



HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Working together, learning together"

Attendance Policy

Headteacher

Mr. M. Cockcroft

Summer 2026

BE POSITIVE

BE PROACTIVE

BE PROUD

HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction:

The link between attendance and attainment is clear: (see [*research*](#))

- *In 2018/19, just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards, compared with 84% of pupils who regularly attended school.*
- *36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs, compared with 84% of regular attenders.*

Good attendance is important for more than just attainment:

- Regular school attendance can facilitate **positive peer relationships**, which is a **protective factor for mental health and wellbeing**. (see [*research*](#))
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transition to secondary school

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. Staff at Heap Bridge seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. School will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of this policy.

Monitoring and evaluation of **children's school attendance is the responsibility of all staff**, however there are key people with responsibility:

Governors of Heap Bridge	Governor for School Attendance	Lesley Porter
Attendance Lead	Head Teacher	Mr Cockcroft
Attendance Link Officer	Attendance Officer	Miss E Forbes
Education Welfare Service	Education Welfare Officer	Yvonne O'Hara

The **Improving School Attendance Action Plan** will involve all staff supporting pupil attendance and the work of the Education Welfare Service in creating a multi-disciplined approach to best support Heap Bridge Primary School to improve school attendance.

As a school we aim to:

- Ensure all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and procedures in place to support attendance and use them appropriately.
- Ensure that staff rigorously record attendance, absence & punctuality.
- To maximise the attendance of all our children & achieve an attendance rate of 97%

- Provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practise
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

What is expected of Education Welfare Service?

It is the responsibility of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the Education Welfare Service to give a statutory service to Heap Bridge Primary School. This will include:

- Participate in the monitoring of attendance patterns.
- Offer advice and consultation regarding school attendance/absence
- Consider and pursue legal action for non-school attendance

What is expected of parents?

As a parent, you are **legally responsible** for making sure your child gets a suitable fulltime education, usually from the age of 5 to 16. For most parents, this will mean making sure your child is in school every day except when:

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from school for them not to attend. **You should only ask for this in exceptional circumstances** (see p4).

If your child is too ill to go to school parents should:

- Read the [NHS advice](#) to help you decide whether they can go to school.
- Contact school before 8:30am by telephone or email (absences@heapbridge.rochdale.sch.uk) on the first morning of an absence stating the reason and an expected date of return
- Keep us updated by telephone or email if your child suffers an extended period of absence due to illness

Parents should also arrange any **medical appointments out of school hours or during school breaks**. Where this is not possible, we ask parents to provide evidence of appointments so they can be recorded on the register.

Parents of pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent should: (95% or below)

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Participate in an Individual Attendance Support Plan (IASP) where appropriate and proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Parents of persistently absent pupils should: (90% or below)

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Parent of severely absent pupils should *(50% or below)*

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

As a school, we are committed to supporting strong attendance by:

- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers.
- Having robust daily processes to follow up absence and following up unexplained absences by phone calls, letters, home visits and ringing 101 if safeguarding concerns are identified (see safeguarding section).
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus, the Home-School agreement and events such as class assemblies.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through the Local Authority and the Education Welfare Service.
- Publish a child's attendance rate on their annual school report.

Where pupils are at risk of persistent absence we will:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Where pupils are considered persistently absent we will:

- Continue support as above and put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers (where necessary this will include working with partners).
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, we work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns we will intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Where pupils are considered **severely absent** we will:

- Continue support as above and agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority and other partners.

Where pupils have **additional needs, disabilities or medical conditions**, we will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure joined up pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

Medical evidence

When a child has had three separate episodes of illness or is considered a persistent absentee, medical evidence may be required for any subsequent absences due to illness in order for these to be authorised.

If medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

A prolonged sickness absence of 5 days or more after first reporting will require a doctor's letter. Children who have a lot of time off due to a recurring illness may be referred to the School Nursing Team.

Safeguarding

If your child is not in school and we are unable to contact you or any emergency contacts via telephone, then the Learning Mentor / Child Welfare Officer will conduct a home visit. If contact with the family is not made and there are concerns around your child's safety, then a call into 101 will be made to register a concern for welfare in line with Local Authority guidance.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not permitted by law**. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Going for a family day out / holiday
- A child's birthday
- Going shopping
- Sleeping in
- Attending other family member's appointments
- No explanation for the absence received
- The explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may contact parents directly and consider taking legal action against a parent if a child has a high number of unauthorised absences. The Education Welfare Officer meets regularly with the school to discuss and monitor children's attendance.

Please note: School will not authorise any family holiday absence requests. *Rochdale Local Authority are exercising its legal powers to issue parents with a penalty notice fine for taking a child out of school during term time. The fine is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay the fine could lead to prosecution in magistrate's court. (See appendix – Penalty letter notification).*

Punctuality

The school gates will open at 8:40am and close at 8:40am when the school bell sounds. Any child and family arriving after 8:50am will need to enter via the main entrance and wait for the office staff to let them in.

- Class teachers will complete the register at 8.50am and save the register at 9.00am.
- All children arriving after 8:50am will receive a late mark (L code).
- Registers close at 9:00am.
- Children who arrive after 9:00am will be marked as unauthorised in line with the DfE (Department for Education) government guidance (U code)
- It is important to be on time as lessons begin prompt, and pupils who arrive late miss the vital teaching to be successful in the lesson.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child.
- We will consult parents if we have concerns about a child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school day will be referred to a place of safety and parents/carers will be contacted immediately.

Term Time Leave of Absence - in line with the DfE legislation:

There is no entitlement to absence in term time for a family holiday. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the DfE guidelines, examples include sports and music exams for external examination boards.

- **No term time holiday absence will be authorised.**
- Other term time absence will only be authorised, at the Headteacher's discretion, in exceptional circumstances

Please remember that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost and a good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

Leavers & Children Missing in Education

If a child is leaving our school other than at the end of Year 6, parents are asked to:

- Provide the school with full information about their plans including a move date, new address, new school, start date and reasons for moving.

If a pupil leaves without notification and we cannot contact the parent, then the child is considered to be **Child Missing Education (CME)**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Daily

- Registers are kept electronically (via Arbor) at Heap Bridge and monitored daily by the administration staff. Details of all absences and lateness are recorded. A log is kept of all text correspondence between parents and school.

Weekly

- Percentage attendance figures are calculated on a weekly basis.
- These are reported in the weekly school newsletter (via Class Dojo) with a healthy element of competition being encouraged between classes.
- Attendance and lateness data are reviewed weekly by the school's Pastoral Lead, Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Any long term or patterns of absence are identified and responded to by contacting parents and requesting a meeting with the Headteacher.

Ongoing

- A series of automated letters are sent to parents via Arbor to keep parents updated regarding patterns of absence, impact on learning and progress towards any targets within support plans.

Termly

- 100% attendance certificates presented to the children in the final assembly of the term.
- Report of attendance is presented to governors.

Yearly

- 100% attendance certificates presented to the children in end of year celebratory assembly
- Action plan for further improvement

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Team aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.