

Attendance Policy 2022

Heptonstall School



Approved by: Governing Body

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Next review due by: October 2023

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To minimise the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all pupils

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Targets

Our target attendance has been set in conjunction with the Governors and with reference to the DfE's aim of reducing unauthorised absence.

Year	2022/23	2023/24
Attendance Target	94%	96%

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

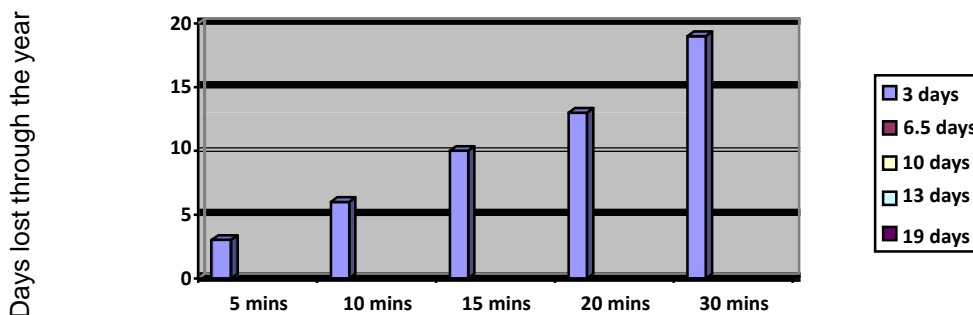
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

4. Punctuality

Lessons begin promptly at 9.00am. Arriving after this time can affect your child's progress. It also disrupts the classroom when lessons have already begun. Therefore, not only must children attend school regularly, but they must not be late.

The following graph clearly illustrates how being late can add up to a loss of learning:



As you can see, if your child is late for just 5 minutes every day that can add up to over three days lost each year and arriving 15 minutes late each day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year: for that reason it is imperative that your child is punctual.

To reduce congestion at the beginning of the school day and help all of our children arrive on time, school doors open at 8:45am (and are closed at 8:55am). If a child arrives after this time they MUST report to the school office.

5. School procedures

5.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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. Due to COVID, these attendance codes have been updated and change. School follow DfE guidance to ensure compliance.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

5.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible by leaving a message on the school absence line or send an email to the office (see also section 7).

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Advance notification of appointments should be made to the office only, either by telephone or email.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 6.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance registers are closed at 9.30am. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registration period (8.50 to 9.00am) but before the registers are closed (9.30am) will be given a late mark (L) in the register. This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school. Any pupil who arrives after the registers have closed (9.30am) but before the end of the morning session will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

5.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We will call parents/carers on the first day by 10.00am for absences not reported. If we do not get a response, we follow Safeguarding Policy for missing children.

5.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance reports are issued to parents annually as part of pupils end of year Reports. Parents are able to access attendance records for their children via Arbor, our management information system via logging in on the app or online.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as compassionate grounds e.g. terminal illness.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 5.2 and 5.3
- 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
- Where attendance is poor Heptonstall School will take the following action with parents/carers:
 - Contact via Dojo or email
 - Contact via letter
 - Meeting with Headteacher
 - Refer to Governors
 - Legal Action

6.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

7. Attendance monitoring

Heptonstall School have support from Calderdale Council Council and have access from a named Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The Headteacher and School Administrator monitor pupil absence on a half termly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5.2).

If a pupil's absence goes below 95% we may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. Absence for COVID will not counted as absence as part of absence monitoring during the pandemic and during the 'learning to live with COVID' phase. This will be updated as guidance is reissued from government.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will insist on a meeting with the Headteacher to resolve. We may will use the Local authority support to meet with parents. Further legal action may be taken.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Persistent Absence

The definition of persistently absence (PA) pupil as set out by the DfE for 2015-2016 is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 3	20 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 4 (autumn and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half term 1 - 5	31 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

As a school, we collect attendance data on our management information system, SIMS. As per legal requirements, this data is shared with the local authority and nationally. Internally, we check this data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence across the school and at an individual level with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as PA. The office and Headteacher will then monitor these pupils and try to work with families to improve attendance. This data is then monitored by our Safeguarding Governor on her school visits and data is shared termly with the Governors in an anonymous way. Attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of free school meals or are vulnerable are a focus of this monitoring.

The identified children are the focus of action and intervention and are discussed with meetings with a Local Authority EWO. These identified children become a daily or weekly focus to ensure improvement. The school are committed to working with parents to help solve attendance issues and ensure regular attendance. As parents/carers have accepted a place at our school, it is an expectation that parents/carers will be committed to ensure attendance is as high as possible and pupils are always punctual.

Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher (along with the School Administrator) is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The School Administrator

The School Administrators act as our attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Follows policy to ensure implementation
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Manages and maintains correspondences
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when it might be appropriate to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. Teachers record absence as an **N** code and attendance and correct codes are added by the school office. Class teachers are responsible for working with parents to ensure improved attendance for identified pupils. Class teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about patterns of absence to the Headteacher/Deputy DSL when it is considered a Safeguarding issue.

8.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to check emails and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Office staff are expected to contact parents when absence has not been reported as per the policy guidelines.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Mr Perrin. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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
I01	Illness	Pupils absent due to non-coronavirus related illness
I02	Illness – confirmed case of COVID 19	Pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus

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
X01	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