



**Attendance
Policy
2020 -21**

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Equality Impact			
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Hawthorns School Attendance Policy

Attendance Statement

Hawthorns School believes that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial and we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents, carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to continue strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

As learners grow and prepare for their next steps of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers.

Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school.
- Keeping records of attendance through school registers and following up absences
- Working effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly

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 Section 7 states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational need they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age who is registered at school fails to attend regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. The Local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary use legal enforcement.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning and afternoon session. The register is a legal document and must record if a pupil is

- Present
- Absent - authorised or unauthorised
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. 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.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. The penalty notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution.

In law, an offence is committed if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once
- They go on holiday in term time without school's permission

- The child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued for such an offence.

Current Government guidelines state that an attendance level below 90% deems a pupil to be a **Persistent Absentee**. Further prolonged periods of poor attendance without good reason will lead to the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for absence is received.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness

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 in advance. If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Family Multi-agency Link Worker may request permission contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

It is a shared responsibility between parents and school to keep each other updated about a pupil who is absent for more than 2 days.

Medical or dental appointments

Absence for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences and the appointment card evidence must be shown to school to enable the absence to be authorised.

However, we strongly encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible or late afternoon only if essential. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school after the appointment.

Religious observance

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to School if they intend their child to be absent. It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a penalty notice is issued or refer the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

Traveller pupils

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Transport arranged by the LEA has failed to arrive

- this applies where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

Exceptional family circumstances

- may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher e.g family bereavement. A leave of absence form may be required to be completed.

Unauthorised absences

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised when a child is absent without permission from school examples include:

- Shopping, haircuts, missed bus, slept late, no uniform, birthdays

Procedures for 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.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence by 9am. We will not accept messages from transport escorts. If no contact is received, this will trigger our first day calling procedures and we will:

- Contact parent/carer by telephone. and keep trying until contact is made and a reason for absence given. All alternative contact numbers will also be used. Parentmail /Parentapp may also be used.
- If no contact is made with parents/carers by 10.30am, the Family Multi agency Link Worker and another member of staff may make a Home Visit to the home address.
- They will take with them a standard written letter from school to leave at the address if no contact is made. The letter informs parents of the visit and that school will now be contacting the police.
- The Family Multi-Agency Worker will phone 101- the non-emergency police line for concerns to report the concern and to request a Safe and Well Check to ensure the parent and child are safe. If no contact is established from this and school determine there is a safeguarding concern then the police will be contacted on 999.

Concerns about absence of any kind are always referred by class staff to the school Family Multi-agency Link Worker. This will result in a phone call or visit to parents/carers and if necessary, they are asked to come in to school for a meeting. This meeting will try to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. Parents/carers will also be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance

Registration

At Hawthorns School a manual registration system is used. Manual registers must be marked in black ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

- Registers will be collected from and returned to the table outside Elder class at the end of the registration period.
- Registration begins from 9.00am every morning depending on allocated Bubble arrival times and 12.50pm/1.20 pm each afternoon. All Registers will be closed at 9.30am/1.30pm. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they should report to reception and class staff will be informed as to the reason for lateness.
- The DfE attendance codes used to mark attendance or absence are listed in registers
- Attendance marks are transferred on to the SIMS system.

It is essential that children arriving after 9.30 am and leaving school before 2.45 pm with a parent/carer are signed in or out at the Reception Office. A reason must also be given. This register is also used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Lateness and punctuality

- Persistent lateness can cause considerable harm to a child's learning as many important learning activities start at the beginning of the day. Late pupils also disrupt other pupils in the classroom when they enter. Being punctual is an important life skill for children to learn.
- Children arrive at school from 8.40 am and Registers are taken between 9 am and 9.30am

- Children arriving after 9.30am must report to reception and will be marked late in the register using **code L** unless there is an agreed late plan in place.
- A late mark **code U** will be recorded after 9.40am if no late plan has been agreed.
- If a child is persistently late, contact will be made with parents/ carers to try to resolve this issue.
- If lateness cannot be avoided due to exceptional circumstances an agreed plan will be drawn up between parents and school to confirm the reasons for regular late arrival. A copy of this plan will be kept in the attendance file in the office.
- Any child arriving after 9.30am on a late plan will be marked in the register with **code C**
- Lateness will be monitored fortnightly as part of our attendance monitoring

Holidays in Term Time

Parents do not have an entitlement to take their children on holiday in term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated term times.

Any application for holidays during term-time cannot be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances and may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents, who take their children on holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child and a possible fine from the local authority. Where extended holidays are taken we will ask for a forwarding address.

Leave of Absence Requests

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At Hawthorns School, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances and only at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least 2 weeks before the planned leave on the **Pupil Leave of Absence form**, which can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the website. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher and it will be marked as unauthorised.

We will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Each application will be considered and will take into consideration the following factors, among others:

- Length of leave requested
- Age of pupil
- Pupil's attendance/ absence record
- Pupil's educational needs
- Welfare of the pupil
- If there are exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Headteacher)
- Previous leave of absence requests.

Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to Local Authority to

request that a penalty notice fine is issued or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We will respond to all application for leave of absence in writing. When a leave of absence is granted by the Head Teacher, the parent/carer will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from or made with the parent/carer school may instigate Child Missing Education Procedures and the pupil may be removed from the school roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality.

- All absences will be followed up on the first day
- The importance of good attendance and punctuality is highlighted in the school prospectus, Attendance policy, newsletters, on the website, and reported to parents at termly Parent evenings, Annual Reviews and on pupil reports.
- Parents/carers, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Parents /carers will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, will be promptly investigated by the school and support provided by The Family Multi-agency Link Worker.
- A weekly prize and Harry bear will be awarded to the class with the best attendance.
- Individual pupil certificates awarded for 100% attendance each term. Pupils with 100% attendance for the whole year will receive a medal at the end of the summer term.

