



Attendance Policy

REVIEWED BY HEADTEACHER: 10.9.24

BY GOVERNORS: 30.9.24

Next review date: 30.9.26

	Amendment to page 7 – reasons for exceptional leave
September 2024	Amendments to school codes, Penalty Notice Fines, Systems (change 12 sessions to 10 sessions) and the team to Education Inclusion and Partnership team. Changes made inline with guidance published August 2024
November 2024	Amendment regarding unauthorised late attendance.

Hall Meadow Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse. All of our school policies and procedures reflect this priority.

Respect Responsibility Resilience

INCLUSION

INVOLVEMENT

INTEGRITY

INITIATIVE

INSPIRING

Importance of good attendance

It is important to recognise the link between attendance and achievement. At Hall Meadow Primary we encourage all children to attend school regularly. Good attendance at school is essential for a pupils' education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. Pupils learn best when they arrive punctually at academies.

Expectations

The Education Act 1996 requires the adult responsible to ensure their child receives efficient full- time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any other special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Pupils are expected to attend the school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absence;

1. Authorised absence is where the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such a request.
2. Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's/carer's request. Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, a text message or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to the Office. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost). If your child has head lice, once they have been treated they can return to school on the same day.

Signing in/out procedure

- Any child arriving at the school after 8.55am must be signed in by their parent or carer at Reception, giving a reason for the late arrival.
- Any child who has to leave school during school hours for a medical appointment or similar reason must have a note requesting this. This should be addressed to the class teacher, who will pass it to the School Office. Parents will be asked to complete a leave of absence form for all appointments.
- Children leaving the school during the school day must be signed out at Reception by their parent or carer.

Attendance Protocol

- Doors to close at 8:55am, any child arriving between 8:55am and 9:05am will be marked as L in the register. The office will record the number of minutes late that they are.
- Children arriving after 9:05am will be marked as a U in the register. The office will record the number of minutes that they arrive at school after 9:05am.
- First response – this needs to be completed by 9:30am with all relevant information added to Arbor so that the FSW can make phone calls/visits as required.

Dental and medical appointments

Parents and carers are asked most earnestly not to arrange dental and medical appointments during school sessions, except in cases of urgency or hospital appointments, so that considerable interference with school work is avoided. Please do not keep children out of school for the whole day unless absolutely necessary.

Pupils are expected to arrive in the school on time.

Registration Procedures

- Registers are taken twice daily, in the morning and in the afternoon, using Arbor.
- The morning register is closed at 9:05am in both academies and in the afternoon the registers are taken 1.10pm for the Infant's and 1:05pm for the Junior's.
- Any child arriving between 8:55am and 9.05am will be registered as late for that session and recorded on the dated and retained School late forms.
- Any child arriving after 9:05am will be registered as unauthorised.

What happens if pupils are late?

- Pupils who arrive after the doors are locked will need to enter school through the main door.
- If a pupil is persistently late contact will be made with the parents to try to resolve the problem.

- If a pupil arrives in school more than 20 minutes late and there is no acceptable explanation, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

The school will monitor daily attendance and lateness rates and will notify the Family Support Worker if there is cause for concern.

Register Codes

The following codes are applied on the registers:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence
C 1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	
D	Dual registered at another school	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J 1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Approved Education Activity
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Authorised absence
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Participating in a sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
W	Attending work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not counted in possible attendances

Y 1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Parents

- In this instance, under Section 576 Education Act 1996, a parent/carer is defined as any adult who has day to day care of the child during the period in question.
- Under current legislation, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Should a child be unable to attend the school for whatever reason or is late, parents are requested to notify the school by telephone before 8.55 a.m. on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence.
- Children who are late after 8:55am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence and therefore are subject to a PNF after 10 sessions in line with other unauthorised absence.
- The school must consider a pupil's absence or arrival after the registers are closed to be unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given by a parent or guardian.
- Parents should always provide a written explanation for the absence upon their child's return to the school even where the school has previously been made aware of the absence.

To help parents monitor their child's attendance and punctuality, attendance rates will be reported at each parents evening and recorded on the child's end of year report. Any concerns with regards to attendance will be spoken about during the two parent's evenings over the year.

