

SUCCESS  AT



Hallbrook Primary School

Attendance Policy

Approved/reviewed by	
Hallbrook Local Governing Committee 15 October 2024 V1	
Date of next review	October 2025
Publication:	Website- Statutory

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Version	Date	Updated by	Summary of changes
V1	October 2024	Headteacher (TB)/ Attendance Officer (NJ)	New Policy

Whilst every student has a right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all students, we will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In implementing this policy, we will take into consideration our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Section 1: Statement of Intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We want every child to:

- Attend regularly
- Attend punctually
- Attend ready and prepared to learn including wearing the right uniform and bringing the correct equipment

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavor to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are in school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at the school are the same as the expectations of any future secondary school and employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

Good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. **The students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence.

The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Champion

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analyzed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

In line with new local authority requirements, attendance data will be shared daily with the local authority.

School Attendance Champion: Tim Barrow

Attendance Officer: Natalie Johnston

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of the SLT

- Monthly meetings with the Attendance officer (AO).
- Monitor the students below 95% attendance.
- Liaise with staff on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Produce certificates and letters in line with the policy.
- Conduct safeguarding home visits.
- Conduct informal and attendance meetings with parents and AO where required.

Responsibilities of classroom staff/group tutor

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in the school

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorized absence.
- Arrive in the school on time.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from the school that is not authorised by the School creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or by letter/email if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of the school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3: Recording Attendance

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day for the morning session and after lunch for the afternoon session.

The school gates open at 8:40am and children can arrive from this time. Students must be in the classroom by 9am.

The register will mark whether every student 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 reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the school day. Learning begins at the beginning of the school day and teachers use this time to recap prior learning. Children quickly move into phonics and reading groups and children find it very unsettling to arrive later than their peers.

- The school day begins at 8:40am and pupils are expected to be in before 9:00am.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U*. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentist's appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action. Lateness after the close of register will be coded U.

Parents, guardians or carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved.

If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school may issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

Section 4: Reporting

First day absence

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

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety, as well as ensuring their regular school attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our pastoral or Senior Leadership team if absences persist

Where a child is on a child in need plan or looked after, contact will be made with the relevant social worker if applicable, on day 1.

Third day absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers after three days of absence, the school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. At this point we may carry out a home visit to ensure the well-being of the child.

Fourth Day Absence

When a student is absent for four or more days, medical evidence will be required to support the length of absence. A home visit and/ or a safeguarding phone call will take place if it is deemed appropriate by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Tenth day absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing in education*. Children's Services will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It would be helpful if you could ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number.

Fifteen day absence

We are required to provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded as with code I (Illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

Continued or ongoing absence

We are required to provide the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly.

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence, for whatever reason, disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. Any student who is persistently absent will be monitored and put on an action plan, if required. A member of the Senior Leadership team and/or our attendance officer will meet with students, and their families whose attendance cause concern. Where necessary, home visits are made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing:

This could include:

- Agreeing attendance targets
- Signing an attendance contract or education supervision order
- Signposting to outside agencies
- Attending attendance matters clinics
- Issue a Notice to Improve and/or Penalty Notice

In situations of persistent truanting, a parent/carer may be fined.

A welcome back

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other students.

Section 5: Requesting a Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that the Head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school-to-school and family-to-family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds, the parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code.

Taking holidays in term time (totaling 5 or more days over the academic year) will result in a penalty notice being issued.

Section 6: Understanding Types of Absence

Students are expected to attend the school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. See Appendix 2 for examples of authorised absences other than illness or medical/dental appointments.
- **Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from the school after a parent's request.

This includes:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained.

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to the school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student'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.

Section 7: Supporting Attendance

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance on our website
- report to you regularly on how your child is performing in the school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment

My child is trying to avoid coming to the school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Contact the school and ask to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership team. There could be a number of reasons why your child does not want to attend – difficulties with work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend the school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and with the correct things for the school day. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

School strategies for supporting attendance

As a school, we encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- Letters to parents to stress the importance of good attendance.
- Reminders in Newsletters
- Ensuring that good attendance is high profile in school
- Regular assemblies reminding students on the importance of good attendance.

When attendance falls below expected levels for the school the following early interventions will take place:

- Courtesy calls to warn that student is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (90% and below)
- Proof of Medical Request Letter (if absence is due to consistent illness)
- Letter home
- Meeting in school with attendance officer and the head teacher

Section 8: Legal Measures for Tackling Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences: What you need to know about the changes.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024.


5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Leave.
Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, and for fewer days where this has happened before.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period.
Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

Per Parent, Per Child
Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.
For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

<p>First Offence</p> <p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:</p> <p>£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.</p> <p>Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.</p>	<p>Second Offence (within 3 years)</p> <p>The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:</p> <p>£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.</p> <p>(No option to pay at £80 level)</p>	<p>Third offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)</p> <p>The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.</p> <p>Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.</p>
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Please consult your school's attendance policy and speak with your school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term-time. It is likely you will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by your Headteacher before it is taken.



