



## Attendance Policy

### Aims and objectives

At Hester's Way Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

### 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.

### Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.20am 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 one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance.

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

**The Governing Board** are expected to:



- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Our Safeguarding Governor will meet with the Head Teacher, termly and monitor pupil attendance.

**The Head Teacher** 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.
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

**The Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The School Attendance officer** is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- 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 school staff e.g. pastoral team/SENDCo to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

**The Class Teacher/Form Tutor** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office. The office staff collect registers by 9.20am.

**School Administration/Office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.



- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents.

### **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made
  - The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

We will also record:

- 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 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

### **Absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9.20 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

Please call the school office on 01242 525616 or email [admin@hestersway.gloucsch.uk](mailto:admin@hestersway.gloucsch.uk).

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/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 and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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

Our school will monitor punctuality issues and if lateness continues, following notification to the parent, a Penalty Notice may be sought, in accordance to the Local Authority guidelines.

### **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please call the school office on 01242 525616 or email [admin@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk) in advance of the appointment.

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 Head Teacher 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' such as religious events, emergency and crisis related incidents, family loss and bereavement. This is not an exhaustive list and 'exceptional circumstances' absence request will be assessed on an individual basis.

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 and where possible, at least a week before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office. Please email [admin@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk) for a form. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Any school agreed part-time timetable provision.

### **Procedures following unexplained absence**

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may text and email to make contact, carry out a home visit, contact social care where necessary and/or contact the Police for a welfare check.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.



- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- 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 contact the Local Authority Inclusion Lead, Social Care and report as a Child Missing in Education when needed.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

We will promote, incentivize and celebrate good attendance through assemblies, newsletters, displays, and whole school events.

### **Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through parents evenings, monitoring letters and school reports.
- Monitor attendance and absence data: daily, weekly, short and long term across the school and at an individual pupil level for any persistent absentees.
- Identify whether 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.

- 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.
- Provide regular attendance reports to staff, including SLT, teaching, pastoral and SENDCO 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.

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% 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 or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Use the Graduated Pathway to identify barriers, targets and support.



- Use informal and then formal communications to inform parent/carers for the need for change and celebrate any progress.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

### **Legal sanctions**

The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not.

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil.

Any person who has care of a child or pupil lives with and looks after the child.

### **Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements**

Other policies used in conjunction with this policy can be found on the school website:

<https://hesterswayprimaryschool.co.uk/>

Acceptable User

Allegations Management

Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy

Complaints

Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

Early Help

E-Safety Policy

First Aid and Medication

Health and Safety

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part 1 (most up to date version)

Lettings/Hirers agreement

Offsite Visits

SEND Local Offer

Safeguarding

Safer Recruitment and staff HR policies

Safer Working Practice

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Staff Behaviour - Code of Conduct and Teaching Standards

Whistle Blowing

Working Together to Keep Children Safe

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, and as a minimum annually by the Head Teacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

Policy written January 2023. Draft to be ratified by Governors on 13.03.23.