

HURST GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	√		
Teachers	√		
Teaching Assistants	√		
Administrative Staff	√		
Lunchtime Supervisors		√	
Site Manager		√	
Cleaners		√	
Governors	√		
Parents	√		
Website	√		
Local Authority		√	

Responsibility of	School Improvement Committee
Review frequency	This is a live document and will be reviewed as often as necessary and no less than annually .
Previous version	05/02/2018; 03/02/2020; 17/10/2022
This version agreed	9 October 2023
Next review date	Autumn 2024

Introduction

At Hurst Green Primary School, we work hard to maintain effective and positive links with our parents' valuing relationship between school and home. We pride ourselves in wanting the best for our children. To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. The role of the parent in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical. Your child should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is important that you make sure that your child attends regularly, "Attendance is everyone's business" (DFE 2022) and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- To have robust daily processes in place to follow up absence.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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.

3. Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to Hurst Green Primary School Attendance Policy

'Working together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2022) and the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.
- Detecting early support through school's support strategies or an Early Help Assessment.

The Law relating to safeguarding:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated attendance lead

The designated attendance lead is responsible for:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Log actions taken on the child's CPOMS log

The designated attendance lead is Kelly Owen. Kelly Owen works alongside our independent attendance support office. can be contacted via email on info@hurst-green.dudley.sch.uk

The attendance support officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices

The attendance support officer is Emma O-Sullivan. Emma O-Sullivan can be contacted via the school office.

Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office by 9am each morning and by 12.45pm (EYFS/KS1) and 1.45pm (KS2) each afternoon.
- Class teachers must not delegate this task to a teaching assistant or a higher-level teaching assistant.
- Registers must be marked at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon session. Class teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of pupils in their care; attendance and punctuality is an important feature of this. **The attendance register is a legal document and must be completed accurately and on time.**
- Registers must be completed using the electronic registers.
- Any absenteeism must also be recorded on the electronic register. **It is crucial that this procedure is carried out in the case of an emergency.**

Office staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Where necessary, transfer calls from parents to the DSL/head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Use CPOMS to log any attendance related concerns

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- All absences must be followed up. Acceptable methods of communication can be a note, a personal visit from the parent/guardian, or another responsible adult, or a phone call or message.
- When a satisfactory reason for the absence is received then the absence can be classed as authorised.
- If no satisfactory reason has been received, this should be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy.
- Where children miss registration altogether and parents fail to provide an adequate explanation, the child may be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Notify School of any changes to emergency contact details or medical issues that may have an impact on your child's attendance.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Parent/carer must notify the school at least 2 weeks prior to travel via a school leave of absence form. There have been occasions where parents have taken holiday without notifying school or said their child is off due to illness. We politely request parents are honest with school as this causes a large amount of time wasted, undertaking calls, home visits and even referrals to children absent from education.
- Engage with school, attendance support and the Local Authority if your child's attendance starts to deteriorate.
- Engage with further support offered, such as attendance support and family liaison visits, Early help, parenting contracts and the Local Authority to prevent further legal action.
- Doors close at 8.55am. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late and parents have to sign them in at the school office with an explanation for the lateness.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, although we recognize that most primary children are brought to school by their parents/carers and therefore arriving on time is unlikely to be their responsibility.

5. 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

Registers open at 8.55am and close 30 minutes after the start of the session. If a child arrives after the register has been taken (i.e., after 9.00am) but before the registers have closed, they are marked as late (code L). If a child arrives after the registers have closed with no relevant reason (e.g., doctors' appointment) they are marked as an unauthorised late (code U).

Children arriving to school after the doors are closed must enter through the main entrance and be signed into school by a parent.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12.40 (EYFS, KS1) or 1.40 (KS2).

6. Absences

Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am.
- If a child is unable to attend school, parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence. Parents can leave a message on the school absence line which is available 24/7. Please note if we have not been contacted by you, it is part of our school policy for a member of the Admin Team to contact parents on the first day of absence to enquire about your child's absence, which also ensures that your child is safe and has not set out to School and failed to arrive. If we are unable to contact anyone on the contact list for your child, we may make a home visit.
- 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

- 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.
- 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.
- Please notify the school office by emailing the info account (info@hurst-green.dudley.sch.uk) or phoning the school on 01384 818210.
- 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.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, refer to social services, contact the child's social worker or contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

7. Lateness and punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Regular attendance and punctuality help to instil good habits and promote the development of a positive attitude towards school. Arriving late to school is stressful for both parent and child and is not a good start to the day. Children who arrive late miss essential learning time, instructions for the lesson, disrupt the routine of the classroom and the work/progress of others.

Regular lateness will be followed up in the same way as developing patterns of absence. Persistent lateness is also reviewed, and a letter sent to parents reminding them of registration times. If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to Dudley Local Authority, Education Support Service for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice fine or enforcement proceedings against you.

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
- Punctuality is monitored and parents will receive communication from the school should we note that punctuality is becoming an issue.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via an annual written report. Where there are concerns about a child's attendance, the school will inform parents when the concern arises and regularly during the monitoring period.

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Like all Local Authorities Dudley are concerned about the disruption planned absences in term time cause to a child's education. The key message is that good consistent attendance at school is crucial to giving a child the best chance of success and in fulfilling their true potential.