Persistent absence

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. All pupils who are actually PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be discussed at the weekly Attendance Review and will result in appropriate interventions being instigated. Referrals may also be made to appropriate external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

Strategies for monitoring and promoting attendance

- Attendance is monitored and followed up daily by the Attendance Leads
- Parents/Carers are expected to phone the school by 9am in the morning of the first day of absence.

- If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days we will contact the parents regularly to discuss the absence and offer support.
- We collect and monitor attendance/lateness data to track the attendance of individual or groups of pupils causing concern and monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.
- We will work with Tameside EWS to seek advice and support for pupils as needed.
- Attendance data is reported regularly to stakeholders.
- 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.

Attendance Target






The school sets an attendance target each year. This is agreed by the Senior Leadership team based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling so we ensure that attendance monitoring is given high priority.

Our attendance target for 2020-21 is 93.5%.

Monitoring attendance

The grading system below is used as an indicator for patterns of attendance and to give early warning of possible problems emerging. It also highlights those pupils whose attendance is above expectations.

- Excellent attendance 98-100%
- Good 93.5 -97.9%
- Monitor 92- 93.4%
- Cause for concern 90-91.9%
- Persistent absentee Below 90%

<p>Excellent attendance 98-100%</p> 	<p>Well done! Pupils whose attendance is at this level will be congratulated, receive positive encouragement and be rewarded at a whole school level to maintain this good attendance</p>
<p>Good/expected attendance 93.5 -97.9%</p> 	<p>Positive encouragement and praise will continue but school will monitor for any deterioration</p>
<p>Monitor 92- 93.4%</p> 	<p>ATTENDANCE CONCERN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention will be instigated as a preventative measure. • Class teachers will liaise with parents to ascertain problems at home or with their child, i.e. health concerns. • Attendance staff will advise and support to ensure the child's needs in school are met. Attendance Letter 1 sent (request for medical evidence if applicable) Referral to School Nurse (if appropriate). Regular contact by Family Link worker
<p>Cause for concern 90-91.9%</p> 	<p>SERIOUS ATTENDANCE CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil is at risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee. Class teachers will discuss concerns with parents • Formal Interventions will be instigated. Home visit if no improvement • Attendance Leads will support parents to improve attendance. <p>Attendance Letter 2 Analysis of individual attendance data to track improvements or declines. Attendance Letter 3 sent if no improvement</p>
<p>Persistent absentee Below 90%</p> 	<p>AT RISK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil with this level of attendance is a high-risk group and will be identified as persistently absent when their attendance is below 90%. • EHA, Social Services referral or legal interventions may be instigated (penalty notices/ prosecutions) <p>Attendance Leads will meet with parents. Letter 3 sent. EHA/ Social Services (if appropriate). Home visit if not engaging Referral to Education Welfare Service for advice and support Penalty notice/ prosecution warning - last resort</p>

Roles and Responsibilities

At Hawthorns School, the Deputy Head Teacher, Ms Debbie Fitton, is the senior manager who leads on attendance under supervision of the Head teacher, Mr Pierre Coiffait and the Governing Body who retain overall responsibility for attendance.

The day to day responsibility for managing/ monitoring and providing support for attendance issues lies with the Family Multi-agency Link Worker, Ms Sonia Jones and Deputy Head, Mrs Debbie Fitton

Attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and Department for Education annually through the census and to the Governing Body termly. This information is collected through the SIMS system.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure there is a whole school approach to improving attendance and reinforcing good attendance by:

- Disseminating the attendance policy to all staff, reviewing it regularly and updating staff as required
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data
- Ensuring the attendance team receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil its day to day duties
- Promoting the importance of good attendance to parents, carers and pupils through regular whole school letters and other communications sent home
- Issuing a parent friendly copy of the attendance policy
- Seeking to promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents and carers during assemblies and at parent events
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for all pupils

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.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will

- meet fortnightly with the Family Multi-agency Link Worker/Attendance lead to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns
- be responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Family multi agency link worker/Attendance lead

The Family Multi-Agency Link Worker /Attendance Lead will:

- Check registers daily and follow up attendance issues as necessary - this may involve phone calls, parentmail,home visits or meetings with parents/carers.

- Ensure attendance data is transferred on to SIMS and monitor daily, weekly and half termly attendance at the school and individual pupil level
- Monitor and analyse pupil attendance data
- Meet with class staff about attendance concerns
- Share concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Make referrals to appropriate outside agencies where necessary, including Educational Welfare.
- Encourage good attendance and communicate and support parents and carers as soon as there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Take an active lead in promoting good attendance at assemblies, on website etc
- Regularly report to governors and parents on pupil's attendance.

The Business support team will:

- Support the Family Multi-agency Link worker where needed and contact parents/carers to establish a child's reason for absence
- Ensure that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

Reception staff

Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and pass information to the Family Multi agency Link worker and class staff.

The class teacher will:

- Take and maintain the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session using the correct codes, and submitting the register to the allocated area.
- Recording absences immediately so contact can be made with parents/carers as soon as possible.
- Promote and set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- Expect pupils to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.

Parents and Carers will:

- Ensure their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Immediately inform the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence
- Work with school to improve their child's attendance
- Avoid unnecessary absence such as holidays in term time

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher /Attendance lead. Data will be monitored weekly, as well as at the end of every half and full term by the Attendance Lead. A termly report will be written and

actions for next steps recorded. All absences will be followed up and support provided where necessary to ensure our attendance figures are as high as possible.

This policy will be shared with staff, parents and governors and reviewed on an annual basis.