Attendance Policy

2026–2027

Small School with a Big Heart

To become the best version of ourselves

Be Respectful • Be Responsible • Be Kind • Be Proud

Policy lead/ Attendance Champion	**Lucy Harding, Headteacher**
Attendance Officer	Dawn Aldridge
Reviewed	October 2026
Governor ratification	20th October 2026
Next review	October 2027, or earlier if guidance changes
Availability	School website; hard copy available from the school office

Summary

High Green Primary School is committed to promoting good attendance so that every pupil can achieve their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for learning, progress and personal development, and help children to make the most of the academic and social opportunities our school provides.

This policy applies to pupils, parents, staff and governors. It takes account of Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, July 2026), Keeping children safe in education 2026 and Sheffield's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct 2026–27.

Aims

To encourage all pupils to achieve their maximum potential.

To raise awareness of the importance of attendance and its impact on progress and attainment.

To provide quality first teaching that your child wants to engage with.

To recognise and reward pupils who achieve good attendance.

To encourage parents/carers to play a vital role in supporting the school and encouraging their child to reach good attendance levels.

To monitor and track pupils' attendance and punctuality through effective systems.

To utilise this information to support the school and parents to improve attendance.

To listen and understand the barriers preventing your child attending school every day.

To facilitate support to remove any barriers to learning.

To address poor attendance through clear, consistent, and effective procedures.

The Legal Position (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

Parents must ensure their child/ren receive a full time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. This can be through enrolment at a school, or education otherwise.

Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age, who are registered at a school, attend regularly.

Sheffield City Council School Admissions will provide a school place to parents who wish their child to be educated at school. Parents have a right to apply for their preferred schools with an allocation criteria (see Apply for a school place | Sheffield City Council for more information).

The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

The school must consult with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Service to consider formalising, or enforcing support when voluntary support has been offered and attendance has not improved.

Leave of absence must be requested in advance. The headteacher considers each application individually and may grant leave only where exceptional circumstances apply, deciding its

duration. Holidays are generally not exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to Sheffield City Council for consideration of a penalty notice, in line with the national framework and local code; fines are not automatic.

Our School Day

Time	Arrangement
7:30am	Breakfast Club opens
8:15am	Free Breakfast Club opens
8:30am	Gates open for pupils and families
8:40am	Children collected from the yard; morning register opens
8:55am	Arrivals must report to the office with an adult and give the reason for lateness
9:10am	Morning register closing time
1:00pm	Afternoon register taken
1:30pm	Afternoon register closing time
3:15pm	F2, Year 1 and Year 2 home time
3:20pm	Years 3–6 home time

Registers are taken at the same time for all pupils. Pupils arriving after registration but before closure are marked L. Arrival after closure is marked U unless another absence code is appropriate. Both sessions have the same 30-minute registration period. The morning register opens at 8:40am. 9:10am closing time replaces the original 9:30am time, which exceeds 30 minutes.

Children are released to an identified parent/carer. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils may walk home independently with written parental consent.

High Green Primary will work together with pupils, parents, family members, the Local Authority and partners to improve attendance. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners will work together to:

Pupils and Parents can expect the school to:

Our approach is to expect regular attendance, monitor patterns, listen and understand, facilitate support, formalise support where needed and use legal intervention when appropriate.

Provide quality first teaching in a classroom where your child wants to learn and achieve.

Provide a broad and balanced education to capture children’s interests.

Welcome children into the classroom, being observant of any concerns they may have.

Regular monitoring and accurate recording of attendance.

Contact parents if their child is absent from school and parents haven’t already made contact providing a reason for absence.

Share with parents' advice from public health regarding the length of absence required for the illness present.

Communicate regularly with parents, sharing their child's attendance percentage and the impact of any lost learning.

Have a zero-tolerance bullying policy to ensure children are not avoiding school due to bullying, including online bullying.

Take prompt action where barriers preventing a child from attending, or learning have been identified.

Liaise with external agencies where appropriate to assist and support pupils and their families.

Attend networking sessions within the locality to share good practice, and ensure that the attendance of the whole family is considered where siblings attend different schools.

Consult with the Local Authority when the support offered hasn't improved attendance, to protect the child's right to their education.

What we expect from pupils

To attend school regularly.

To take some responsibility for getting up and ready for school in a morning.

To be wearing the correct uniform.

To wear PE kit on PE days and suitable clothes for Forest School and woodland days.

To be prepared for the day with any appropriate equipment.

To remember their homework, swim kit, musical instruments.

To have a water bottle in school each day.

To be on the yard before the bell and lined up when the bell rings.

To go promptly into the classroom and into their place in the classroom.

To share with the teacher, teaching assistant or another staff member if they have any worries stopping them from wanting to attend school.

We expect all parents and carers to:

Promote the importance of attending school every day.

Ensure their child attends school regularly.

Ensure their child is on time and prepared for the day.

Contact school before 9am to report any absences, providing a reason for the absence.

Be open and honest with staff the reason for their child's absence.

Ensure their child is off for the minimal amount of time recommended by Public Health (visit Home :: Healthier Together (sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk) to find out more)

Make routine appointments outside of school hours.

Ensure the child attends before and after any medical appointments that could not be booked outside of school hours, providing appointment card/text messages.

Arrange holidays during school holidays. Unauthorised term-time leave may result in legal action; decisions are made individually under the national framework and Sheffield's current code of conduct.

** Requests for term time leave must be made to the Head Teacher on the Term Time Leave Request form, available from the school office or website. A return to school date must be provided and a prompt return is essential.

First Day Calling

We monitor attendance daily. On every day of absence, if a parent/carer has not contacted school to explain the absence, school will telephone them to establish the reason and check the child's welfare. This is both a supportive and a safeguarding call. We prioritise Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who have permission to travel to school independently, alongside any pupils whose circumstances indicate greater risk. If parents/carers cannot be reached, school will try emergency contacts and refer unresolved concerns promptly to the safeguarding team.

Regular Monitoring

We will monitor the attendance of all children weekly. This ensures we can monitor any patterns of absence, and ensure prompt support is offered when a child has irregular attendance.

If we identify irregular attendance, patterns of absence, or your child's attendance drops below school target you will expect:

Your child's teacher to discuss this at parent's evening

Your child's teacher to contact you to discuss these concerns

A letter home to highlight the concerns and offer support

A meeting in school with a member of the senior leadership team

School Attendance Support Meetings

Each term we will meet with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Specialist to discuss whole school attendance, the attendance of key cohorts of pupils, and individual pupils with irregular attendance. We will gain advice around appropriate next steps and further support that we could offer.

The purpose of all meetings will be to listen and understand what the concerns are that prevent your child from attending school every day. We call these concerns 'Barriers to Learning'.

We will listen to you, as parents/carers and we will listen to your child.

As part of the meeting we will agree, together, what the strengths are for your child, what we are concerned about, and what the next steps should be to ensure they can start attending regularly and on time.

When considering your child's strengths, areas of concern and next steps we will do this across Education, Health, and Care. Together we will be able to identify where the predominant needs lie, and who is best to support these needs.

Some of the next steps may include referrals to other agencies. If this is the case, we will support you through the process.

At times we may invite other professionals into the meetings to advise, guide and support us in identifying the next steps.

Sheffield City Council Early Help Services provide a range of support, advice, and guidance. We may seek their support for your child, and/or family.

With your consent we may also seek advice from other partners through locality or citywide panel meetings.

If you have another child/other children at different schools we will work with them to ensure whole family support is offered, avoiding duplication.

We will ensure your child has someone in school who they feel confident speaking to and asking for support from.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with we will work with the local authority to put formal support in place.

Initially we will arrange a further meeting with you, and your child to explore if the barriers to learning remain the same, and if so, why the agreed plan was not effective.

During the meeting we will work together to put a attendance contract together. This will be a formal contract between you, as parent/carer, the school and if appropriate any other professionals working with your family to support the improvement in attendance.

In the meeting we will agree actions and set timescales for improvement in attendance to be seen.

Where support is appropriate but has not improved attendance, the local authority may issue a Notice to Improve, setting out the support, required improvement and a review period of between three and six weeks. A notice is not required in every case, including where support is not appropriate, such as an unauthorised holiday.

If you, as parent/carer are engaging with the actions agreed previously, but your child is refusing to engage we may also consider the use of an Education Supervision Order, applied for through the family courts.

Where attendance is unsatisfactory, and there are other safeguarding concerns we may request a statutory assessment through Sheffield Social Care.

Safeguarding

Based on the statutory guidance for schools and colleges KCSIE 2026, persistent absence from school is considered to be a potential indicator of abuse and neglect.

Schools have a duty of care to ensure an offer of Early Help for any child who is persistently absent from education, including persistent absence for part of the school day*

Schools should ensure a safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeated occasions and/or prolonged periods. *

*Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026.

Where there is a case of non-attendance or poor attendance, early help will be offered to the family. This may include support from school or external services, for example MAST. Attendance will be closely monitored by school and LA Link Officer.

If a child has not been seen by school staff for three consecutive school days, school will telephone the parent/carer to discuss the absence and arrange a safe and well home visit. The purpose is to see the child, check their wellbeing and offer support with returning to school. If contact cannot be made, the safeguarding team will consider an unannounced visit and any further action needed. Where there are safeguarding concerns, school will act sooner and will not wait until the third day.