In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hallbrook Primary School will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance.

Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- the child has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures may be used for students of compulsory school age who are registered at Hallbrook Primary School.

- Parenting contracts set at Attendance Meetings
- Notice of Improvement/Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a 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 child 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

Section 9: Use of Data

Students' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a learner's attendance is a cause for concern in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. On a regular basis the Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer and Trust Data Team will provide the following data:

Data	Regularity	Provided to
Daily registers	Daily	Class Teacher
Weekly registers	Weekly	Class Teacher
Individual learner % attendance data	Weekly	Class Teacher / Pastoral team
3+ day absence	Weekly	Pastoral team
Less than 95% attendance lists	Weekly	Attendance Officer / Pastoral team / Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Persistent Absence/Severe Absence learners identified from 'sessions missed' data	Weekly	SENDCo / SLT /Lead DSL
Attendance data broken down into key groups	Monthly	SLT / Attendance officer/Governors

The school registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups. Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if their attendance is a cause for concern.

Section 10: Key Contacts

Senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in the school is:
Tim Barrow – Head teacher

If you have any queries in relation to your child's attendance, please contact the school or our attendance Officer: Natalie Johnston – njohnston@thomasestley.org.uk

Appendix 1: Absence Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (AM)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Student is present at afternoon (Period 4) registration
L	Late Arrival	Student arrives late but before registers close at 9.30am
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than the school they are registered at for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is attending a place other than the school they are registered at for an education visit or trip arranged by/on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational sporting activity
W	Work Experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the local authority or the school
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved education activity that isn't sporting or work experience.
D	Dual registered at another school	Student is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
M	Attending medical or dental appointments	Where leave is granted following an application made in advance by the parent the student lives with and the school is satisfied the appointment could not be made out of school time
J1	Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institute	Where leave is granted following an application made in advance by the parent the student lives with, to attend an interview
S	Study for public examination	Leave granted by the school for the student to study for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Leave of absence granted for a student not if compulsory school age to attend part-time
C2	Compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable	Leave of absence granted for a student of compulsory school age to attend part-time
C	Exceptional Circumstances	Where leave is granted following an application made in advance by the parent the student lives with for exceptional circumstances as deemed by the school
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Where the student is a mobile child (of no fixed abode) and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place

R	Religious Observance	The student is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
I	Illness	Where a student is too ill (mentally or physically) to attend school
E	Suspended/Permanently Excluded	Where a student is suspended or permanently excluded from school but their name is still on roll and no alternative provision has been made for them.
Q	Unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements	Student unable to attend due to local authority failing to make access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Student unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance (3 miles for children over 8) of their home and transport normally provided is unavailable
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of school being closed	Part of school premises is unavoidably out of use and student is one of those that school considers cannot practicably be accommodated for
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unavoidably closed	Where the school is unexpectedly closed (e.g, due to adverse weather)
Y5	Unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend because they are either police custody, in youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing or detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Where travel to or attendance at school would be contrary to or prohibited by guidance or legislation in respect of transmission or infection of disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency that prevents student from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil and not the parent
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Normal coding will begin on the first day that the student attends school
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance

Unauthorised Absences

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Holiday not granted by the school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the student is absent for the purpose of a holiday
N	Reason for absence not yet established	When a reason for absence has not yet been established before the registers close, the absence must be recorded as an N
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied with the reason given
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived at school after the register has closed (9.30am) but before the end of the session.

Appendix 2: Other Types of Absence

Religious observance

Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Removal of a Child from the school

If your child is leaving the school parents are asked to:

- Give the attendance team comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to the school in writing
- Arrange a meeting to discuss home education. We strongly discourage parents from this option and would aim to work with you to keep your child in the school.

If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from the school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance license and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from the school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Education off Site

Schools can allow students to be absent from school for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity
- To attend another school at which the student is dual registered
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health & care plan
- To participate in an approved sporting activity
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school

Appendix 3: Attendance thresholds

The following percentages of attendance will act as trigger points for intervention strategies to raise attendance.

<u>% Attendance</u>	<u>Action to be taken*</u>
100%-96%	Positive praise for high level of attendance no action required
95%-94%	Student monitored
93 % - 91%	Meetings with parents to address barriers and how attendance can be improved Monitored weekly and informal conversations with SLT Warning letter
90 % -50%	Attendance panel meeting – meeting around the child Letter 1/2 – added to PA processes – discussed weekly with attendance team Attendance contract /action plan SMART targets established Fortnightly meeting between pastoral leader and AO to ensure swift action taken to improve attendance Final warning letter Court pack if required Fines Referrals to Inclusion service and attendance team for Notice of Improvement/Penalty Notice
50% - Below (SPA)	Student added to SPA processes Barriers established – actions in place to support student to overcome barriers Intervention/support form inclusion service Child missing in education referrals Consider reducing timetable to support with reintegration Weekly contact with parents Daily contact with child non attendance Bespoke arrangements maybe required