

Attendance Policy

Harper Bell SDA School



Issue Date:

Version: V1

Review Date:

16/03/27 or when new legislation requires changes.

This policy will also be reviewed annually or when new legislation requires changes, whichever is the soonest. This policy is approved by *The Governing Body*.

Date approved:

Headteacher/Principal.....Susan Sidhu

Chair of Governors Richard Beamish

Date approved: 16/03/26

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Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School

Attendance Policy

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1. How this policy has been written

This attendance policy has been written to help families understand how Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School approaches attendance and punctuality.

At Harper Bell, we believe that strong attendance is essential for pupils to flourish academically, socially and spiritually. As a Christian school, we believe that every child is created with purpose and potential, and regular attendance ensures that pupils can fully participate in the learning, character development and community life of the school.

This policy reflects:

- Department for Education statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
- Our commitment to strong family partnerships
- Our school values of **Love, Learning, Laughter, Prayer, Progress and Purpose**

We want this policy to be clear, supportive and transparent so that families understand how we work together to secure excellent attendance for every pupil.

2. Attendance is important

Attendance at school is essential. When pupils attend school regularly they benefit from:

- high quality teaching and learning
- strong friendships and social development
- opportunities to develop confidence and independence
- participation in enrichment and wider curriculum experiences
- belonging to a positive school community
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At Harper Bell we aim to make school an irresistible place to learn, where pupils feel safe, valued and inspired to attend every day.

Our approach to attendance includes:

- building strong relationships with pupils and families

- creating a positive learning culture through our STARS expectations
- ensuring lessons begin with Strong Starts, helping pupils recall prior learning
- carefully monitoring attendance patterns
- celebrating excellent attendance and improvements
- supporting families where barriers to attendance arise

We expect pupils to attend school **at least 97% of the time** wherever possible. When attendance drops below this level, pupils can begin to miss important learning and experiences that cannot easily be replaced.

Attendance is therefore a shared responsibility between school, families and pupils.

The Headteacher holds overall responsibility for ensuring that attendance is prioritised and promoted across the school.

3. Our attendance processes

The school takes attendance registers twice daily in line with statutory requirements.

Registers are taken:

- **Morning session:** 8:30am
- **Afternoon session:** 1:15pm

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by **8:40am** so that they are ready for the start of learning.

Late arrival

- Pupils arriving after **8:40am** will be recorded as late.
- Pupils arriving after **9:30am** will be recorded as **absent for the morning session** in line with Department for Education guidance.

Punctuality is important because late arrival disrupts learning and causes pupils to miss the Strong Start of lessons, where key retrieval practice takes place.

First day absence procedures

If a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified:

1. The school will contact parents or carers by telephone or message.
2. If contact cannot be made, further attempts will be made throughout the day.
3. If absence continues without explanation, the school may carry out a **home visit** or involve the **Local Authority Attendance Service** to ensure the pupil is safe.

This safeguarding procedure is an important part of keeping pupils safe.

Monitoring attendance

Attendance is monitored:

- daily by school staff
- weekly by the attendance lead
- half-termly by senior leaders

Where patterns of absence begin to emerge, the school will contact families early so that support can be provided.

Recognising good attendance

At Harper Bell we celebrate and recognise excellent attendance. This may include:

- class attendance awards
- termly recognition certificates
- celebration assemblies
- rewards for improved attendance
- acknowledgement of strong attendance in school communications

Our aim is to celebrate commitment and improvement while reinforcing the importance of being in school every day.

4. How families can help

Families play a vital role in supporting good attendance and punctuality. We ask families to support us by focusing on three key areas:

- regular attendance
- punctual arrival
- clear communication about absence

Regular attendance

Families can support regular attendance by:

- avoiding holidays during term time
- booking medical appointments outside the school day wherever possible
- ensuring pupils attend school whenever they are well enough
- encouraging positive routines at home

Even small amounts of absence add up over time.

For example:

- **95% attendance = half a day missed every two weeks**
- **90% attendance = one day missed every two weeks**

This can significantly affect learning and progress.

Arriving on time

Pupils should arrive at school by **8:30am** so that they are ready to begin learning.

Being punctual helps pupils:

- settle calmly into the day
- take part in Strong Start retrieval activities
- avoid missing important instructions

Informing school about absence

If a pupil is absent, parents or carers must inform the school **before 8:30am** on the same day.

Absences can be reported by contacting the **school office** or **through the absence reporting function on our school website**

Parents should provide:

- the reason for absence
- the expected length of absence if known

If a pupil is absent for multiple days, parents must keep the school informed.

The school may request evidence in cases of repeated or extended absence, such as:

- appointment confirmations
- medical advice

Term-time leave

The Department for Education states that schools may only authorise leave during term time in **exceptional circumstances**.

Requests must:

- be made in writing
- be submitted before booking travel

Each request will be considered individually by the Headteacher.

Communication and support

If families are experiencing difficulties affecting attendance, we strongly encourage early communication with the school. The school will always aim to work in partnership with families to identify solutions and provide support.

