

Haddenham St Mary's CE School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction and aims

Haddenham St Mary's CE school (HSM) believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- 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.

Please see Appendix 1 for the impact of reduced attendance and lateness on loss of learning.

2. Legal Framework

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.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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 for reporting attendance
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data at the Curriculum and Standards committee
- Monitoring attendance for the whole school, year groups and key pupil groups
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy for all pupils at HSM
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Reporting to the County Attendance Team at Buckinghamshire Council re Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence via the school absence phone line and each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, medical or other appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register for all pupils.

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

Attendance will be recorded for two half day sessions each day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am. Arrival after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm.

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- 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

All entries on the attendance register will be retained for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The DfE statutory attendance codes are detailed in Appendix 3.

4.2 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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence phone line.

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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment via the school office.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must apply for any other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed at 9.30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

Arrival after the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence using the appropriate code unless there is a valid reason for absence.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence including where no explanation for absence has been provided (following Buckinghamshire Council procedures)

The following steps will be taken where no explanation for absence has been provided and schools are unable to contact the parents/ carers of the child (no immediate welfare concerns):

Within First 5 Days

- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with
- Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records
- Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers
- Send emails to all known email addresses
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll

- Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

Within days 5-10

- Write to address of emergency contact (if known)
- Speak to your School Attendance Officer for advice:
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Inform the parent/ carer of the child in writing that you are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to the Children Missing Education Team may be required if no response is provided.
- Repeat a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

Day 10

- Complete online CME referral form /contact CME Officer at Buckinghamshire Council.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels should their child's attendance drop below the expected threshold. This will be communicated half termly as needed.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant an authorised 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.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 10 school days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

If you wish to request a leave of absence you should email or ask the school office for a leave of absence request form (appendix 2).

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. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.
- 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.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted the parents must contact school should any delays occur to the child's return date to school.

5.2 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.

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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, Local Authority officer or the police.

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

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

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

HSM will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- 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.

6.2 Analysing attendance

HSM 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.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

HSM will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers 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

6.4 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.

6.5 Strategies to improve severe absence

HSM recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

HSM also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- use of attendance targeting letters
- early meetings with parents and pupils when concerns first emerge to discuss concerns and agree actions to improve attendance
- use of formal attendance panels, including members of the SLT
- home visits
- communicating with parents when agreed plans to improve attendance are failing.

In more complex and longer-term cases of poor attendance and persistent absence, interventions may include:

- multi-agency meetings and actions plans
- requesting medical information or information from other services
- home visits
- direct work with children and parents to address root causes of absence
- engaging specialist services and considering options for provision.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and children.

Appendix 1: Attendance statistics

Above 97%: less than 6 days absence a year

These children have every chance to make really strong progress at school.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school.

90%: 19 days absence a year

Children in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year

Children in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. This level of absence is seen as persistent absenteeism.

80%: 38 days absence a year

Children in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education and are not benefitting from their entitlement to an education. Parents of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice.

Minutes late per day = days of learning lost per year

5	3.2 days
10	6.5 days
15	9.5 days
20	12.5 days
30	19 days

Appendix 2

Application for Leave of Absence for a Pupil in Term Time



Please read these notes before submitting the application:

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 no longer permit Headteachers to authorise leave for holidays.
- Headteachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless** they consider there to be **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.
- The Headteacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
- The Headteacher will determine how long the absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.
- Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (i.e. home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
- If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

Please note: Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

Parents:

- The application overleaf must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
- Parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted for unauthorised absence, including holidays.
- Please complete a leave of absence form for each child at least 10 days before the first day of absence.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to their full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name: _____

Class: _____

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school: _____

Date of return to school: _____

Total number of school days missed: _____

Please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have time off during term time and why it should be regarded as exceptional?

Have you already requested any term time holiday this year?

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE DO NOT BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY UNTIL YOU KNOW THAT THE ABSENCE IS AUTHORISED

Appendix 3: 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 exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to 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