

Hemblington Primary School



Whole School Attendance Policy

Date Reviewed: March 2020

Next Review Date: March 2021

HEMBLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Hemblington Primary is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The Parent Brochure will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. Newsletters and class curriculum letters will be used to remind parents of the priority we place on good attendance.

The Trust includes attendance as a priority in all its schools through its home school agreement. This emphasises the need for punctuality as well as high attendance rates at school in order to maximise learning.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider

any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

Registers

Registers are completed by the class teacher at morning and afternoon registration using the school's MIS (Pupil Asset) on a daily basis. A laminated class list will be used to record absences, for use in the event of an emergency evacuation. In the event of the online system being inaccessible, or a supply teacher / coach taking the class, the laminated card should be sent to the office so the online system can be updated and any absences followed up.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. The registers will remain open for 25 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.10pm

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close. Where possible, the number of minutes late should be recorded on the Pupil Asset system.

First Day Absence

Parents are asked to contact the school if their child is absent and provide a reason for the absence. Information collected in this way is passed onto the class teacher via a note, or a call across to the class teacher. If no explanation of absence is received the school will ring to find out the reason for absence.

Third Day Absence

If no contact is made, the school will continue to phone and then write to establish the reason for absence.

Continuing Absence

If no explanation for absence is forthcoming and there has been no contact with the school, the attendance officer will be contacted for advice.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff for the local area. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Cases of unexplained absence, however limited, will always be followed up. This is in the interests of safeguarding children at our school.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. If verbal absence explanation is given, either in person or by telephone, the reason is updated on the MIS as soon as attendance is updated.

Frequent Absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible with the family.

The Headteacher checks attendance patterns on a weekly basis.

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). Any absence rate of under 90% is a cause of concern and must be investigated.

Warning letters are sent to families half termly where attendance and / or punctuality are concerns.

Persistent Absence [PA]

All pupils whose attendance level falls below 85% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Headteacher. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. This will, in most cases, be done through the class teacher.

Attendance Awards

The school will use a positive reward system for pupils who have good or improving attendance. Certificates are awarded termly, with an annual award of 100% attendance

certificates and rewards. A weekly class mascot is given to the class with the best attendance. Letters are sent home half termly to pupils with over 95% attendance.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. **Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. **Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. **Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorized absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorized absence |
| O | Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorized absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorized absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

The school's electronic register is backed up through the school's MIS.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work. Targets will relate to national averages.

Our schools targets are:

Absence rate of 4% or below for 2019-20

Our PA targets will be 0% for 2019-20

School attendance will be reported on in every Headteacher's report to the FGB, and a standing agenda item for the P&O committee.

Any pupil with attendance below 85% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences. The DfE has indicated that the level of absence that defines a child as being classed as PA may be reduced in future years.

Covid-19

During the current pandemic, the information in this document may be superseded by government guidance and the school's Covid-19 risk assessments.

Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.