



# **The Federation of Hackbridge Primary School & Spencer Nursery School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Policy Date: September 2022**

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## 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:

- 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

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](#)' May 2022 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. 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
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and a report shared at Full Governing Body meetings
- 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

### 3.2 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
- Applying for the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The Designated Senior Leaders responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is Responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- 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
- 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
  - At Hackbridge Primary School (HPS) working with Cirrus Primary Academy Attendance Officer to tackle persistent absence
  - Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices at HPS for statutory school age children.
- The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance is Natasha Edmonds-Chappell (HPS) and Sandra Tanner (SNS) and can be contacted via school offices.

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office.

- Ensuring that the registers are completed accurately at the beginning of each session;
- Ensuring that all absence letters are sent to the office;
- Monitoring the attendance and patterns of absence of the children in their class;
- Liaising with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with regard to any concerns regarding absence;
- Ensuring that the delivery of the curriculum is challenging, interesting and stimulating so that children want to attend regularly;
- Ensuring (in conjunction with their colleagues) that the ethos in class and school is supportive of good attendance.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Record on the school system information taken from calls, emails and google form, from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis.
- At HPS meet weekly with Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance to discuss pupil absence and concerns.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Making sure their child comes to school on time, every day to enable them to receive their entitlement to learning unless prevented by the child's illness or medical appointment;
- Call the school to report their child's absence before by 9am on the day of the first absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- 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
- Providing medical evidence for absences, particularly for those deemed persistently absence and providing surgery/hospital cards/letters for all medical appointments;
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 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 start of the school day at both HPS and SNS and then again after lunch at HPS only. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity (completed by the office)
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (completed by the office)

Any amendment made by the office staff (or the Designated Senior Lead responsible for Attendance) 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 for pupils of compulsory school age at HPS
- 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

#### **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 9am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or the parent/carer has been requested to provide medical evidence due to child/ren persistent absence.

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.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

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 and shows the office staff evidence of appointment where asked.

However, 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 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.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality HPS**

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
- All children arriving after the start of the school day, or their nursery session, should enter through the school office.

These times are as follows:

- YR to Y6 Hackbridge Corner Site – the start of the school day is 8.45am Y3 & Y4 London Road Site – the start of the school day is 9.00am
- Caterpillars Nursery class– the start of the session is 8.30am Honeybees Nursery class – the start of the session is 9.00am Tadpoles Nursery class – the start of the session is 12.30pm
- Children who arrive after these times are late.

Late children will be scrutinised weekly by the school office, with persistent lateness being reported to the Headteacher and discussed with the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance. Being late to school can disrupt your child’s start to the day and cause them to become anxious, as they are missing the class teacher explaining the timetable for the day.

Minutes late every day	Amount of days lost each year
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	19 days

### Lateness and punctuality SNS

The school office will sign late children in. Parents or Carers are asked to ensure they let the school office know if their child is going to be late, to ensure that a school dinner is ordered for them.

### 4.5 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 contact Social Care or 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 School Attendance Officer.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance and absence levels in the Autumn and Spring Term and included in the annual report at the end of the Summer Term.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

At HPS the headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to a pupil during term time unless there are ‘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 in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our school website. 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

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The 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 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. Strategies for promoting attendance**

At HPS we have a number of strategies for rewarding good attendance and improved attendance:

- Each week we celebrate good attendance (and punctuality) in assembly. This is also shared with all staff and via our school newsletter to our families.
- Through the weekly attendance celebrations, classes with persistently good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded.
- Children receive a certificate each term for good attendance (96% or above) or improved attendance.
- Children will receive a badge each term for 100% attendance.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

*As per Government recommendations, good attendance is 96% or above.*

The school monitors all children whose attendance falls below 96%. The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance monitors attendance each week, scrutinising registers and reasons for absences. The school understands that sometimes there are valid reasons for low attendance and will not move onto the next stage of attendance monitoring.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school 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 Learning & Attainment Committee.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

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

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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

#### **7.4 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
- Follow the DfE's guidance on attendance legal intervention (see Appendix 2: Attendance legal intervention).

#### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

#### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

**Agreed by Governors:** Autumn 2022

**This Review:** Autumn 2023

**Learning and Attainment Committee**



## 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
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

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Attendance legal intervention

DfE: Working together to improve school attendance (September 2022).

### Section 6: Attendance legal intervention

89. As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

