

Attendance Policy

Lady Hawkins' School



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Table of Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Recording attendance	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. Attendance monitoring.....	6
8. Child Missing Education	7
9. Monitoring arrangements.....	9
10. Links with other policies	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes	9

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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

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. 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:

- 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 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.

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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers and form tutors

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

3.5 School administrative staff

School administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system using appropriate codes. Responsibility for correct coding lies with the administrative team

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 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.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.55 and will be kept open until 09.05. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.50 and will be kept open until 14.00. These timings may change during the examination season.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carer should report an absence via Edulink. Alternatively telephone the school after 08.00 giving the reason for absence. This will be noted in the school diary.

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.

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.

Parents/carers should telephone the school, or email in advance of the appointment, with details of the appointment and arrangements for the student to be collected from school.

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

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

Persistent lateness will be identified during weekly attendance meetings and parents contacted as per section 4.5.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by the named member of the administrative team telephoning home on the first morning of the absence, and any subsequent day if the school is not contacted or a medical reason given by the parent/carer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported as a live figure using Edulink.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as anything requiring consideration of the Head teacher, outside of term time holidays or sickness.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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
- 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

If the attendance of a student is identified as causing concern, then a series of events will be triggered.

Stage 1 - Letter sent to parents, stating that their child's attendance is of concern

Stage 2 - Letter sent to parents outlining a continued issue and inviting them to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM), with a suggested time. At this meeting targets will be set and strategies discussed to improve attendance.

If, after further monitoring over a rolling 12-week period, there continues to be a problem then discussions will be had in school as to whether a second AIM meeting is required.

A lack of improvement or a lack of engagement will result in the Headteacher considering the use of Fixed Penalty Notice.

5.3 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

The attendance officer, along with the pastoral lead at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents/carers are expected to call the school each day their child is ill or communicate with the school the date of expected return.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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 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.

The school uses SIMs to store, interrogate and track student attendance data to identify those who require intervention.

To ensure parents and the school can each fulfil their statutory requirements the following process will be followed. With attendance monitored over a rolling 12 week period.

Stage 1 – Attendance below 95%

If the attendance rate falls below 95%, except where the absence is the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, you will be contacted by text message to alert you.

Stage 2 – Attendance below 90%

If attendance is below 90 %, except where the absence is the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, you will be sent an attendance concern letter. If there is no improvement, then the concern will move to stage 3.

Stage 3 – Attendance below 85% or no improvement at Stage 2.

Attendance rate below 85% signifies a persistent absence. Except where the absence is the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, you will be invited into school for an attendance improvement meeting with a member of the pastoral team. If there is no improvement at this stage, then the concern will move to stage 4.

Stage 4 – Attendance below 80% or no significant improvement at stage 3.

Parents will be invited to attend an attendance meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. An action plan and contract with targets for improvement will be drawn up. If there is no improvement at this stage, then the concern will move to stage 5.

Stage 5 – Attendance below 70% or no significant improvement at stage 4.

Parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel of the Board of Governors. A range of strategies and actions will be discussed at this stage and an agreement drawn up in writing.

At all stages the school will make every reasonable effort to attempt to resolve issues expediently while reminding parents of their statutory responsibilities. If no improvement is evident at stage 5 then the issuing of a fixed penalty notice by the local authority will be considered.

7. Child Missing Education

7.1 Description of a child missing education

Children missing education (CME) is the term used to describe compulsory school age* children who:

- Are not on a school roll *and*
- Are not being educated in another way (for example at home, privately, or in alternative provision) *or*

- Have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time and we do not know their whereabouts

Parents and the council both have duties in relation to children missing education:

- Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education and
- The council has a duty to establish and record what that education is, and to assess whether it is suitable to meet the child's needs

CME is not persistent absence. Please refer to your school's procedure for persistent absence.

**The start of the term commencing on or after the child's fifth birthday, until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16.*

7.2 Examples of CME

- Children of compulsory school-age whose family have never approached the LA for a school placement or formally registered to Elective Home Educate (EHE)
- Families who are missing and their destination is unknown
- Cases where the family have not taken up the allocated place and the child has not started at any school
- Families who inform the school that they are relocating and fail to give any further details
- Families whose home address is empty and clear indicators show that no-one is living at the address
- Children not previously known (movers in) who may be vulnerable and need additional support in securing a school place
- GRT children who do not start at the nominated school, or are travelling, and have not provided a return date to the LA
- Children who have failed to return from leave in term time and all avenues to trace them have been exhausted by the school and the LA
- Children where there is suspicion the family have moved abroad

This list is not exhaustive please contact CME officer for further advice. Please also see the further guidance on this page.

7.3 Safeguarding concerns

If there are any safeguarding concerns or if a child is known to social services, a referral to [Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) (MASH) should be made straight away.

Making a CME referral

A CME referral cannot be submitted before 10 consecutive days of absence. During this time the school is expected to carry out investigations to locate the pupil. The local authority will have a further 10 days to investigate the CME enquiry. School will complete a [CME safeguarding checklist](#) (vulnerability assessment) as part of this process.

In line with [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2006 regulation 8 \(h\)](#), a pupil cannot be removed from the school roll until 20 days have passed. This procedure does not replace school attendance policy, the issuing of penalty notices for non-attendance or the 'In Year Fair Access' procedure.

a CME referrals **must include** the following documents:

- A completed CME referral form
- The registration certificate

- Any other appropriate documentation

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 governors. 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

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
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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