Safe and Well visits are to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and to maintain contact with the family to facilitate a return to full time education. These visits may be conducted by one or more members of staff from the school and will include a member of the Safeguarding team.

Safe and Well visits may be scheduled in agreement with the family or unannounced.

Whilst it remains the school's responsibility to carry out Safe and Well visits, external advice and support may be sought from Local Authority Attendance Link officer.

Where a satisfactory outcome has not been achieved: the child has not been seen by staff or other professionals, a safeguarding referral may be made to Sheffield Safeguarding Hub.

Where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with, we will consult with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Social Workers to consider prosecution.

This may include the issuing of a Penalty Notice Warning Letter, a fixed penalty notice (fine) or a fast-track offence within the magistrates' court.

Educational neglect can significantly impact a child's future.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Where a pupils attendance falls to 90% or below, they will be identified as persistently absent and absence escalates and HGPS will work closely with Sheffield LA to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort will be made across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners will work together to make this

group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

Where severe unauthorised absence continues despite appropriate support, the DSL and local authority will consider whether there are concerns about neglect or other harm. The school will refer concerns to children's social care when appropriate; statutory assessments are undertaken by children's social care, not by the school.

In all cases, HGPS will make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence will also be central to strategies for improving attendance.

Attendance Legal Intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, HGPS will work together with LA and other professional partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

HGPS will work together with LA and other professional partners to make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

Attendance contracts

Education supervision orders

Attendance prosecution

Parenting orders

Penalty notices*

Where they are used, it should be clear that it is the most appropriate intervention to change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, headteachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The school will provide relevant information to the local authority, which will determine appropriate legal action and the parent or parents to whom it applies, considering responsibility for the absence and individual circumstances.

National Threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Further Information

High Green Primary School website

www.highgreenprimary.co.uk

Sheffield City Council website

www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolmatters

The Department for Education

Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance

Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Should my child go to school today?

The Healthier Together team within the NHS have created a website to help parents to understand if their child should attend school with minor ailments, and if not, how long they should be absent for.

Home :: Healthier Together (sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk)

Additional arrangements and responsibilities

Leadership and governance

The headteacher is the senior attendance champion and oversees implementation. Dawn Aldridge coordinates attendance monitoring and family contact. Teachers record registers accurately and raise concerns promptly. The DSL evaluates safeguarding concerns. Governors review attendance, persistent and severe absence, challenge trends and monitor the impact of support. Families can contact the attendance lead or headteacher through the school office.

Illness, SEND and emotional wellbeing

Parents should report absence before 9am each day unless an alternative arrangement is agreed. The school normally accepts a parent's notification of illness; medical evidence is not routinely required. Where clarification is needed, requests will be proportionate and discussed sensitively. Staff work with families, the SENDCo and relevant professionals on reasonable adjustments, medical support and barriers arising from anxiety, disability or other needs. Attendance recognition should celebrate improvement and effort without disadvantaging pupils whose health or disability affects attendance.

Temporary part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable may be used only in exceptional circumstances to meet a pupil's individual needs, with parental agreement, a clear return-to-full-time plan, an end date and regular reviews. It must not be used to manage behaviour. The school follows local notification procedures, considers safeguarding arrangements for time out of school, involves relevant professionals and uses code C2 for agreed absence where applicable.

Registers, notifications and off-site provision

Unexplained absence is followed up on the first day, including emergency contacts if necessary. Code N is replaced with the correct code as soon as possible and within five school days; unresolved reasons are recorded O. Registers and amendment records are retained for six years. The school meets required daily attendance-data sharing and local authority attendance, sickness and admission/deletion notification duties. Where illness is expected to result in 15

school days' absence, consecutive or cumulative, the school makes the required sickness return and works with the local authority on suitable education. Off-site provision is checked through agreed attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Remote education is a last resort within a reintegration plan and does not make an absent pupil present.

Children missing education and safeguarding

The school promptly works with the local authority when a pupil's whereabouts or education arrangements are unknown. Pupils are removed from the admission register only where a lawful ground and all required checks are satisfied. Immediate risk is referred to emergency services; other concerns follow the school's safeguarding referral procedures. Consent is not a prerequisite to necessary, lawful safeguarding information sharing.

Confidentiality and review

Attendance information is stored securely and accessed by staff who need it for their role. Information is shared lawfully and proportionately with relevant services, in accordance with data protection requirements, the school privacy notice and safeguarding duties. This policy is available on the school website and a hard copy is available on request. It is reviewed annually and sooner when legislation or guidance changes; amendments are submitted for governor ratification.

Current references

Education Act 1996, sections 7, 19 and 444; Education Act 2002, section 175.

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024; Equality Act 2010.

DfE: Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

DfE: Keeping children safe in education 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Sheffield: Penalty Notice Code of Conduct 2026–27: https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/attendance/school-attendance