



*'Be the best you can be'*

**CARE - COURAGE - RESPECT - RESPONSIBILITY**

# Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Board (06.10.25)

*Date written: September 2025*

*To be reviewed: October 2026*

## 1. Introduction

Hagbourne CE Primary School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For children to benefit as fully as possible from their time in school, it is vital that they attend regularly – that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance optimises a child's attainment, mental health, well-being and relationships with others.

The school has a legal duty to promote attendance, report and publish its absence figures and to share its Attendance Policy. School attendance data is made available to Oxfordshire County Council, Ridgeway Education Trust and the Department for Education on a daily basis.

All of our staff are committed to working with parents, carers and pupils to secure the highest possible levels of attendance. We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils. In turn, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

This policy outlines how we go about achieving this by making our attendance procedures clear to parents and carers, so supporting close partnership working.

### 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. The importance of regular attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling; regular absence seriously affects a child's learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best

safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in the statutory guidance, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024](#).

### 3. Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Promote good attendance and celebrate where identified pupils have increased their attendance;
- Run sessions when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- 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

As well as promoting a general culture of good attendance, we will tailor our approach to the contexts and needs of particular cohorts and individual pupils.

#### 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

#### 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.

### 4. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the **school**, as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.

- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between school, parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes.
- Helping with homework.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school.
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).

#### **4.i. Patterns of absence**

**Persistent absence (PA):** A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the fullest support of parents and carers to improve this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. The attendance of pupils who are persistently absent is then tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system/Home School Link Worker (HSLW).

In most cases, our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a TA or the HSLW, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Most PA cases are also made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we may seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

**Severe absence (SA):** A pupil becomes a severe absentee when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress which is likely to have lifelong consequences. All pupils at our school who are severely absent will have an Individual Attendance Plan incorporating multi-agency input. Parents and carers will be expected to engage with all partners to improve attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

#### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Contact parents (verbally and/or by written letter) to inform them when attendance is lower than expected

- 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

## 5. Exceptional Leave

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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, where possible, in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Events such as immediate family weddings or funerals

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the school may request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Points to note about term-time holidays and exceptional Leave:

- It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- RET schools do not authorise requests for holiday.
- The Headteacher or their designated representative may wish to meet personally with families requesting Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- Exceptional leave is unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 96%.
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The Penalty Notice for unauthorised holiday is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024)

**Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child.**

## **6. Absence procedures**

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us by phone (via the absence reporting line) as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for the non-attendance
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or you can call into school and report your child's absence to reception;
- Be honest about the reason for absence including if you are on holiday.

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we do not hear from you;
- Visit you at home if we have not heard from you by day 3 of absence.

**In addition, if your child's attendance is at risk of becoming a cause for concern, we may:**

- Invite parent/carers to a meeting in the school with our Home School Link Worker, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher to identify the barriers to attendance and ensure support is put in place;
- Offer a Strengths and Needs assessment;
- Gain the voice of the child to ensure we are taking a child-centred approach to supporting improvements to attendance;
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance falls below 90%.

### **Unplanned absence**

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.

### **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. 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.

## **7. Contact details**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to always have your current contact numbers and email addresses. Please ensure we have up-to-date phone numbers and email addresses – if we don't, then something important may be missed. Please ensure we have both parents, if applicable, and at least a third emergency contact person's contact details. We will check the contact details we hold on record annually for this.

## 8. Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their tutor or class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which is embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

**Managing punctuality:** The school day starts (and the registration window opens) at 8:45am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (**/**).

Registers are completed by 8:50am and your child will receive a late mark (**L**) if they are not in school by that time.

At 9:15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with relevant regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (**U**) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean this session is classed as an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for **pm** registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1:00pm in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are late to return or whom do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (**\**)

As with attendance, patterns of punctuality will be monitored and analysed carefully to identify any persistent problems as early as possible. If your child is starting to be persistently late we will ask that you meet with our Home School Link Worker, Head or Deputy Head to identify and address any barriers and you may be offered to complete a Strengths and Needs Forms. If there is no improvement after this discussion you will be sent a 'Notice to Improve' letter with the aim to maintain good attendance and punctuality for the next 6 weeks. Where this is not achieved, a Penalty Notice Referral may be made to the County Attendance Team. If you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time you can approach us at any time.

## 9. County Attendance Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff towards resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, or take action via a Non-Attendance referral (in line with legislation in the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A)).

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs assessment. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

In the event of further unauthorised absences, parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is (01865) 323513, and the email address is: [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## 10. School contacts

Staff responsible for attendance in our school are:

- Mrs Dobson, Attendance Officer / Headteacher
- Mrs Lewis, Attendance Officer / Deputy Headteacher
- Mrs Katie Gilbert, Attendance co-ordinator
- Jemma Dyson, Governor with responsibility for attendance

### Summary:

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social wellbeing.

### Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

[Attendance codes summary](#)

### Appendix 2: Start of year attendance letter including County example blanket model letter for penalty notices

[Link to letter.](#)

### Appendix 3: Roles and Responsibilities

#### 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
- 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

## **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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## **The designated senior leader 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sarah-Jane Lewis and can be contacted via [sjlewis@hagbourne.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:sjlewis@hagbourne.oxon.sch.uk) or 01235 813367.

## **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 Sarah-Jane Lewis and can be contacted via [sjlewis@hagbourne.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:sjlewis@hagbourne.oxon.sch.uk) or 01235 813367.

## **Class Teachers**

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

## **School Admin / Office staff**

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Transfer calls from parents to the class teacher or senior leadership team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the 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

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time