

Horton Lodge Community Special School

'Working Together – Achieving Potential'



Attendance Policy

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:



Contents

1. Aims	1
2. Legislation and Guidance	1
3. School Procedures.....	2
4. Authorised and Unauthorised Leave.....	3
5. Attendance Monitoring.....	4
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
7. Monitoring Arrangements.....	5
8. Links with Other Policies.....	5



1. Aims

Horton Lodge 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.

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 lessons.

Horton Lodge School believes;

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community
- This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying and support for children with medical needs
- Through the use of the school curriculum and learning materials, positive behaviour and attendance will be promoted. The school recognises good attendance appropriately.
- All children should be in school on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable or in exceptional circumstances.

Horton Lodge School will;

- Work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or Local Support Teams, where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance.
- Be proactive in encouraging the attendance for all pupils through their work with parents and pupils and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.
- Work cooperatively with parents, as parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

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:

- 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.

3. School Procedures

3.1 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 once in the morning and once in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

2. Present
3. Attending an approved off-site educational activity
4. Absent
5. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The morning register will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The afternoon register will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1:45pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents should notify the school office by telephoning and speaking to a member of staff or by leaving a message.

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.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing school sessions for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents should give advance notice by informing the school office.

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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Please see section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality



Attendance Policy September 2018

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils who arrive late at school because of difficulties with school transport will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent lateness by contractors occur, school will liaise with Staffordshire's transport department.

3.5 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.

On the first day of absence where a reason has not been given the school will make a telephone call to parents to ascertain the reason for the absence. If contact cannot be made the school will send a txt message asking parents to contact the school. A 'safe and well' visit may be made if the school has concerns regarding the absence and no contact has been made.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 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'.

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 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

4.2 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.

5. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly 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 3.2).

If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, 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 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.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 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.

6.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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.

The headteacher is the attendance officer and also:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Liaises with the safeguarding team around concerns about attendance
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

6.3 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.

6.4 Office staff

Office staff will take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They will also make first day absence phone calls.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy