



# Highfields Primary School **Attendance Policy**

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Persons responsible for policy: **Senior Attendance Champions**, Mrs Bholat and Mrs Vanzaria (Deputy Head).

For day-to-day messages about attendance, please contact our school office by ringing 0116 253 1382, or email us at [office@highfields.thealt.org.uk](mailto:office@highfields.thealt.org.uk)

This policy is a working document and will be reviewed at least annually.

Reviewed	November 2022	Next Review	November 2023
Reviewed	March 2023	Next Review	March 2024
Reviewed	March 2024 Updated September 2024 to include DFE guidance	Next Review	March 2025
Reviewed	<b>September 2025</b> Updated September 2025 to include DFE guidance	Next Review	September 2026

Highfields Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises the importance of attendance.

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

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

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and

punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to Foundation 1 (Nursery) and Foundation 2 (Reception) age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to establish good practice of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

In order to achieve the best possible attendance for our school, we need the best possible attendance from our pupils. This means that we will listen, empathise and support families when children have absences, but we cannot tolerate absence that is concerning. We will consider information from parents about the reason for a child being absent but will not automatically authorise all absences. This policy sets out the school's response to attendance and absences.

## EXPECTATIONS AND DAILY ROUTINES

We expect all children registered at Highfields Primary School to attend every day when school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage all children to attend, and we put in place appropriate support for families when needed. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We also make the best provision we can for children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2023, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

School opens the gates at 8:20am in the morning and children are expected to be in class for the **morning register at 8:30am**. Children who arrive between 8:30am and 9am will be marked as late arrivals.

The law makes clear that children who arrive in school 30 minutes after the register is taken

i.e. after 9am are absent when the register is taken and will be marked as absent for the whole morning session.

We open the gates for home time at 3pm each day.

Regular attendance at school promotes well-being. It gives children the best chance of learning and reaching their potential. Pupils should attend school every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance and punctuality are important because children:

- Get on better with learning and other children.
- Cope better with school routines, work and friendships.
- Find learning easier because they do not miss out.
- Are more successful moving between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.
- Are known to be safe and well.

Research shows a direct link between high attendance and doing well at school.

All children have a right to an education. Missing school or being frequently late for school means children miss out on vital lessons and learning time.

The table below shows how having days off impacts on attendance:

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year.

Attendance (one Year)	Equals Days Absent	Approximate Weeks Absent	Lessons Missed	
100%	0	0	0	Excellent - A flying start and best chance of success
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	40 Lessons	Some concerns identified. (unless absence is authorised)
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	80 Lessons	Persistently Absent – Worrying less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	120 Lessons	
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	160 Lessons	<b>Serious Concerns</b>
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	200 Lessons	
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	230 Lessons	
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	270 Lessons	
<b>Below 50% Severely Absent</b>				

Please remember that children who miss a lot of school achieve less

If children have 80% attendance for 5 years, that is the equivalent to missing a whole year of school.

### Early Start

We also run Early Start which is subject to availability. This is from **7:50 am** until 8.20 am. Charges for this service is available on the school website.

### SHARING ATTENDANCE INFORMATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We celebrate attendance in awards assemblies; trophies are awarded to classes with the highest attendance and over 95% or the National average each week. At the end of each term, the class with the highest attendance receives a prize of their choice.

Individual attendance is celebrated at the end of each term. Each child receives a certificate for achieving 95%+ in a whole school assembly with parents present. At the end of the year any child with an attendance of 100% in the first instance or above 98% thereafter is presented with a gift card

Each term, during the Attendance Assembly, we discuss and remind the children of the impact of missing school and arriving late.

Letters are sent to parents where attendance is or has started to be a concern.

We will send out regular updates on the school's current overall attendance on WEDUC.

Where a child's attendance is below 95%, parents will be informed that it is being closely monitored.

Where a child's attendance is below 90%, parents will be informed and notified that further absences will not be automatically authorised. The school's Senior Attendance Champion will consider each absence carefully.

Where attendance is an on-going concern, our Senior Attendance Champion will consider if an Attendance Support Plan is needed and will discuss this with parents.

We will meet with families where there are concerns, we will listen, review and work with families to ensure that the support we offer is effective.

Where a child's attendance is monitored on an Attendance Support Plan, we will share any improvements in attendance with the pupil and parents. This might be in a review of the plan, a face-to-face meeting or a letter.

## ABSENCES

Any time a child is not in school, or on an activity organised by school is classed as an absence from school. Absences can be recorded as either an authorised absence or an unauthorised absence.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence **before 9:00am** or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning or emailing the school office.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school or during absence if applicable. If a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.
- The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to

provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.

- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

### **Authorised absences:**

- We classify an absence as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received information about the absence from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, you the parent write a note, email the school office or telephone the school office to explain the absence.
- Where a family takes a day for religious observance, we can only authorise **1 day** for each religious festival.
- Medical appointments should be reported to the school office and letters or appointment evidence should be shared with us.
- Explaining an absence or ringing the school does not automatically mean the absence is authorised. Repeated odd days off for illness are monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion who may ask for proof of illness before an absence is authorised.
- Only the school can decide if an absence will be authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised.
- Parents of children who have low attendance will be asked to meet with Miss Bholat and possibly be asked to provide proof of illness (this could be an appointment card or text, an appointment letter, sight of a prescription or medication. We do not expect parents to pay for any evidence,) for the school to have an absence authorised.

### **Unauthorised absences:**

We classify an absence as unauthorised when:

- a child is away from school without the permission of the school or a parent.
- a child is away from school and no reason is given to the school.
- a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child's attendance falls below the persistent absence level, <90% then we will record all further absences as unauthorised unless we have clear evidence to support an absence.

**IF A CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL**

If a child is ill or going to be away from school, parents should contact the school office (letter / email / telephone / visiting the school office in person).

If no information is received, then we will send a WEDUC message, or we will make a phone call to confirm the reason for an absence. If no reply is received and no reason given for the absence, then the absence may be unauthorised. We will continue to attempt to contact

families where we are not given information about an absence.

It is essential that school knows why children are absent for safeguarding of all children. Parents must keep informing the school if their child continues to be ill. A message may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the office staff will attempt to contact parents / carers as above.

Schools have to give Local Authorities the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days.

If other services such as Early Help or Social Services are working with a family. Any absences will be shared with them.

Registers are monitored daily to identify pupils who are absent. If appropriate, a home visit will be made by members of school staff. If there are serious concerns about the safety of a child, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or the police will be called to conduct a home visit.

### REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leaves of absence have a big impact on individual children's education and also have a big impact on the school's overall attendance. All requests for leave of absence need to be made to the school **BEFORE** you book any tickets.

Please contact the school office and request a meeting with the **Senior Attendance Champion**. An appointment will be made so see a member of SLT or Miss Bholat where an application form will be completed. We will then confirm the outcome of the application in writing.

Government legislation means that:

- Schools are **not allowed** to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school during term time for a holiday.
- Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances and holidays are not considered exceptional.
- Evidence will be required to support requests for leave.
- Penalty Notice fines will be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised term time leave of 4 or more consecutive days and may be issued for fewer

days where this has happened before.

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised.

***If the absence is unauthorised parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 28 days), or the case may be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.***

As of August 2025, Penalty Notices fines, in line with the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, will be issued as follows:

### **Per Parent, Per Child**

- Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.
- For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

### **5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Leave**

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for

- term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days
- or 4 days where the absence immediately precedes/includes a 5<sup>th</sup> day which is a school closure day (e.g. school holiday / INSET / enforced closure) or **any** form of absence
- or for fewer days where this has happened before

### **10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period**

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10- week period.

#### **First Offence**

- The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

#### **Second Offence (within 3 years)**

- The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. (No option to pay at £80 level)

#### **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**

- The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.
- Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's

future DBS certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

**Court prosecutions:** Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

*By law, all Penalty Notice payments go to the local authority and not to schools.*

If there are 20 or more days of absence, your child may be removed from the school roll resulting in you having to reapply for a school place.

If there are 20 or more school days of absence due to holidays or trips away, this may result in cases proceeding straight to the Magistrates` Court.

If your child has other unauthorised absences, of 10 or more half days in a period of 10 weeks, then you can also be fined as above. This includes absences where you have not informed the school why your child is away.

Reminders of absence procedures and extended absence procedures will be sent to parents /carers on admission to school and at least annually. *See appendix 1 & 2 for examples of leaflets sent to parents / carers.*

#### REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES AND SUPPORT TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

We will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences:

- We will call the parents/carers and discuss the reason for the repeated absences and find out how we can help
- If the absence continues, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the situation with the **Senior Attendance Champion**, Miss Bholat.
- If appropriate, we can refer you to other local agencies such as Early Help or the School Nurse service to support your family to improve your child's attendance.
- Your child's attendance will then be monitored and if there is no improvement an attendance plan will be agreed with you. This will be monitored. Targets for attendance will be set for a 3 - 6 week period initially
- If your child's attendance does still not improve, then we will refer your case to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWO) for further support.
- If there is still no improvement, the EWO can progress the case to a Penalty Notice or Court Action.