Approval for term-time absence

2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Parents are asked to note the following:

- Parents wishing the school to consider authorising an absence for any reason should read these notes carefully and complete the Absence Request Form (which is available from the school office and the school website).
- Any request for leave of absence must be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the absence.
- Parents need to consider carefully before making any request for absence as any time away from school can be detrimental to your child's education.
- Each case will be reviewed individually. In considering a request, the school will take account of the effects of absence on your child's education as well as your child's attendance record.
- Parents should not assume that completing the form guarantees that the absence request will be approved and should bear this in mind before booking holidays.
- The school will usually respond in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the form informing you whether your request has been authorised as an exceptional circumstance.
- Should the School decide to grant the leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time he/she is expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the School to explain/justify the continuing absence or make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the School could be withdrawn.
- Should the school decide not to grant the leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- This may be subject to a Penalty Notice costing up to £60 within 21 days per parent per child. This will increase to £120 if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period may result in court action.

Holidays in term time

There is no automatic right or entitlement for parents to take children out of school during term time.

The school term and holiday dates list are published at least a year in advance on the school website and Dudley MBC's website which allows plenty of time for parents to plan holidays and other planned absences accordingly.

- If a request is made for a holiday during term time, there will need to be exceptional reasons as to why the holiday cannot be taken during the 14 weeks of school holidays.
- The granting of leave of absence for the purpose of an annual holiday in school term time is a matter for consideration and decision by the school.
- Please note that reasons such as cheap holiday offers or it being the only time an adult is available to take time off will not be granted as authorised – there should be exceptional reasons as to why the holiday cannot be taken during the 14 non term time weeks.
- A holiday taken without the permission of the school will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Holidays of more than 5 days may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent.
- It must be emphasised that holidays taken in term time can be disruptive to a child's education. Children are put at a disadvantage by missing days/weeks of what is a carefully structured programme of work.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

9. Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. School may refer the case to Education Support Service, Dudley Local Education Authority who have statutory duties and issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or refer the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.

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

- A leave of absence in term time has been refused and the family opted to go.
- If a child has stopped attending and we do not know their whereabouts. (*See Children Missing Education below*)
- If the child is at risk safeguarding procedures will also be followed.

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.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

10. Children Missing Education

If you move out of the area and the distance is too far to travel to School, please notify us immediately. We advise you contact the admissions department (of the Local Authority where you now reside) as quickly as possible to obtain a new school place, as often places are limited.

All schools must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations DfE (2016). If your child ceases to attend school and we have had no contact from parents, we will deem this as a safeguarding issue. We will try to contact you and may undertake a home visit. We will then follow the Local Authority referral procedure for a child missing education before removal from roll.

11. Strategies for promoting attendance

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school may discuss matters with our appointed independent attendance support officer, Emma O'Sullivan. They will discuss matters and try to resolve the situation by agreement or may use the following strategies:

- a. Attendance analysis
- b. Phone call to discuss attendance concerns
- c. Home visit/safe and well check
- d. Parenting contract
- e. Attendance certificates
- f. Attendance assemblies
- g. Interventions (mentor/meet and greet)
- h. Maintaining positive communication (school refuser/long term illness etc)
- i. First day absence contact
- j. Letters
- k. Attendance clinics
- l. Late gates
- m. LA referrals

12. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Regularly update parents on their child's attendance.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

The Attendance Lead and the Attendance Support Officer monitor all the children's attendance. Where there is a concern, this may be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Children at. Or at risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee (see below) are monitored more regularly.

Monitoring Persistent Absentees and Severe absentees

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

A pupil becomes a severe absentee if their attendance falls below 50%.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority.

Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Where a pupil is a persistent absentee or is at risk of becoming persistently absent, parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance and to proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Where a pupil is at risk of, or is a severe absentee, parents are expected to proactively engage with the formal support offered, including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Support for severely absent, persistently absent pupils and those at risk of becoming persistently or severely absent

The school will

Use data to identify pupils

Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reason for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, school will signpost and support access to any of the required services in the first instance.

If the issue persists, school will take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the LA and other partners.

If the issue persists, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.

Hold more formal conversations with parents where there is lack of engagement and be clear with parents about the potential need to legal intervention in the future.

Begin appropriate work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working.

Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Use data to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them
- Work with schools in the local area and with the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

13. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Offer support to parents who are struggling to improve their child's attendance.
- Put identified pupils on an attendance monitoring list which will be managed by the attendance lead and officer.
- Write to parents outlining our concerns about their child's attendance and providing a print out of their child's attendance history.
- Send out subsequent escalation the letters if attendance doesn't improve. Letters about attendance concerns will be signed by the head teacher.

14. Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

- At Hurst Green we maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance for pupils with medical conditions or SEND.
- We will ensure joined up pastoral support, and where required, we will put in place additional supports or adjustments to support attendance.

- We will consider additional support from wider services and external partners.
- We will regularly monitor data for such groups

15. Support for Pupils with a Social Worker

If a child has a social worker, parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.

School will inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if a child's name is to be deleted from the register.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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
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	School site is closed, there is disruption to

	exceptional circumstances	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