Attendance and Lateness Policy

Hillborough Infant and Nursery School

Owned and Written by: Sally Barber, Assistant Headteacher Josie Walter, Headteacher	**Date:** June 2024
Approved by: Full Governing Body	**Date:** July 2024
Next Review:	**Date:** June 2027
This policy has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and it supersedes the HM Government Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and Managers published in March 2015.	

Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. Roles and responsibilities 4
4. School Procedures 5
5. Absence 6
6. Authorised and unauthorised absence 8
7. Attendance monitoring 10
8. Links to other policies 10
9. Monitoring 10
10. Review Period 11

Appendix 1 – application 1 - Request for leave of absence from school during term time 12

Appendix 2 – attendance procedures & reporting 13

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Seek to improve parental involvement
- Increase the profile of attendance across the school

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.2 What is attendance and Lateness?

At Hillborough Infant & Nursery School, we aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and are on time wherever possible thus enabling them to make the most of the educational experiences offered. We also aim to raise awareness of attendance with children's families, making them aware of the importance that a positive attendance has upon school performance. It is vital that pupils are on time and making the most of their time in school. The school day begins at 8:50 – so being late can be extremely disruptive to the sessions and a child's education, particularly over time.

'Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school' - DfE Attendance document July 2019

2. Legislation and guidance

The law states that parent must ensure that their children gets a full time education that meets their needs. Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16. (School Attendance and Absence – gov.uk September 2016).

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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of the policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at Hillborough Infant and Nursery School
- Monitoring school level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance lead

The attendance lead is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Leading meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Devising targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking data using https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupilattendance-in-schools and comparing attendance data using https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/
- Monitoring the Penalty Warning Notice Letters and the Period of Grace

- Monitoring and contact The Schools Neighbourhood Partnership when a Penalty Notice is issued

3.4 The attendance officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the attendance lead and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher and attendance lead when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Calling parents when there is no reason given for absences
- Writing and discussing with parents when their child is persistently late to school
- Sending the Penalty Warning Notice Letters and monitoring the Period of Grace
- Monitoring and contact The Schools Neighbourhood Partnership when a Penalty Notice is issued

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.7 Parents/ guardians

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends everyday on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4. School Procedures

The School uses attendance registers and electronic recording to store and monitor our legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of pupil's attendance.
- The school's Attendance Team will regularly monitor pupil attendance percentages. If a pupil's attendance is falling below the expected percentage (96%), parents/guardians will be contacted. If the attendance of the child does not improve, then further contact will be made to invite the parents/guardians into school to meet about their child's attendance. If there is still no improvement, then the school will liaise with the School Neighbourhood Partnership at Luton Borough Council. Appendix 2 for attendance protocol
- Lateness will also be monitored by the school's Attendance Team and parents will be contacted if their child is regularly late and missing significant amounts of the school day. The aim is for the school and parents/guardians to work together to ensure that pupils are getting the most out of the opportunities available at Hillborough Infant & Nursery School.
- Hillborough Infant & Nursery School promotes good attendance throughout the year with a number of incentives. Attendance is shared weekly in Celebration Assemblies with the attendance bears – Ruby and Markus. Whole and half termly 100% certificates and an attendance trophy for 100% over the whole academic year. Improvements in attendance are also celebrated through certificates, stickers and calls to the parents / guardians.

4.1 Reporting to parents

There is a weekly attendance newsletter sent through ParentMail and attendance will be discussed at the parents' consultation twice a year. Parents/guardians will receive annually in the written end-of year reporting their child's attendance record. Parents may be informed sooner, via email or a meeting, if there is a concern around attendance.

5. Absence

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note, or telephone message from a parent will not count as an authorised absence if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school. For persistent absences, the school may inform the School Neighbourhood Partnership for Luton Borough Council and a penalty notice may be issued. Local authorities also 'have the power to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school' (DfE School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures January 2015).

