by a written note on the attendance register.
6. School Attendance Lead will call parents the same day for an explanation if no absence information has been received by 10am.
7. All staff can inform the Headteacher of concern if anyone is absent for more than one week without a known reason and where frequent or patterns of absence occur.
8. Staff are to raise any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality of individual children with the Headteacher.
9. An attendance concern letter will be sent home if attendance is 90% or less than 90% and attendance will be monitored again at the next half termly review, to check for improvement.
10. The Headteacher will meet parents to discuss concerns about attendance or punctuality and to ask for an improvement if attendance is below 90%, after consulting with Attendance Lead regarding circumstances.
11. If there is no improvement, or if attendance falls below 90% Attendance Lead will contact the Attendance and Placement Team and decide whether a meeting in school or referral needs to be made. A Penalty Notice Warning to improve will be legally issued and this may lead to prosecution and a fine. The fine will be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings.
12. Children who return to school after a long period of absence will be warmly welcomed and closely supported in the classroom to enable the transition period to be as smooth as possible.

### **Acceptable reasons for Absence**

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith.
- The child is absent with permission under other exceptional circumstances previously discussed and granted by the Headteacher.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a one week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

### **Attendance Codes**

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are inputted into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

#### **Code School Meaning**

Leave blank - Present (am)

Leave blank - Present (pm)

B Educated off site (Not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G Family holiday (not agreed)

I Illness (not med/dental etc. appointments)

J Interview at new school

L Late (before reg closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity – supervised by someone authorised by school

R Religious observance

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

Y Enforced closure/Exceptional Circumstances

# DfE School closed to pupils and staff

X Non-compulsory school aged absence

### **Monitoring**

Attendance Monitoring will be carried out weekly highlighting children with less than 100% attendance, it will also be done half-termly. This will take place between the Headteacher and the School Attendance lead. Concern letters will be sent out after half-term scrutiny alongside meetings in school with parents. Congratulatory certificates for children/ letters for parent/carers will be sent out half termly/termly. Letters/ certificates will also be sent out to children with greatly improved attendance and updates to parent/carers who have attended meetings regarding low attendance.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school in monitoring attendance including ability to record comments and

minutes late. These reports will be accessed when required and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues. The Attendance and Placement Service will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

### **Requests for Holidays During Term Time**

Reasons for these requests should be exceptional and not just for a holiday. **It is not a parental right to remove a child from school during term time for a holiday.**

If a parent wishes to request a period of holiday during term time because they believe they have exceptional circumstances they are required to complete a leave of absence form (Available from the school office) highlighting the exceptional circumstances, date of first absence and date the child will return to school. Then return to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks before the intended holiday. School may then invite parents in to school to discuss the reasons behind the exceptional circumstances before making any decision and notes will be taken. School will write to all parents who have requested a leave of absence, to inform the parents of the decision of the Headteacher. This will be either authorised or unauthorised. If the leave is unauthorised the Headteacher will state the reasons behind the decision. If the leave of absence is still taken after being unauthorised by the Headteacher a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Authority. The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice can result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings.

If a parent fails to request permission prior to the leave of absence or the child returns after the date agreed the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority to request a Penalty Notice be issued, Again this fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine can result in the Authority starting legal proceedings.

### **Special / Exceptional Circumstances**

The DfE School Attendance guidance published November 2013 states that

'Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion.'

At Hazlewood Community Primary School, exceptional circumstances could include:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Religious observance

6. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 5 above, the Headteacher will consult with the Attendance and Placement Service prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

**If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:**

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils)
- 2) Year 6 transition day/week (for pupils in Y6)
- 3) Year 6 SATs week (for pupils in Y6)

### **Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality**

Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed. Pupil attendance figures will be published with the termly academic reports.

We have an attendance reward system in place which includes 100% attendance, excellent and improved attendance rewards and certificates for termly and annual attendance. We aim to reintroduce the Attendance Award cup we have used in the past.

From September 2021 Reception children will also be included in the monitoring process to develop the importance of excellent attendance from an early start.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

The Headteacher and Governing Body, in line with recommendations, will review the policy every two years or sooner if required.

### **Conclusion**

Through the consistent application of this policy we aim to ensure that children attend school punctually and regularly. This will support the early identification of children whose attendance is causing concern and steps quickly taken to remedy it. Children will then have full access to all teaching and learning and make consistent progress.