

Attendance Policy

School Name	Highfield Primary
Attendance Target	97%
School opens at	8.55 a.m.
Registers close at	9.25 a.m.

Mission

Attendance is defined as the participation in a programme of educational activities arranged by the school, which might include an off-site provision. A child's attendance record will follow them throughout their statutory education.

Excellent attendance and punctuality is the key to ensuring that children and young people have the best life chances and opportunities. As a Cluster, we strongly believe that having access to and receiving a good education is the best way we can ensure that all children achieve the best possible outcomes, empowering them to make the best and most positive choices about their future lives.

It is the responsibility of all schools, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership to ensure that all our children and young people receive an appropriate education suitable to their needs.

We need to work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and support them to resolve difficulties.

Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is part of all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.

Principles

- Children must attend regularly to achieve their full potential.
- Children who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind.
- Absence in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect a child's education.
- Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers

Persistent Absence Indicator

The Department for Education regards attendance of **90%** or below as persistent absenteeism.

The table below shows an indication of approximately how many sessions a pupil needs to miss per half term to meet the threshold of persistent absenteeism.

HALF TERM		
1	7 sessions	3.5 Days
2	14 sessions	7 Days
3	20 sessions	10 Days
4	25 sessions	12.5 Days
5	31 sessions	15.5 Days
6	38 sessions	19 Days

- Average attendance of 85-90% over 5 school years equates to pupils missing half a school year of education.
- Average attendance of 80% over 5 school years equates to pupils missing a whole school year.

% Attendance expressed in number of days absent

Attendance / absence is presented as a percentage figure, but it's helpful to equate this to the number of days off:

98% = fewer than four days absent in a school year
95% = fewer than ten days absent in one school year
90% = 4 weeks absent in one school year (equates to a ½ day each week)
85% = 5.5 weeks absent in one school year (approaching a whole half-term in the school year)
80% = 7.5 weeks absent in one school year (equates to one day each week or a whole half-term)

School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Children and young people may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child and young person is everyone's responsibility and within the context of the ARM Cluster, promoting the welfare and life opportunities of all children and young people encompasses:-Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying.

Children who are missing education are at greater risk than those who are seen regularly in school. These risks include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Day Slavery
- Forced Marriage
- Domestic Violence
- Honour Based Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Neglect

This Cluster Attendance Policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding Policies including the schools Child Protection Policy.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. That is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Roles and Responsibilities Attendance

PARENTS/CARERS will:
Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time Notify school on the first day of absence Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances Supply medical evidence when required Ensure all contact details are up to date Provide school with two emergency contact details
School have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular attendance.
SCHOOL STAFF will:
Complete the register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon) Monitor daily patterns of attendance and punctuality Make parents aware of concerns over irregular attendance Input attendance data onto the system Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence Take actions where concerns have been identified Inform Governors of attendance records Inform parents of individual pupils attendance record Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern Request medical evidence if a pupils attendance is below 90% or if there has been 3 periods of absence due to illness. Referrals to the Local Authority School Attendance Service Request Penalty Notices to be issued for unauthorised leave in term time. Request Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE will:
Support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns Support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly Prepare and facilitate school attendance meetings for irregular attendance including punctuality Contact the parent/carer by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved Quality Assure Penalty Notice requests for unauthorised absence Implement legal proceedings
GOVERNING BODY will:
Monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards. Nominate a named Governor for Attendance

Authorised Absence is defined as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement – (Headteachers discretion)
- Religious observance (no more than 2 days per academic year)
- Approved leave in term time where there are *exceptional circumstances*, as agreed by the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised absence is defined as:

Absence in term time where permission has **not** been given by the school in accordance with the ARM Cluster Attendance Policy. This means that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time.

- Late after the registers have closed - 'U' code
- Unexplained absence. Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period (10 days) will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education (CME)
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives;
- Going shopping or having a haircut;
- Any absence that the school has not been informed of by letter or by telephone;
- Birthdays;
- Weddings or Anniversaries including Parents' Weddings;
- Transport issues or car broken down;
- Holidays in term time ;(following the Department for Education's Guidelines)
- Travelling to airport to meet relatives/friends;
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment.
- Translating
- Visiting sick relatives

Punctuality

Being late to school has a significant impact on the amount of learning time lost over a school year. The table below will help you understand how much time is lost by being regularly late.

Minutes late per day	Number of days over a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will receive a 'U' code 'Late'. In the ARM cluster, schools actively discourage late arrival and are alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Exceptional circumstances

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time.

Absence in term time will only be considered if parents/carers make a request to the school on the appropriate form giving **exceptional** reasons why the application for absence has been requested and provide information to support their application.

The Headteacher will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

Parents/carers, who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a penalty fine of up to £120 and face a possible prosecution in court.

Continuing concerns regarding attendance

If attendance continues to be of concern and there are a number of unauthorised absences then this may lead to a referral being made to the ARM Cluster, Guidance and Support meeting. This is a multi-agency meeting where concerns are discussed and appropriate support is then offered. Alternatively a referral may be made directly to The Leeds City Council, School Attendance Service.

Ultimately parents/carers can be held to account for failing to ensure that their children attend school punctually and regularly. Leeds City Council's, School Attendance Service carries out this statutory function on behalf of the Local Authority in order to uphold the right of children and young people to access their education. Where necessary statutory action can and will be taken, which may take the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution of parents in the Magistrates Court resulting in a fine, or a statutory order.

This document is compiled with Refer to:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741315/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_2018_Part_One_14.09.18.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739764/Guidance_on_school_attendance_Sept_2018.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