If children are repeatedly absent from school without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- Contact the parent by telephone to enquire as to the reason for the absence
- Monitor absence and pupils falling below expectation will have a letter sent home to make parents aware of their attendance percentage. Continued poor attendance will

then be followed up with a meeting between parents, the Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer and the Headteacher

- Make a home visit via the Attendance Officer or Local Authority School Attendance Team if a child's attendance continues to fall or does not improve
- A Penalty Warning Notice Letter will be issued by the school after eight or more sessions which are not authorised. This will be monitored for six weeks and six further unauthorised sessions will result in a Penalty Warning from the School Neighbourhood Partnership for Luton Borough Council.

5.1 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/guardian must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **09:00** or as soon as practically possible via telephoning the school number.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/guardians to provide medical 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/guardians will be notified of this in advance.

5.2 Leave of absence during term time

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

5.3 Lateness

- Pupils arriving after 09:00 will be recorded as late (school doors open at 08:50 until 09:00)
- Pupils arriving after 09:00 must report to the School Office so their attendance can be recorded
- Pupils arriving after 09:20 will be recorded 'unauthorised late'. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given.

Action to address lateness will be taken in line with school's strategy to improve punctuality:

1. Parents will be contacted either via ParentMail and a letter to inform them of repeated absences and the number of minutes of school their child has missed.
2. A meeting will be requested with parents where a member of the school's Attendance Team will be present to discuss the lateness.
3. Further meetings if lateness has still not improved where a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team will be present as well as the school's Family Support Worker

- We expect parents and guardians to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day as it can be upsetting for children if they do not. Children who are not collected within 10 minutes of the end of the school day are taken to the school office and their names are recorded. This is a late pick-up.
- In the unlikely event that a child has not been collected and there has been no contact from a parent/guardian/family member, every effort will be made by the school office to contact parents via given numbers, emails and also by text message.
- After 30 minutes, if parents still cannot be reached, the child's emergency numbers supplied by the family will then be attempted.
- If no contact has been made and no-one has arrived to collect the child 1 hour after the school closing time, school safeguarding procedures will take effect and Children's Service will be contacted. This is a child not being picked up and is different to a late pick up, and therefore action needs to be taken in the best interests of the child.
- The same rules apply for after school extracurricular activities.

5.4 Reducing persistent absence

Target setting

We understand that there will be occasions when pupils will not be able to attend school due to various reasons. However, minor ailments should not stop your child from attending school. As a result, our overall school target for attendance is set at no lower than 96%. Attendance below this may be contacted.

Equal opportunities and Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school, help can be given in relation to catching up with work missed. However, as children learn through practical and 'hands-on' approaches, they need to be present in school to make the most of teaching and learning.

5.5 Failure to seek permission may result in the following:

1. We may seek advice from the School Neighbourhood Partnership for Luton Borough Council with regard to unauthorised absences, and this may lead to a penalty notice.
2. If parents take their children out of school for unauthorised leave that exceeds 20 school days, then their child could be taken off the roll. If this happens, on return to the country, parents must contact the

Admissions Team at Luton Borough Council to re-register the child as they will have lost their school place.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and to mark any absence as either

'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. A child's attendance record is printed on their school report and this way is reported to parents and guardians. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. If your child is due to attend a medical or dental appointment, we do ask that you try to make appointments outside of school hours to minimise disruption to their education. If this is not possible, documentation will need to be provided to confirm the absence is due to an appointment that cannot be missed.

Examples of Authorised Absence	Examples of Unauthorised Absence
Illness, medical or dental appointment. Provided the school is satisfied the illness and appointments are genuine and documents have been seen.	
Special occasions as agreed with the school as an authorised absence.	Additional days taken for special occasions or other than those specified by the school.
	Shopping during school hours or going to the airport to meet relatives.
	Looking after brothers or sisters, or keeping a home because a sibling is ill as well.
An agreed period for family bereavement.*	Absence for more than the agreed period.
Religious observance days the number and timing of each will be determined by the school. ^	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school.
Off-site activities e.g. music exams, representative sporting events during school time. *	Term time leave or attendance at an event without prior authorisation by the school.
	Several medical related absences unsupported by medical note and where attendance is below 87%.