#### PERSISTENT ABSENTEES

These are children whose attendance is below 90%. All children with attendance

below 90% are monitored closely. If attendance does not improve, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Senior Attendance Champion or a senior member of staff. All absences after this meeting will be monitored and we will only authorise future absences if we are certain the absence is for a genuine reason. Referral to the School Nurse service may be sought for a child with ongoing health issues.

Support plans may be agreed with parents for any children who have attendance below 90%

Children with attendance below 90% will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis. If a child's attendance falls below 50% we will work closely with families and the Education Welfare Officer to ensure that the appropriate support is put in place.

### PERSISTENT LATECOMERS

Children who are late, miss out on the important initial learning activities of the day. Children who are regularly late fall behind in their learning. Their day is disrupted, as is the learning of the rest of the class, whose attention is disrupted by the arrival of latecomers.

When your child arrives late at school, he/she misses the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson. Your child may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost and can **seriously disadvantage your child**.

**The table below shows the days of lost learning when your child is late**

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 Minutes	3.4 Days
10 Minutes	6.9 Days
15 Minutes	10.3 Days
20 Minutes	13.8 Days
30 Minutes	20.7 Days

Children who arrive in school after the registers close at 8.30am, are recorded as late. Any children who arrive after 9am are U coded which means they are marked with an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session. As part of the normal monitoring of attendance, we contact parents where children are late **three or more** times in a week.

If this happens, we will follow the process below.

1. **Senior Attendance Champion** or a member of SLT will contact the parents/carer at the end of the week
2. If lateness continues, the parent/carer will be invited to a meeting for a discussion with the head teacher
3. If lateness still continues, it will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

At each stage, we endeavor to work together with parents to improve punctuality.

### CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing in Education (CME) case for the Local Authority.

### ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE LEAD

- To investigate and monitor patterns of absences and any unexplained absences, with the Education Welfare Officer, which are below the 95% expectation.
- To issue letters (for children whose attendance drops below 95%) and make sure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To work with the Education Welfare Officer and support families with strategies to ensure attendance improves.
- To investigate and monitor patterns of absences and any unexplained absences, with the Attendance Lead, which are below the 95% expectation.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive a termly report from the head teacher via the Headteacher Report. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to

them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Schools now have to share schools' attendance data with the department of Education on a daily basis. This is done electronically via the WONDE system.

We monitor attendance on an individual pupil level and a school level to identify when issues arise. Where there are concerns, action is taken as outlined in this policy to improve attendance.

Class teachers and office staff, together with the Senior Attendance Champion, will be responsible for monitoring attendance in each class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there are concerns about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion, who will arrange contact with the parents or carers.

## Attendance - Graduated Response

### EXPECT

School follows attendance policy - whole school approach to encourage good attendance.

### MONITOR

School undertakes careful monitoring of all pupils' attendance and intervenes early.

### LISTEN UNDERSTAND & FACILITATE SUPPORT

School escalation process. Casework for individual pupils / families. Thorough assessment and planning, involve school colleagues or external services as identified necessary (with consent where required). Review. EWS referral checklist where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

### FARMILIARISE SUPPORT

School request EWS involvement - share checklist. (Consent not required.) EWS response - usually either attendance panel meeting or advice to the school re alternative course of action. If panel held and contract in place, school monitor. If unauthorised absence continues, school request further EWS action.

New in August 2024 - LA Attendance contract meetings / Notice to Improve letters. If agreed, EWS issue Final Warning, or Interview under caution paperwork (EWS decision based on all available information), and EWS monitor attendance with school.

EWS consider Education Supervision Order throughout process.

### ENFORCE

Penalty Notice or court action (decision made by EWS based on all available information.)

# Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence

Fines are issued in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

This poster explains when a fine can be issued for unauthorised absence that occurs from August 2025 onwards. Fines issued for absence that happened from August 2024 onwards count towards the escalation process.]

## Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in **each** parent receiving 3 **separate** fines.

## First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

## Consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for:

- term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days
- or 4 days where the absence immediately precedes/includes a 5<sup>th</sup> day which is a school closure day (e.g. school holiday / INSET / enforced closure) or **any** form of absence
- or for fewer days where this has happened before

## 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

## Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. **(No option to pay at £80 level)**

## Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will usually proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate and may impact on **job applications and travel abroad**.

**Court prosecutions:** Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

**By law, all Penalty Notice payments go to the local authority and not to schools.**