



# PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

**The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:**

Name: Lucy Fynn

Email: [admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk)

**The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:**

Name: Maisy Hoath

Email: [admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk)

Governor approval date: July 2023

Review Date: July 2025



## Hadleigh Infants & Nursery School

### Pupil Attendance Policy

#### Introduction and Background

Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School recognises the positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education, either by attendance at school, or by other educational provisions such as elective home education.

Where parents decide to have the child registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend, or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department of education has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. Our attendance policy reflects the key principles of that guidance. This link has that document attached. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos too. We believe every child is unique and we work hard to develop the individual abilities of your child, as well as providing for their particular needs.

Our policy has been developed in consultation with the board of school governors, teaching staff, the senior leadership team, local head teacher associations, the local authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details of the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote, monitor & reward pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the *Headteacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**



## Promoting Regular Attendance

At Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School we recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding, well-being and education. We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and setting high, achievable expectations for our students for their attendance and punctuality.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parent/carer's and all members of school staff. To help us focus on this we will:

- Be celebrating excellent attendance by displaying, reporting and awarding individual and class achievements. This is through the attendance hero initiative and the attendance bear initiative. This is delivered weekly in assemblies.
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- We will regularly update parents/carers on attendance in our newsletters..
- We will contact parents and carers regarding their child's attendance if necessary.
- There will be a Prize Draw each term. Each time a pupil has one full week at school they will get one raffle ticket in to their year groups pot. Each term, a raffle ticket will be pulled and that child will win a book.
- Each term we will look at each child attendance for that term and the previous term. Any child's attendance who had improved from the previous term will be put in to their year group pot and a random family will be drawn out of the pot to receive a prize.
- Prize draw whole academic year. Any student above 97% for the whole academic year will be put in a pot for their year group and picked at random for the prize.

**The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:**

Name: Lucy Fynn

Email: [admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk)

## Understanding Types of attendance

Any absence will affect your child's attendance figure, whether this be a medical appointment or due to illness. If your child is not in school for any reason, they will be marked in with the code that relates to their absence or circumstance. Any pupil's absence or late arrival to class will be marked as such. If a child is late to school, they will be marked as late. The minutes late and reason for lateness will be recorded on their attendance certificate for the academic year.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without good reason, creates an offence in law, which may result in prosecution. Repeat lateness after the register has closed, may also result in prosecution.

Authorised absence is a morning and/or afternoon session away from school for an authorised reason, such as illness (you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be



authorised), medical and dental appointments, which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, and for which no leave has been granted this type of absence can lead to the school referring to the local authority for penalty notices and all legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absences, include, but is not limited to:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily. For example, because they had a late night, a non-infectious illness or injuries that would not affect the child's ability to learn
- Absences which have not been properly explained. For example, simply saying a child is unwell will not get an authorised mark.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however is counted as an unauthorised absent for that session as they were not there before the register closed.
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children.
- Children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed for exceptional purposes by the head teacher.
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time, which has not been agreed
- No contact from Parents / Carers.

Any of the above reasons for unauthorised absences may result in school applied to the local authorities issued penalty notice or if previously a child's parents/carer has been issued a penalty notice the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.

Coding Explained:

/ = Present Am

\ = Present Pm

M = Medical Appointment with evidence received.

I = Illness, authorised absence.

O = Unauthorised absence.

G = Holiday, unauthorised by the school.

H = Holiday, agreed due to exceptional circumstances.

C = Absence not related to illness but due to exceptional circumstances.

### **Persistent absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is defined by the government as persistently absent when they missed 10% or more of schooling across the school year for any reason this can be authorised or unauthorised absences. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we will need the full support and cooperation of the families to resolve this.



## **Absence Procedures**

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Maisy Hoath

Email: [admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk)

## **Reporting Absence Procedure.**

**If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before *9am*. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *9 am*

Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

**If your child is absent, we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us
- If we are unable to contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be "missing from education."

**If absence continues, we will:**

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer or Headteacher if absences persist.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions



### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wide world. People have late construct lessons, and if a child misses the start of the day they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, misses to work and important messages from the class teacher.

All students are expected in between 8.45 and 8.55am. Any student that arrives late between 8.55 and 9.05am will receive a late code and that will be logged as an 'L' code with the minutes and reasons as to why that student was late. Any student late after 9.05am will be logged as a 'U' code, along with the minute late and the reasons as to why that student is late. If a student is marked as a 'U' code they will be logged as an unauthorised absence. If a student is late 10 or more times, after the register has closed, within a 10 week period, the parents/carers may receive a penalty notice or prosecution referral to the Local Authority.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with our Attendance Officer, a Wellbeing Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

### **Understanding barriers to attendance**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve.

An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed. Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Local Authority attendance support services Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.



## **School Attendance and the Law**

School Attendance and the Law states that all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered. Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child. Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year. It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the head teacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the head teacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school.

Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct. A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two calendar weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

At Hadleigh Infants and Nursey School, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as being of unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the head teacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- At any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.
- During assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.



### Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School, other than at the end of year 2, parents/carers are required to provide this request in writing. This must include their child's name, their new destination and the reason for leaving. If you are moving then we must have your new address as well. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency. Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

### Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment. We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

### Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day. All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.