5. Supporting pupils and families where attendance becomes a concern

Harper Bell takes a supportive and graduated approach to improving attendance. Attendance is monitored using an attendance support pathway, which identifies pupils whose attendance is beginning to fall.

Early support

When attendance begins to decline, the school may:

- contact parents to discuss concerns
- explore possible barriers to attendance
- offer support strategies
- monitor attendance closely

Targeted support

If attendance continues to decline, the school may:

- arrange a meeting with parents or carers
- create an **attendance improvement plan**
- implement targeted support
- involve external support services where appropriate

Formal intervention

Where attendance does not improve despite support, the school may involve:

- the Local Authority Attendance Service
- formal monitoring procedures
- legal intervention where required

Legal action is always considered **a last resort**, and the school will work with families to resolve attendance concerns before this stage wherever possible.

5. Supporting pupils and families where attendance becomes a concern

At Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School we work in **partnership with families to promote excellent attendance**. Our approach follows the Department for Education's principle that schools should **expect, monitor, listen, support and enforce** attendance where necessary.

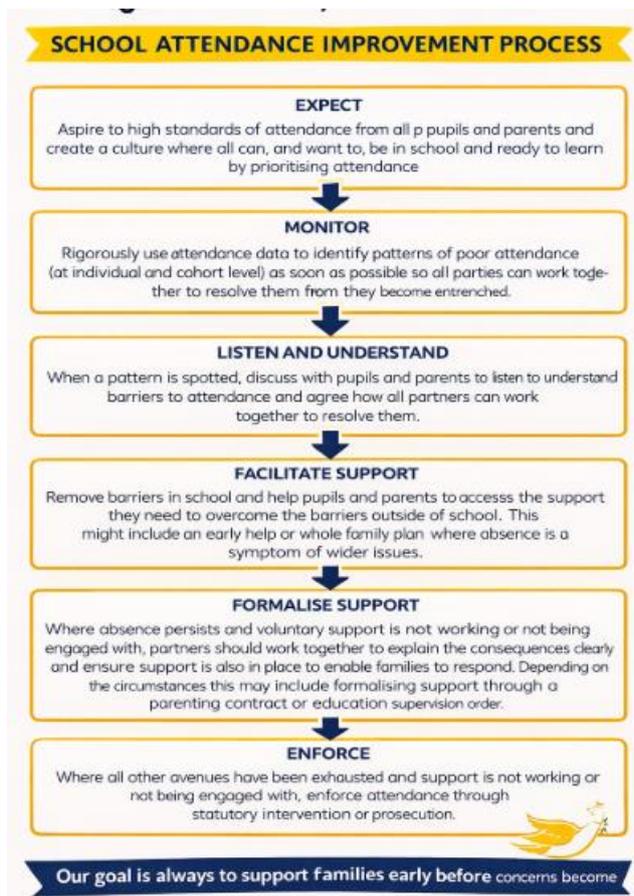
Our aim is always to identify barriers early and provide support before attendance problems become entrenched.

Attendance improvement process

Our approach to improving attendance follows a clear stepped process. This ensures that:

- expectations are clear for all pupils and families
- attendance is monitored carefully
- barriers are identified early
- appropriate support is put in place
- statutory action is only used where support has not been successful.

The process used at Harper Bell is shown below.



This process ensures that:

Expect

The school promotes a culture where high attendance is expected from all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to attend school every day and families are supported in prioritising attendance.

Monitor

Attendance data is analysed regularly so that any patterns of absence can be identified early.

Listen and understand

Where concerns begin to appear, the school will speak with pupils and families to understand any barriers that may be affecting attendance.

Facilitate support

Where barriers exist, the school will work with families and external partners to remove those barriers and support improved attendance.

Formalise support

If voluntary support is not successful, formal attendance plans or agreements may be put in place to support improvement.

Enforce

Where absence continues and support has not improved attendance, statutory intervention may be considered in line with Local Authority guidance to protect the pupil's right to education.

Attendance monitoring zones

To help families understand how attendance is monitored, the school uses an attendance zone system.

97-100% missing around 6 days	The Green Zone	When a pupil's attendance is in this zone, this is ideal. Pupils will be benefiting from the full range of what school has to offer.
93-96.9% missing around 14 days	The Yellow Zone Emerging concerns	When a pupil's attendance is in this zone we will begin to keep an eye on attendance patterns. This way, we can get in touch with you to see if any support is needed.
90-92.9% Missing around 19 days	The Amber Zone Concerns	When a pupil's attendance is in this zone, we will get in touch with families/parents and families to let them know. We will ask you if there's any help you need because we know that there is a real risk of a pupil falling significantly behind and missing out.
Below 90% Missing more than 20 days	The Red Zone Significant concerns	When a pupil's attendance is below 90%, this is classified as 'persistently absent'. This is a real worry. We will ask families and pupils to have a discussion with us and to make a plan to improve attendance really quickly so that attendance is back on track.

These zones help the school identify when support may be needed.

Green Zone (97–100%) Attendance in this zone is excellent. Pupils are benefiting from the full curriculum and wider opportunities the school provides. The school will continue to encourage and celebrate strong attendance