



Attendance Policy

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Audience: **Open**

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1. Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

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

3. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and if this affects their attainment;
- Contact you if we feel that attendance is an issue and is affecting your child's learning;
- Give certificates for 100% attendance at the end of the academic school year.

4. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which inevitably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Supporting evidence must be provided for any medical/dental appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Attendance Support Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained

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- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed and for which there are not exceptional circumstances
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bedtimes

Helping with homework

Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school

Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

5. Persistent and Severe Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this.

We are aware that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and all PA cases are also made known to the Attendance Support Team.

Reducing persistent and severe absence.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

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- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

6. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by 9.20 a.m. on the first day of absence;
- If your child is absent on a Friday please call again on the Monday if they are still absent
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher if absences persist;

We may:

- Refer the matter to the Attendance Support Team if attendance moves below 90% and we are not aware of the reasons for the absence.

7. Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have **two** up to date numbers – if we don't then something important may be missed.

8. Attendance Support Team (formerly the Participation Team)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the 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 the Attendance Support Team from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, this Team can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and

will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or attendancesupport@hillingdon.gov.uk

Letters will be sent to parents once their child's attendance drops below 93%. (see Appendix A, B and C)

9. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can 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 absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school gates will be open from 8.30. The children walk straight to their classrooms where school work will be ready for them to complete.

Registers are marked by 8:45 a.m. when the official school day begins. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

At 9.15 **am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Class teacher or Headteachers to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

End of day late collection procedure

It is also important that you pick up your child, at the expected time, at the end of the day or arrange for another adult to do so. It is important that everyone understands that while we are happy to help in a real emergency, parents / carers cannot assume that it is acceptable to turn up late without notifying the school. The Attendance Support Team and Social Care have agreed a protocol to support schools and children when children are left after school and this will be enforced if a child is not collected by 4.30pm and we have not heard from you. The Attendance Support Team will also be notified if your child is persistently late being collected from school.

10. Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.

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2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
3. All Hillingdon schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
4. Exceptional Leave will usually be refused in Year 6.
5. Exceptional leave will usually be refused when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
6. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
8. Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the student's attendance record and any concerns regarding absence should be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The Attendance Support Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned and for each child's absences. If unauthorised leave is repeated, the Attendance Support Team may summon each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

11. School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **90%** attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

12. People responsible for attendance

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Newnham Junior School Governing Body

Head Teacher

Mrs D Duncan, Attendance Officer

13. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

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All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

14. Attendance Strategy

- a. Before 9.20 the registers are checked.
- b. Before 9.20 the absence line is played and compared to those who are recorded as absent in the registers.
- c. After 9.20 any parents/carers of unreported absences are called to clarify the reason for absence and as a safeguarding check.
- d. If the first named contact does not respond a message will be left.
- e. Other contacts will be called if there is no response to messages left on phones.
- f. If there is no response to other contacts, then the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will be informed and the next step will be discussed depending on the needs of the absent child
- g. Next steps may range from waiting longer for a reply, visiting the home of the absent child to contacting social services.

Appendix A

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance below 96%-97% (or schools attendance target)

Dear Mr and Mrs

We are concerned about **(Childs name)** attendance. Our records show that **(Child's name)** current attendance is **%.

As you are aware we want parents' support to improve attendance, so if there are any issues please get into contact with me, as we may be able to help and discuss any issues you may be having with getting **(Child)** into school.

As a result of **(Childs)** poor attendance, we have to initiate our attendance monitoring procedures.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Wilkey
Headteacher

Appendix B

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance between 92% to 90%

Dear Mr and Mrs

Following my previous letter sent on **(enter date)**, we are disappointed that there has been no significant improvement in **(Childs names)** attendance.

Our records show that (Child's name) current attendance is **%.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at **(enter school name)**, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting **(Childs name)** into school.

We are offering a meeting on (enter date and time). Please get into contact with us if you cannot attend.

Any future absences will need to be covered with medical evidence to be authorised.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council. You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Wilkey
Headteacher

Appendix C

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance BELOW 90%

Dear Mr and Mrs

As stated in our previous letters, **(child's name)** attendance has not improved and we therefore have no other option but to refer this matter to the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council.

Our records show that (Child's name) current attendance is **%.

Any absences will now be recorded as unauthorised until we receive medical evidence.

You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Wilkey
Headteacher

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This document was approved and adopted by the governing body

Date

22nd February 2024

Chair of Governors

Tanya Huehns

Date	Status	Comments
12 th May 2017	Approved	All references to the Education Welfare Officer changed to the Participation Team. End of day late collection procedures inserted. Change of name for the Attendance Officer. Friday absence procedures updated.
September 2018	Approved	No Changes
September 2019	Approved	No Changes
October 2020	Approved	No Changes
October 2021	Approved	No Changes
March 2023	Approved	Attendance strategy added
October 2023	Approved	Minor changes
February 2024	Approved	Minor changes. All references to the Participation Team changed to the Attendance Support Team. Appendix A, B and C added