



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed:	Spring 2023
This policy was ratified by Full Governing Body (if applicable):	Not Applicable
This policy will be reviewed again:	Spring 2024
Governor committee responsibility:	Headteachers (A&F Informed)
Statutory Policy?:	No

## **Introduction**

We expect all children to attend every day when the school is in session, providing they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Whilst parents/carers have the legal responsibility for their child's attendance, we will do all we can to encourage and provide the required support to ensure the children to attend.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will praise those children whose attendance is very good and will also make the best provision we can for those children, who for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school- working positively in partnership with all related partners towards this aim. Poor attendance at school and lateness may potentially be a safeguarding or wellbeing concern. Effective communication with school to explain any absences is therefore essential

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education, in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

“The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. The role of all partners is to: Expect- monitor- listen and understand- facilitate support- formalise support- enforce.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- ✚ Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- ✚ Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- ✚ Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- ✚ Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- ✚ Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.

- ✚ Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.”

(Working together to improve school attendance (DFE May 2022))

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is 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 the category of absence in line with borough policy.

### **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- ✚ Improve pupils’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- ✚ Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues or a specific context.
- ✚ Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- ✚ Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- ✚ Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- ✚ Working in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- ✚ Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- ✚ Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- ✚ Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child’s age and development.
- ✚ Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- ✚ Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- ✚ Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- ✚ Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Absence from school can be authorised for the following reasons:

-  Illness
-  Medical and dental appointments, though non-emergency appointments should be made outside school hours and proof of the appointment will be required.
-  Bereavement
-  Religious observance

Unauthorised absence will be coded:

-  When a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and parent.
-  When a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent parents/carers should contact the school office by 9.00am on the first day of the child's absence and leave a message on the school absence line. The school office staff will endeavour to contact a parent/carer if a message or reason for absence has not been received.

If a child has a medical appointment a copy of the appointment card or letter should be provided to the school ahead of the appointment. Wherever possible appointments should be made outside of school hours but if not, the child should return to school as soon as possible to complete the school day.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. It is important that the school receives accurate information, either by note or telephone notification- to determine the correct category. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### **Requests for leave of absence:**

Children are expected to attend school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that occasionally there are very exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child.

Under these circumstances, parents are required to contact the school office to discuss reasons for the request, which will then be considered and a response will be given. Parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for holidays. The Headteacher does not have authority to approve absence for general family holidays. Any unauthorised holiday absences of five days or longer will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

### **Long-term absence:**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will, when appropriate, do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If it seems likely that the absence will continue for an extended period (15 days or more), or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA). The LA have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school because of their health.

### **Repeated absences:**

Absence data is closely monitored by the school. The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unexplained absence requesting details. If a child has a repeated number of absences, the parents or guardians may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school on a regular basis and will review all cases where attendance has fallen below 90%. Attendance is expected to be over 96%.

When attendance is below 90% proof of absence will be required, for example in the case of illness a letter or appointment card will be required or permission to speak to the doctor's surgery.

If attendance does not improve, the EWO will arrange a visit with the parents/carers at school or home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation. The School and EWO will work with the family to support an improvement in attendance so that the case can be closed.

If these interventions do not achieve an improvement further action by the EWO may include a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution of the parents/carers.

### **Punctuality:**

At HHJS, the school gates open at 8.40am and the school day starts at 8.55- to allow children to be in class and ready to start learning by 9.00am.

At Carlisle, Reception children can enter the classroom from 8.45 – 9.00 am and should be ready to learn by 9.05 when morning registration is taken. The Years 1 and 2 children are expected to enter their classrooms at 8.55am and should be ready to learn by 9.05 when morning registration is taken.

Children arriving after 9.10am will be deemed as late and marked in the register accordingly. Children who are persistently late miss significant learning opportunities - the start of the day is a particularly important time to share information for the day. Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as late after the registers close and is considered an unauthorised absence for that session.

The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who is repeatedly late for school. The parents or guardians may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school may involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will arrange a visit at school or at home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. Together the school and EWO service will identify strategies with the parent or guardian to resolve the lateness issues.

### **Monitoring and review**

Is the responsibility of the Governing Body, who are also responsible for monitoring this policy and related practices. Attendance and punctuality will be reported at each Achievement and Families Committee meeting and monitored by the governing body through termly KPIs. (key performance indicators)

The School reports its attendance information, including figures for authorised and unauthorised absence, to the Local Authority each half term. Where attendance falls below 90% this will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Holidays**

Parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term-time. By law you must request permission from the Head Teacher for your child to miss school for any reason. Parents/carers must arrange their family holidays within the school holidays so that their child's education is not disrupted. Please note that term dates are published in our weekly newsletter and on our website.

**HHJS and CIS may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for any periods of unauthorised term-time holiday comprising ten sessions /five days. (Please see Appendix 1 – Fixed Penalty Notice)**

## **Safeguarding**

It is essential that we know where your child is. For safety reasons if a child is absent from school and no explanation has been received the Attendance Officer will call the parents/carers to establish the reason for absence.

## **Covid-19 Related Absence**

The school will continue to follow the advice issued by Public Health England and the Local Authority and school attendance requirements will be determined by the latest guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>).

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for unauthorised term-time holidays**

The school will consult with the allocated EWO before submitting a referral for FPN requests

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#### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE GUIDANCE Feb 2023**

If the school is seeking issue of an FPN for term-time holidays, the request should be emailed to [ews.fpn@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ews.fpn@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

Each request must be accompanied by a completed FPN checklist –

#### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE CHECKLIST 2023**

This is for term time holidays as well as a registration certificate to cover the offence period, which must be signed and dated by the Headteacher. This service must not be used for any other persistent absence matters. These requests must be sent through to the SPA - single point of access as a persistent absence referral, at which point EWS( education Welfare Service ) will determine if it meets threshold and/or whether it is appropriate to issue an FPN. Each request will be assessed on a case by-case basis for persistent absence. All schools, before seeking to issue an FPN, must ensure that a consultation with parents/carers has been held and that governors are in agreement with the school in implementing this action. Whilst it is the EWS that issues these, they cannot determine the issuing of FPNs for holidays. Schools looking to implement FPNs for holidays should ensure that they have reached a decision that is in line with their own process.