



Hemingbrough CP School

Attendance Policy

Aims and Ethos

Hemingbrough Community Primary School recognises the importance of full attendance and aims to ensure that all pupils achieve and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and punctuality are a prerequisite to a good education and therefore are a priority for the school. We are committed to providing a full and inclusive educational experience for all pupils. We aim to develop pupils to their full potential; Parents/carers have a responsibility to aid the education process by ensuring that pupils attend the school regularly, on time, and in a suitable condition to learn.

Irregular attendance is likely to place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a school therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of regular pupil attendance. In this matter the partnership between school and home is important. We expect our parents to value our school and their child's education and to support our school's procedures.

Our aim is also to minimise the amount of time lost to term-time holidays in order to maximise the educational potential of every child. This can be achieved with the support of parents/carers by ensuring holidays in term time are not taken unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are 175 days each year when a child is not in school. Absence for any reason during term time interrupts a child's education and disrupts educational progress.

At Hemingbrough Community Primary School we strive to ensure that every child will want to attend school. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where the pupils feel valued and providing a stimulating and accessible curriculum delivered in a physically clean, bright and attractive environment.

The school will try to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Regulations and Guidance to which the school must adhere

Absence in term time – The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Issuing of penalty notices – The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE 2024)

Parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly where there is a child registered at a school and they are of compulsory school age

School has a responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence

School has the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the local authorities' code of conduct

Definition of a parent

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

Context of the school attendance measures

Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. In most cases children attend school. Parents are thus primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, an alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

At Hemingbrough we ask that parents inform the school of any absence or lateness before 8.30am via email or phone. Communication should state the reason for the absence. If we have not received notification of a child's absence the administrative staff will contact the parents on the main contact number or the second contact number. If school is unable to make contact, we may visit the home. In some circumstances we will contact the police to request they undertake a 'welfare call'.

The school will monitor attendance regularly. Where attendance falls below 90%, it is classed as persistent absence. In these cases, parents will be informed in the first instance using the letters provided by NYC. Attendance will be monitored and appropriate steps taken should attendance continue to be below 90%. This may be a follow up letter or a face to face meeting.

School Attendance Orders

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

Prosecutions by local authorities

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an

offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. The decision to prosecute rests solely with the Local Authority

Local authorities must conduct all investigations in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Section 444 had two separate but linked offences: Section 444(1): where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly, and fails to ensure the child does so.

Section 444ZA applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where alternative provision is provided. There are statutory defences for parents to use under the Act. The fines available to the court if parents are found guilty of the section 444(1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1000. If they are found guilty of the section 444(1A) the fine is at a level 4, up to £2500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to three months.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school. The fine is a level 3 fine of up to £1000.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £80 / £160 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

Penalties 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 five days of a period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

The Code of Conduct

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. This includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consulting all schools, including academies, and the police. The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice. These could include: a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year; one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission; and where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority. The parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

Can schools decide whether parents should be prosecuted or not?

No. Only local authorities can make decisions on whether parents should be prosecuted for school attendance offences. All schools (including academies) have a duty to refer absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how they supported the pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable cause of action.

It is the statutory duty of local authorities to carry out investigations including witness statements leading up to prosecutions. Local authorities should conduct all investigations in accordance with PACE and Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors. Local Authorities cannot delegate this function to schools (including academies) or charge them for this service.

School Procedures for requesting an absence in term time

Any parents or carers wanting to request to take their children out of school during term time should, where possible, make an appointment with the Head teacher to discuss the request in the first instance. Any request should be made a minimum of six weeks (excluding emergency and unforeseen events) before the intended absence is to be taken, and we strongly advise parents / carers not to book any holiday until request for leave has been obtained.

Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as exceptional:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production of confirmation from the organisation / company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the experience offered by being out of school. Where the Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Parent / carers will be notified in writing of the decision for a holiday in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

Procedures for following up an unexplained absence

The Headteacher / admin staff will endeavour to contact the parent by either phone or email to seek clarification on the absence.

If we are unable to gain clarification then the absence will be classed as unauthorised and, where appropriate, the Education Social Worker will be contacted.

If a child is absent from school for a long period of time, the school will maintain contact and provide the child with appropriate school work (if this is feasible).

Lateness

It is important that pupils are punctual and arrive prepared for the day's learning.

Lateness will be recorded in the register by means of the appropriate symbol. If lateness follows a persistent pattern or occurs frequently the Head teacher will contact the parents to discuss the matter.

Pupils who are regularly late will receive help from school to try to improve their punctuality.

The school regards lateness as arriving more than 5 minutes after the recognised school starting time. Registers will be closed after 15 minutes.