*Authorised leave of absence for these situations may be considered by the Headteacher. Refer to 'Leave of Absence during term time' for guidance on school policy.

^The Governing Body has decided that only religious festival days will be agreed within a total of 2 days during the whole school year.

6.1 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, School Neighbourhood Partnership for Luton Borough Council or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute/withdraw the notice.

7. Attendance monitoring

- The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.
- A parent/guardian is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.
- If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for this.
- If absence continues to rise after contact with the parent/guardian, we will consider a home welfare visit and/or involving Local Authority School Attendance Team.
- Where the pupil's absence rate is 10% or more, they will be classified as a persistent absentee, a part of the threshold.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases https://explore-educationstatistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average using https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/ and share this with the governing board.

Our school collects and stores attendance data, and uses it for internal purposes by to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

9. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum three yearly by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Review Period

June 2027

Appendix 1 – application 1 - Request for leave of absence from school during term time

Hillborough Infant & Nursery School

Request for leave of absence from school during term time

This should be completed before booking any travel arrangements

To be completed and submitted by the Parent/Guardian to school at least 14 days prior to request.

Pupil's Name
_____
___

Date of birth_____ Registration Group
_____

Date of absence requested: From _____ /_____ /_____ To_____
/_____ /_____

Reason for application (needs to be exceptional circumstances)

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____
Address at which child will be resident during period of absence:

_____
_____

1st Parent / Guardian details 2nd Parent / Guardian details

First name_____ First name_____

Surname_____
Surname_____

Address_____
Address_____

Contact number_____ Contact number_____

I have read the schools leave of absence policy document

Parent / Guardian signature_____

Date of application _____/_____/_____
Name_____

_____ ***For schools use only***

Current attendance *(*must be at least 97%*)* _____ No. of term days requested _____

If the child has had previous term time leave, please state dates and number of days taken

_____
_____

Leave agreed / Not agreed Date of letter confirming the decision posted to parent_____

Reasons_____
_____
_____
_____

If leave is to be authorised, the following must be completed

Travelling abroad? Yes / No Country_____ Return date*:* _____/_____/_____

Proof of return date *(tickets/e mail etc.)*
_____

Appendix 2 – attendance procedures & reporting

Senior leader for attendance: Sally Barber

Family Support /

Inclusion Support

Although parents / carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance the Headteacher and Governors at Hillborough Infant and Nursery School work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. The procedures below are followed to ensure that this happens. Attendance is monitored by the admin staff, the attendance lead, family and inclusion support.

School target is 96%

Where concerns are raised the following actions are put in place

Stage 1 (93% - 95.99%)

Pupils attendance is 96% or below. Attendance Letter 1 send by the family support worker to parents / carer and support is offered.

School continues to monitor attendance. Any further absences will trigger actions from Stage 2 or Stage 3

Stage 2 (90% - 93%)

Attendance letter 2 sent by the family support worker to parent / carer and a meeting is held with the family support worker and the attendance lead to discuss support

No further absences and attendance improves. Letter sent to parents about improves attendance.

Parent / carer attends meeting and agreed support where appropriate, is put in place.

School continues to monitor attendance. Any further absences will trigger actions from Stage 3 or Stage 4

Stage 3 (less than 90%)

Attendance letter 3 sent by attendance lead to arrange an Attendance Panel with the Headteacher, attendance lead and other relevant professionals

Parent / carer does not attend the meeting and pupils' attendance is monitored fortnightly and if it continues to decrease a home visit may be arranged.

Stage 4 (less than 90% and fails to improve)

Attendance letter 4 sent by the Head teacher advising that the case will be sent to the Local Authority School Attendance team with a discussion around legal action.

Stage 5

Attendance does not improve. School Neighbourhood Partnership for Luton Borough Council starts legal actions