

Attendance Policy

1. Aim:

The aim of our attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Hargrave Park School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be.

We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding and child protection, behaviour and anti-bullying.

2. Legal framework:

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

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

Children are entitled to and must receive a primary school education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the academic year they turn 11 years old.

Our school is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;

- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
- Report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;

- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homelearning, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;
- Do not take their children out of school during term time. If parents/carers would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher.
- Ensure that they follow the correct procedure if they arrive late.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy.
- Understand that they need to be in school every day on time.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. Pupils are held responsible for ensuring that they report to the school office if they arrive after 9.00am. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

The School Register

The law requires all schools to have an admissions register (children on roll) and an attendance register, which records all children present and absence twice a day.

All children are placed on both registers.

The school places every child on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day which the school has agreed or has been notified that the child will attend the school. If the child fails to

attend, the school will notify the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent a child going missing from education. The admission register is accurate and is kept up to date. The school encourages all parents/carers to keep it updated of any change in circumstance.

The school follows Local Authority guidance for off-rolling pupils.

The school registers all children twice a day – at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The school monitors the attendance of all pupils regularly and works closely with our Education Welfare Officer to support good attendance from all pupils. The school has procedures to address poor or irregular attendance and reports concerns to the Local Authority. The school informs the Local Authority of all pupils who fail to attend school regularly and seeks to work with parents/carers of all children with poor attendance or who have been absent without the school's permission.

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school either by telephone or through the school's app on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return.

For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to send a notification on the school app or make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The class teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

Family holidays and extended leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason.

Requests for leave from school must be made in writing to the Headteacher, Mrs Horton, two weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, parents must inform school prior to the absence to avoid the school reporting the child to the Local authority as a child missing from education.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents/carers should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice by the Local authority, who monitor all extended periods of absence.

Religious observance

Hargrave Park School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school notification in advance.

Late arrival

Registration is taken at 9.00am. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked at late.

Pupils who arrive after 9.00am should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

5. School action: following up absences

Class registers are passed to the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents/carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absence emerges, the school and/or the Education Welfare Officer will contact the parent/carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Monitoring attendance and responding to patterns of absence

School staff will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges:

- The school is responsible for initial interventions. When a pattern of poor attendance emerges, a discussion is needed between the parent and the Pastoral Care Manager to determine a course of action. This may include drafting an attendance plan or a referral to early help service or school nursing team.
- The Pastoral Care manager and the Education Welfare Officer meet regularly to monitor absence and identify children whose attendance is classed as persistently absent (below 90%)
- Persistently absent children are monitored weekly. Parents/carers will be invited in to school to meet with the Pastoral Care Manger and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss reasons for persistent absence, identify issues and plan how to remove any barriers to regular attendance.
- Referrals will be made to the Local Authority for targeted intervention if attendance does not improve over time.

Children Missing Education

All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, sexual abuse/exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health issues, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. We understand that early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

The school understands that it is essential to comply with the guidelines as laid out in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2021) document so that the Local Authority can, as part of their duty, identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education enabling them to follow up with any child who may be at risk of not receiving an education and/or who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised.

The schools ensures it is aware of where each child who is not in school is accounted for by requesting parents/carers call the school to report why their child is absent. Where an unexpected absence is unexplained, the school will make every attempt to contact the parent/carer to obtain a satisfactory explanation. This may include texting, emailing and/or calling parent/carers, calling emergency contacts and, on occasion, making home visits. The school reports all children missing education to the Local Authority. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the school will contact Children's Services and/or the police as necessary. Please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (2021-22) for additional information.

Punctuality

The school provides a universal free breakfast club which starts at 8.00am in order to support good attendance and punctuality.

In addition, the school offers a Soft Start from 8.40am to 9.00am; children can arrive at any time across this period and go straight to class where they are supervised.

The school gates close at 9.00am and this is when the register is taken.

Pupils arriving after 9.00am must report to the school office and collect a late card so that their class teacher knows they have been registered by the school office.

Pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am are registered as late.

Pupils arriving after 9.30am are registered by the school office as being unauthorised absent for that session.

Persistent late arrivals are closely monitored and regular issues may result in a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

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Policy to be reviewed March 2024