Children Missing from Education Procedures

- If a child is absent and initial contacts are not returned, and contact cannot be made with the parent/carer, then the Family Support Worker or Attendance Officer will visit the home address in order to establish the safety of the child.
- Letters will be sent to the family and a record will be kept in the school office.
- If a pupil does not return to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and LA have failed to jointly establish the whereabouts of the child.

Information taken from the DFE Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for Local Authorities September 2016. Guidance for this to be reviewed in September 2019.

Leave of Absence (including term time holidays) – see appendix 1

- In April 2013, the Government made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations, these came into effect on 1st September 2013.
- Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances', (for example a family crisis, the funeral of a close relative, an entrance exam or an arts performance.)

- Authorisation for term time absence is at the discretion of the Head teacher and Governors.

This means that Head teachers are no longer able to authorise holidays taken in term time.

Requests for leave of absence must be put in writing to the Head teacher. An absence request form is available from the Office or on the website.

A leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. **See Appendix 3**

School Systems

- Individual attendance levels will be monitored and steps taken if a child's attendance is below 95%, there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 6 weeks or there has been 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence.
- If a child's cumulative attendance falls below 95% then the Stage 1 standard letter will be sent to inform parents/carers. **(See appendix 2)**
- If cumulative attendance remains below 95% for a second month then the Stage 2 letter will be sent inviting the parents to a 'Parent Contract Meeting' (PCM). Notes to explain the purpose of this meeting will also be sent. A Parent Contract Meeting (PCM) will take place to set targets for attendance and identify any support required. All meeting notes will be recorded on my concern (school system).
- If parents/carers fail to engage with the PCM process then the Stage 3 letter will be sent inviting the parents to implement an EHA with the Family Support Worker.
- An EHA will be offered for all PCM cases. If it is declined, this will be recorded on the pupil's file and confirmed in writing to the parents. The child's views will be sought. From this point absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.
- A review period of 5 weeks will be set.
- After 5 weeks a review will take place and the outcome will be recorded. If targets are met, then there is no longer a need for the contract. If there has been some improvement monitor for a further 5 weeks. If no improvement, we will seek advice from Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team and possibly make a referral.
- If a child has 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence then a referral will be made to Education and Inclusion Partnership Team and the parent informed in writing.
- If a child's attendance continues to be a concern then a referral to the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team and could result in legal action being taken.

Monitoring

- Individual pupil attendance data will be reported to parents at least annually.
- School attendance data will be monitored monthly including analysis and trends for different groups of pupils.
- Attendance reports will be shared at Full Governor Meetings including the number of children at each stage of the process.

Late Collection

- If children are not collected when school finishes at 3.10pm for Reception Class and 3:20pm for years 1 – 6, then parents will be contacted.
- If this becomes a regular problem the academies Family Support Worker will be informed.

Application for leave of absence in term time

Hall Meadow Primary School, the Local Authority and Government believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it can be recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the absence by the head Teacher.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory notes states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

As a result of the changes, we at Hall Meadow Primary School, have revised our attendance policy which will include the following:

- Application is to be made in advance by the parent on the form obtained from the school office and the website.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head Teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. **See Appendix 3**

The DFE's guidelines look at the area of "Special Occasions" and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised. This will be decided at the discretion of the Headteacher.

We ask parents to notify the school well in advance (preferably 4 weeks notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not.

The DFE's guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorised.

Please note headteacher may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time:

Example of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
 - Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
 - Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
 - Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
 - Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education • Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions.
 - Weddings of parents and siblings – parent weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that here is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulty if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.

- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.
- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Family holiday
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problem

Appendix 1

Request for Leave of Absence for Pupil

Please indicate your reason for requesting absence

Child's Name:		Class:
First day of absence		
Last day of absence		
Reason	Tick	Specific Details
Family Circumstances		
Medical Appointment		
Education Off Site		
Religious Observance		
Please attach a letter detailing reasons for leave of Absence		

<p>School response:</p> <p>This absence will be unauthorised / authorised.</p> <p>Signed (Headteacher): _____ Date: _____</p>

Appendix 2: Attendance letter examples

Dear Parent/Carer

Currently your child's attendance is XX% which means they have missed XX sessions of school.

There may be a number of reasons why your child's attendance is low, such as term time holiday, illness or one off events that were unplanned for. If this is the case then hopefully your child's attendance will improve in the next 6 week period.

We are hoping that you will be able to support an improvement in XX's attendance to school. We have a duty to monitor and track absence of which we do on a daily and weekly basis. Unauthorised absence can lead to your child becoming persistently absent (less than 90% attendance) and subsequently we must then refer them for support from the local authority.

I must make you aware that under **Section 444 1/1A of the 1996 Education Act**, you as the parent are responsible for ensuring your child of statutory school age attends school regularly and on time. I have included below some questions you may have and included an answer for each.

What happens if my child's attendance continues to decline?

You will be invited to a parenting contract meeting which will be chaired by Mrs Bodman-Knight. The purpose of the parenting contract is to formally identify any reasons for absence and put a support plan in place to aid improvements in your child's attendance to school.

Is there any support I can receive to help my child attend?

Yes. You can contact Mrs Ricotta at any time and discuss the individual needs of your child and she will help refer you to the most appropriate person. This may involve her signposting to external agencies and internal provision.

What will happen if my case is referred to the local authority?

As an academy operating in the Northamptonshire Local Authority, we follow their procedures in regard to non-attendance of students who are statutory school age. When a case is referred to our Local Authority's Educational Inclusion Partnership Team they will investigate the matter.

How many weeks do I have to support an improvement in my child's attendance?

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and may visit you at home in the event of absence to offer additional support. We will review their overall attendance each term, and in some cases each fortnight, to check their absence hasn't declined further.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you to ensure that your child's attendance improves.

Yours sincerely

Dear

Currently your child's attendance is XX% which means they have missed X sessions of school.

There may be a number of reasons why your child's attendance is low, such as term time holiday, illness or one-off events that were unplanned for.

We are hoping that you will be able to support an improvement in X attendance to school. We have a duty to monitor and track absence of which we do on a daily and weekly basis. Unauthorised absence has lead to your child becoming persistently absent (less than 90% attendance) and subsequently we must then refer them for support from the local authority. We are Aware that X attendance has been low in previous school years too.

Before we make a referral, we would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss X attendance to devise a supportive plan to increase her attendance at school on xxxxxx.

Please contact the office to confirm your attendance.

I must make you aware that under **Section 444 1/1A of the 1996 Education Act**, you as the parent are responsible for ensuring your child of statutory school age attends school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3

Penalty Notices are issued by North Northamptonshire County Council.

[Penalty notices for non-school attendance | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](http://northnorthants.gov.uk)

A penalty notice (PN) is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school. It is issued per parent, per child.

In Northamptonshire, they are issued them through the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team following notification from the school.

They are used when:

- a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon)
or
- a pupil has a series of unauthorised absences leading to irregular attendance
-

This includes:

- absence marked in the register as unauthorised
- persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence
- absence in term time which has not been authorised by the head teacher - the Government has directed that head teachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances

PN's can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

If the school refers to a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days, the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team may consider that a penalty notice is not appropriate.

In these instances, the matter may proceed to a prosecution. If a parent knows that their child is failing to attend school regularly and there is reasonable justification for not ensuring that their child attends then it is for the parent or carers to prove that reasonable justification.

An initial fixed penalty notice of £80 is issued to each parent for each child.

When you pay	Amount to pay
Payment within 21 days	£80
Payment within 22 days and 28 days	£160

If a second penalty notice is issued within 3 years of the first, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Payment is acceptance of liability. You must enter each penalty notice number individually if paying more than one penalty charge. NNC do not accept payment in instalments.

There is no right of appeal.

If NNC don't receive payment within 28 days from the issue date, you could be prosecuted for the offence of irregular attendance and be:

- subject to a fine of up to £1,000 per child
- a parenting order
- a community service order
- any costs

You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the penalty notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