The registration system is in place to record, in an accurate manner, attendance, lateness and absences. This complies with Government and LA guidelines

It is our policy to actively discourage late arrival. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport disruption), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line will be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

- School's official starting time is 8:45am. Children should be lined up at their designated point on the playground by 8.45. Parents are politely asked to leave promptly so that classes can enter school promptly for registration and for learning to begin. **If you need to speak to a member of staff, please make an appointment or speak to the Head teacher who is available at the start of the day. The Head teacher will pass on any messages as appropriate.**

- Pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office as they will be required to sign in and parents will be asked to provide a reason for the lateness.
- If a child arrives after registration closes at 9.00 they will be marked as late for the whole morning session.

Registration

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as is indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 8.55 am in the morning and 1.10pm in the afternoon when they will be returned to the school office. It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

Absence

It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. **Parents/carers are asked to inform the school office by 8.30am on each day (or the first day, when the child will be away for several days) a child is unwell and will not be attending school.**

- A child who has been given antibiotics should be kept away from school for the first 48 hours of treatment if advised by the doctor.
- A child who has been sick (vomited) and/or who has diarrhoea should also be kept away from school until the child has been clear of the problem for 48 hours.
- Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours. However, where this is not possible, the school will require notification prior to the absence. When a child is absent for a medical appointment, it is expected that they will attend school prior to the appointment and/or return to school immediately following the appointment.

Please contact the office for further guidance on specific illnesses and required length of absence.

If parents do not contact school on the first day of their child's absence, the office staff will contact parents to ascertain reasons for the absence and offer advice and support where appropriate. It is important that contact with parents is made on the first day of absence to ensure that parents are aware that their children have not arrived at school that day.

On day two or three of an absence, a **home visit** may be conducted by members of school staff. This is so we can offer any support and guidance to families during the child's period of absence. If for any reason (other than a justifiable medical reason, such as the child being in hospital or the parent/carer providing a verifiable doctor's certificate that the child cannot be seen) we are not allowed to see the pupil, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and advice may be sought from the authority.

It is crucial that parents adhere to this procedure to ensure that all pupils are safe and their whereabouts are accounted for.

Leave for medical and dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) on production of an appointment card/letter. To minimise absence from school, parents are requested to bring children to school prior to the appointment (where possible) and return children to school after medical and dental appointments if they are well enough to be at school (i.e. following dental check-ups or routine appointments).

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil although registered is not physically present. Similarly, the school must note the presence or a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

Excessive Unauthorised Absence

An excessive amount of unauthorised absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

School office staff and the Head teacher will monitor absence through the use of the attendance reports.

Parentally Condoned Unjustified Absence

It is a fact that parentally-condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy. Staff should be vigilant to avoid it becoming a problem.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, the staff will intervene at an early opportunity. If no improvement is noted after school staff have intervened, we will refer the absence to the Local Authority's Prevention Team.

Long Term Absences

Occasionally, some pupils experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. School deals with each case individually, agreeing procedures for re-integrating these pupils with each family as the need arises. Please contact the Head teacher if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the school from the child's parents/carers. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Where there is doubt about the authenticity attributed to illness, the School or the School Attendance Officer can refer the matter to a doctor working in the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make contact with the pupil's GP.

In cases of long term absence the school will visit the home to make weekly welfare/safeguarding checks.

Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor very closely attendance that falls below 90%. When children fall below this, parents will be contacted using NYC attendance letters. Reasons for absence will be explored and it might be decided that the parent(s)/carer(s) is (are) asked to attend a meeting to discuss attendance with a plan put in place to help this to improve. Further meetings will be held to ascertain if the plan is working.

The Head teacher will also:

- Liaise, where appropriate, between home and the school
- Investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk.
- Complete a regular register check; giving feedback and advice on improving attendance.
- Enforce the Law in relation to school attendance.

Encouraging and Rewarding Good attendance

The school will:

Reward good attendance with certificates at the end of each term

Hold weekly class attendance competition (winning classing will 'bank' £5 for each win to spend at the end of the year

Hold a weekly 100% raffle (winner can choose a small prize)

Attendance will be reported on Snippets each week

Individual attendance data will be sent to parents/carers at the end of each term

Date of Policy Adoption / Reviewed	Responsibility / Reviewed by	Revisions Made (Y/N)	Method of Communication	Next Review Due
Adoption Nov 2016	Dr Ruth Waters, FGB		Website	
Reviewed May 2020	Laura Ward, FGB	Y (COVID)	Website	May 2021
Reviewed Mar 2021	Laura Ward, FGB	N	Website	Mar 2022
Reviewed Feb 2022	Laura Ward, FGB	N	Website	Feb 2023
Reviewed Feb 2023	FGB	Y	Website	Feb 2024
Reviewed Feb 24	FGB	Y	Website	Feb 25
Reviewed Jan 25	FGB	Y	Website	Jan 26

