

Attendance Policy

Lady Hawkins' School



Approved by:

Governors

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure 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 is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)
- It also refers to:
 - [School census guidance](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is K Davies and can be contacted via 01544 230441

3.5 Class teachers and coaches

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

3.6 School office 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.

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school Pastoral Support Team who can be contacted via pastoral@lhs.hereford.sch.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 08.55 and ends at 15.30.

Pupils must arrive at 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 for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.50 and will be kept open until 14.00.

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/carers should report an absence via Arbor. Alternatively, email the school on absence@lhs.hereford.sch.uk 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 with 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 fortnightly attendance meetings and parents contacted

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.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below)

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported as a live figure using Arbor.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

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

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the Local Authority will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Local Authority.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

We understand that returning to school can bring a mix of emotions, from excitement to anxiety, and we are committed to providing the necessary guidance and care to make this transition as smooth as possible. The school Pastoral Support Team will do this by:

- **Emotional Well-being:**
 - Our team will offer individual support sessions for those who need extra care, ensuring that every pupil feels heard and understood
 - We will implement various well-being activities, such as mindfulness sessions, peer support groups, and workshops focused on building resilience and coping strategies
- **Reintegration and Routine:**
 - Our team will work closely with pupils to help them gradually readjust to school life, offering tailored support where needed
 - We will also collaborate with teachers to provide a structured environment that encourages positive learning experiences and personal growth
- **Social Connections:**
 - We will support students to reconnect with their friends and peers
 - For students who may feel isolated or anxious about social interactions, we will provide support to help them rebuild confidence and social skills
- **Communication with Parents/Carers:**
 - Our team will maintain open lines of communication, providing updates and resources to help them support their child's well-being and academic progress at home
 - We are also available to discuss any specific concerns parents or carers may have and work collaboratively to address them
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Support:**
 - Our team will regularly check in with pupils to monitor their well-being and progress. We are committed to offering ongoing support, adapting our approach as needed to meet the changing needs of our students
 - We will also work in partnership with other school staff and external agencies to ensure a holistic approach to pupil support

7. 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 Arbor MIS system 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 the school.

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..

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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) 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.

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
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
I	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays