



# Attendance Policy

Harrow Way Community School





# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **2. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 this policy



### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the 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 Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance**

The Designated Senior Leader 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Katy Woods and can be contacted via 01264 364533.

### **3.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Kerri Jackson and can be contacted via 01264 364533.

### **3.5 Class Teachers/ Form Tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes. This needs to be completed within the first 10 mins of a lesson or tutor period.

### **3.6 School Admin Staff and Attendance Officer**

School admin staff and Attendance Officer will:



- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Retrieve messages from the direct Absence Telephone Line

### **3.7 Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, the school expectation is 96% attendance
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am 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

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Sign in and out at Student Reception if they arrive after registration or need to attend medical appointments during the school day

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance Register**

We will keep an Attendance Register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our Attendance Register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the Attendance Register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

*See Appendix 1 for the DfE Attendance Codes.*



We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the Attendance Register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40 am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm and will be kept open until 12.55pm.

#### **4.2 Unplanned Absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school Absence Line or Attendance Officer. (See also Section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or concerns around the child's attendance.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of 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. Parents are able to monitor attendance marks via the Harrow Way VLE online system.

#### **4.3 Planned Absence**

If it is absolutely necessary to attend a medical or dental appointment during the school day it will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This should be done via the school Absence Line, the child's tutor, a note in the school planner or by contacting the school Nurse.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If a child is persistently late, a parent will be contacted by the Form Tutor or Year Leader



- Sanctions will be put in place for lateness to school.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained Absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Endeavour to inform all the pupil's parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence either by text, call or email to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's parents/carers they will endeavour to leave a message
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, the absence will remain unauthorised until parents have stated the reason for absence
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider completing a welfare check or contact relevant outside agencies.

#### **4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via school academic reports and letters sent from the Attendance Officer.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised Absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time Absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated via the online form which can be found on the school website. The Headteacher may request evidence to support any leave of absence.

### **5.2 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, Local Authority 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 or withdraw the notice.

The school may refer to the Legal Intervention Team (LIT) for additional support, guidance or further legal interventions.

## **6. Strategies for promoting Attendance**

School ethos and culture encourages high expectation around punctuality and attendance

Daily incentives to be in school

Rewards system

Attendance challenges

Whole school, House and Year Group attendance prizes and recognition

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Daily attendance monitored by the Attendance Officer

Attendance Officer works closely with the SLT (Senior Leadership Team), Heads of Year, Safeguarding Manager, Tutors and Pastoral Team to identify any individuals or groups that have lower or declining attendance.

### **7.1 Monitoring Attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Board.

### **7.2 Analysing Attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Work with feeder schools to identify attendance issues early



### **7.3 Using Data to improve Attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Form Tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe Absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Work with parents to problem-solve issues around persistent absenteeism

## **8. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of two years by Deputy Head Teacher for Inclusion and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

## **9. Links with other Policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

### ***Appendix 1: Attendance Codes***

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:





Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Approved sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance



<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

**Committee responsible for review:** Students & Curriculum  
**Date ratified by Governing Body:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 (Revision ratified Feb 2025)  
**Date of next review:** **October 2025**