



Hadley Wood Primary School Attendance Policy

Date the policy came into effect	September 2024
Date of the next policy review	September 2026
Version number	2
Name of the person responsible for this policy	Fran Worby
Issued to	Staff, governors and parents
Date of issue	September 2020

Attendance Policy

Purposes:

The staff and Governors at Hadley Wood School believe that regular attendance and punctuality are essential for a good education. We actively promote children's welfare and safeguarding by ensuring all pupils achieve good attendance levels. Children are expected to attend school every day, unless they are ill. In general, children are able to attend school when they have minor ailments such as colds or hay fever and special arrangements can be made for their care. If a child is sick at home, or is sent home from school because they have been sick, **they are not allowed back to school for 48 hours**, even if they seem well. This is to give the child the chance to recover properly and to prevent infections from spreading.

We aim to maintain excellent attendance through:

- Setting a good example of attendance and punctuality as a staff
- Encouraging all pupils to achieve their full potential through regular attendance and punctuality
- Adhering to the attendance non-negotiables, outlined below
- Valuing and rewarding good attendance and punctuality
- Monitoring poor attendance and punctuality and following up appropriately
- Offering support to pupils and families where it is needed
- Maintaining regular communication with parents/carers

Our attendance policy:

- Establishes clear and effective procedures for administration which are understood by staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that we comply with the necessary legal requirements
- Enable other appropriate agencies to access the information that they need
- Ensure that any pupils presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken

Attendance Non-negotiables:

- Every child is expected to attend school every day
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95%, they become a concern for senior leaders. Attendance is monitored weekly henceforward and where necessary, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education welfare Officer (EWO)
- Daily contact is made with the parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern
- Good attendance is rewarded and celebrated publicly
- Pupils who are persistently absent are monitored daily and parents are contacted daily to celebrate improvements or remind of targets. Records are kept of this contact
- All parents are informed of attendance expectations at transition into school including pupils who join midyear
- Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with medically diagnosed serious illness. Termly meetings are held with parents and medical professionals to update next steps
- Medical appointments must be held outside of the school day except in exceptional circumstances where school leaders are made aware of the exceptional circumstances
- Unauthorised leave **will** lead to penalty notices

Timings for the School Day

The school day begins at 8.50 am and finishes at 3.20 pm. All pupils are welcome to attend Breakfast Club, which starts at 7.30 am.

Registration period:

Morning:

- Main class registration between 8.45- 8.50 a.m.
- *Children will be marked late after 8.50 a.m. and children arriving after that time must be 'signed in' by an adult.* Parents will be approached about persistent lateness
- Registers are completed online and a daily call home for any child who is absent is carried out by the school's admin officer. The register is taken again as soon as the children return to class at 1.00 following lunchtime.
- Registers are monitored by the Office Manager, Welfare Officer and the Headteacher (on Arbor).

If it is appropriate, in recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional transport difficulties) the school will extend the registration period.

The Class Teacher, Teaching Assistant, Cover Teacher or Trainee Teacher may take the class register.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open. It is the expectation of the school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher, not the parent, is the only person who can authorise the absence. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and impacts negatively on the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Where parents are separated both parents have equal responsibility in law for their child's attendance at school. This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed that attendance matters in school. All are committed to the aims of attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a "session".

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a justified reason like illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), urgent medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. Unauthorised absences are coded with an O code. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however, this is not exhaustive:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been adequately explained to the school
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a "U" mark on the attendance register to indicate they are in school for safeguarding purposes; however, this is counted as an absence for the session
- Shopping trips
- Family events
- Problems with the distance travelled to school
- Looking after other children/ family members or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- Their own or family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave - unauthorised absence will lead to a penalty notice being triggered by the Local Authority
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Family Holidays

At Hadley Wood School we do not allow holidays to be taken during term time and it is the policy of the school that any holidays taken during this time are unauthorised.

It is only in special circumstances that the Headteacher will authorise any absences. Parents must provide a letter **requesting** absence and see the Headteacher in person. Parents are often reminded, through the Head teacher's regular newsletter, that taking holidays during Term time is not conducive to their child's effective education.

The school have been set a target of 95.6% attendance across the school. If attendance drops below this it can trigger an inspection.

Absence for work or participation in a sporting or other event.

Parents must request permission for this kind of absence in writing. In some instances, children may be deemed to be 'educated off site', for example over a prolonged period of

filming where there is a tutor on the set. School are always happy to liaise with these tutors. **The Headteacher is unlikely to sign a license for a child whose attendance is below 95% or who is behind with their academic work.**

School Attendance and the Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996).

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered. Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

Monitoring

In order to ensure good attendance, patterns of absenteeism are observed across the school. This will include attendance of vulnerable groups. Attendance is analysed for trends, e.g. children who qualify for Pupil Premium. The Headteacher reports on attendance to the Governing Body in the termly 'Head teacher's Report'. Attendance and attendance trends are reported in the Governments Raise Online report for the school.

Intervention

If a child's attendance falls below 95% their attendance will be monitored. Arbor generates a report which shows which days a child has been absent and gives a percentage attendance for each day of the week. If a child is found to be absent frequently on a specific day of the week, or the child is missing odd days, the Headteacher may discuss this with parents, in case there is a problem of which we are not aware.

If attendance falls below 90% the school will write to the parents, enclosing an attendance report and a meeting will be arranged with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Meetings

The Attendance Officer (Office Manager) and Headteacher meet the EWO regularly to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individuals whose attendance or punctuality are causing a concern.

Prior to the meeting, the following information is collected:

- Attendance record for any child with less than 90% attendance
- Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- Attendance record for any child who has been frequently late
- Attendance records for **persistent absentees** (those with 90% or less attendance)
- Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where appropriate. Decisions are recorded on the attendance monitoring sheet and the EWO may arrange meetings with parents if it is felt that the child's attendance is an issue.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absences. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, rigorously. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, EWO, or Social Care. We will write to both parents listed on school admissions forms/ email/ text and set an attendance target of 100% and contact you daily to let you know that the attendance target is or isn't being met. We will do this until your child's attendance falls within acceptable limits.

Absence Procedures

- If a child is absent from school the parent must follow the following procedures:
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am using the online absence form accessed via the school website. Each subsequent day must be notified separately.
- If we do not hear from you, we will attempt to make telephone contact by 10.00am.
- Where telephone contact is not made, a home visit may be made and if necessary, the school will contact the police or social care

Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and if your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or email you on the first day, and every subsequent day of absence if we have not heard from you, we may also visit you on the first day of absence, if we have not heard from you;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding;
- Make a home visit to ascertain the safety of the child if we have concerns for their welfare;
- Contact the police at the end of the first day's absence if we do not know of your child's whereabouts;
- Write to both parents listed on school admissions forms if your child's attendance is below 95%; •

- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer or Educational Welfare Officer if absences persist;
- Arrange a formal school attendance meeting if attendance deteriorates following the above actions; A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education.

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our School Welfare Officer, Child and Family Support Worker or Educational Welfare Officer if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions Local authority referrals

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to EWO. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Children missing in education

Where a child is not attending school, has moved without a forwarding address or school, or cannot be traced, or contact cannot be made with the parent, the school is required to inform the local authority that the child is missing. The school will carry out a home visit and refer the family to social care and the police to ensure any concerns for the child's welfare have been thoroughly investigated. Pupils will not be removed from the school roll until notified by the local authority that their enquiries are complete.

A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. If a child misses the start of the day, they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Appendix A DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. Sept 2022

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act 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.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with 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.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>