

# Whole School Attendance Policy



## Whiteheath Junior School

Written by	Written on	Updated on	To be reviewed
M Kenny/L Ventin	December 2023 (new policy)	Autumn 2025	Autumn 2026

### Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy when their children join our school and regularly give updates regarding attendance thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

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## 1. Introduction/Aim

At Whiteheath Junior School we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on child protection and safeguarding and behaviour. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

## 2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

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

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A “Parent” is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Whiteheath Junior School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone’s business. That it is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and the wider school community.

Role	Name	Contact details
Attendance Lead	Mrs Ventin	office@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk
Attendance and Welfare Officer	Miss Aistrop	welfare@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk

The Governing Board of Whiteheath Junior School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school’s ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by ensuring the school is:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Reporting to the governing body on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Monitor attendance regularly – this includes half termly pupil group analysis, weekly attendance and register codes of unauthorised absences, monthly class attendance, and monthly persistent absentee tracking.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and work effectively with the local authority Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a

social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.

- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Management Team at Whiteheath Junior School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time, via Wonde and LEAP
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

All staff at Whiteheath Junior School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.

- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil records of attendance.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Whiteheath Junior School requests that parents/carers:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school daily if their child is absent to let them know the reason why - this can be a voice message or email
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Not taking family holidays during school term time

Pupils will:

- Be aware of when and where they are required to attend school. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

#### 4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

##### 4.1 Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Whiteheath Junior School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Whiteheath Junior School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Whiteheath Junior School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.
- Six or more sessions be requested for said leave
- It is noted that a pupil or pupils are absent from school immediately before or after a school holiday on a regular basis even if parent phones in to say pupil is sick. Medical evidence will be required to evidence the illness in this case.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

#### **4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness**

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must sign out via the school office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the school nurse.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support.

#### **4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance**

Whiteheath Junior School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday

periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance, up to a maximum of 2 days. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

#### **4.4 Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

### **5. Our Procedures**

#### **5.1 Register Keeping and Recording**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

“Regular” attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

## 5.2 Late Arrival at School

At Whiteheath Junior School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:50am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken between 8:50am and 9:00am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9:15am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:15am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

## 5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call or email on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day contact procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:15am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil’s parents, a telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child’s named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission

In certain circumstances the School may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance, and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [Children Missing Education procedures](#)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support.

#### 5.4 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

Attendance Monitoring		
<b>0-4 DAYS OFF</b>	99 – 100%	Whole school approaches used to encourage good attendance include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Strong parent/school relationships</b> – before and end of day presence of staff and leadership team and good communication across a range of mediums.</li> <li>- <b>Monthly Class Attendance</b> – shared with staff, pupils and parents via the newsletter.</li> <li>- <b>Positive reminders from Headteacher</b> through the newsletters.</li> <li>- <b>Termly 100% certificates for pupils</b></li> <li>- <b>End of year 100% certificates for pupils</b></li> </ul>
<b>4-7.5 DAYS OFF</b>	96 – 98%	
<b>9.5-21.5 DAYS</b>	90 – 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weekly review of attendance for those 95% and under to see if % might fall</li> <li>- Monitor attendance</li> </ul>
<b>21.5+ DAYS OFF</b>	Under 90% (PA - persistent absentee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter 1 sent to parents with a review period set for improvement</li> <li>- If no improvement, letter 2 sent and review period set for improvement</li> <li>- If no improvement, attendance contract meeting arranged with a fixed period for review and formal contract put in place</li> <li>- If no improvement, referral to LA Attendance Support Team (decision made re: fixed penalty notice)</li> </ul>

<b>95+ DAYS OFF</b>	<b>Under 50% (SA - severe absentee)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intensive support through statutory Children's Social Care involvement</li> <li>- No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention</li> </ul>
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At Whiteheath Junior School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

“Severe absence” (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

## 5.5 Support Systems

At Whiteheath Junior School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

## 5.6 Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

Whiteheath Junior School will follow the new guidelines set out by the DFE and consider a penalty notice referral in each individual case where ten sessions (or half days) of absence without authorisation is reached in a rolling period of ten weeks.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

## **5.7 Reduced timetables**

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

We will notify the Attendance Support Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

## **6. Deletions from the Register**

At Whiteheath Junior School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Whiteheath Junior School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Hillingdon Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team via LEAP of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a parent or carer chooses to educate their child at home, they must inform the school in writing. Whiteheath Junior School will inform the local authority and will await permission from them to remove the child from roll. Whiteheath Junior School will always speak to parents about their decision to remove their child from roll prior to referring to the local authority.

Whiteheath Junior School will follow Hillingdon's [Children Missing Education procedures](#) when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with the local authority to establish the whereabouts of the child.

## 7. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding and child protection
- first aid
- admissions (LA)
- behaviour incorporating anti-bullying
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning

## 8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(September 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2025\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2023\)](#)

## 9. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

## Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form

### APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This form is to be completed by the parent or carer and sent to the Headteacher at **one month** prior to the period of absence requested. Mrs Ventin, our Pastoral Manager, may telephone you or arrange to meet with you to discuss the reasons for the request.

**As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 the government set a directive to all schools that all exceptional leave is to be refused.**

Guidance from Hillingdon Local Authority about Exceptional Leave is as follows:

- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
- We must stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
- It is at the Head Teacher's discretion to decide on what they feel is a reasonable time for family emergencies. **They can no longer offer up to 10 days for any family, or authorise any leave for holidays.**
- The Attendance Support Team at the Civic Centre can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence.

Any requests for absence for music examinations, 11+ examinations, visits to potential Secondary schools, medical appointments etc, must be requested in advance, and evidence (confirmation letter/email from school/organization) must be provided for your request to be authorised.

**Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:**

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per child, per parent of £160 if paid within 28 days but reduced to £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days.

✂ .....

**Please complete the details below and return to the school office with the required evidence.**

1) Name of Child..... Class.....

2) Name of Child..... Class.....

Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

**I request permission for the above named child/children to be given exceptional leave of absence for:**

(Please state reason and attach evidence.)

First day of absence:	Last day of absence:	Total number of days/part days to be missed:	Total number of school days missed so far this school year:
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Decision by Headteacher:

Date:

For unauthorised – date passed to LV

Added to SIMS

Code

Referred: Yes / No

Appendix 2: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

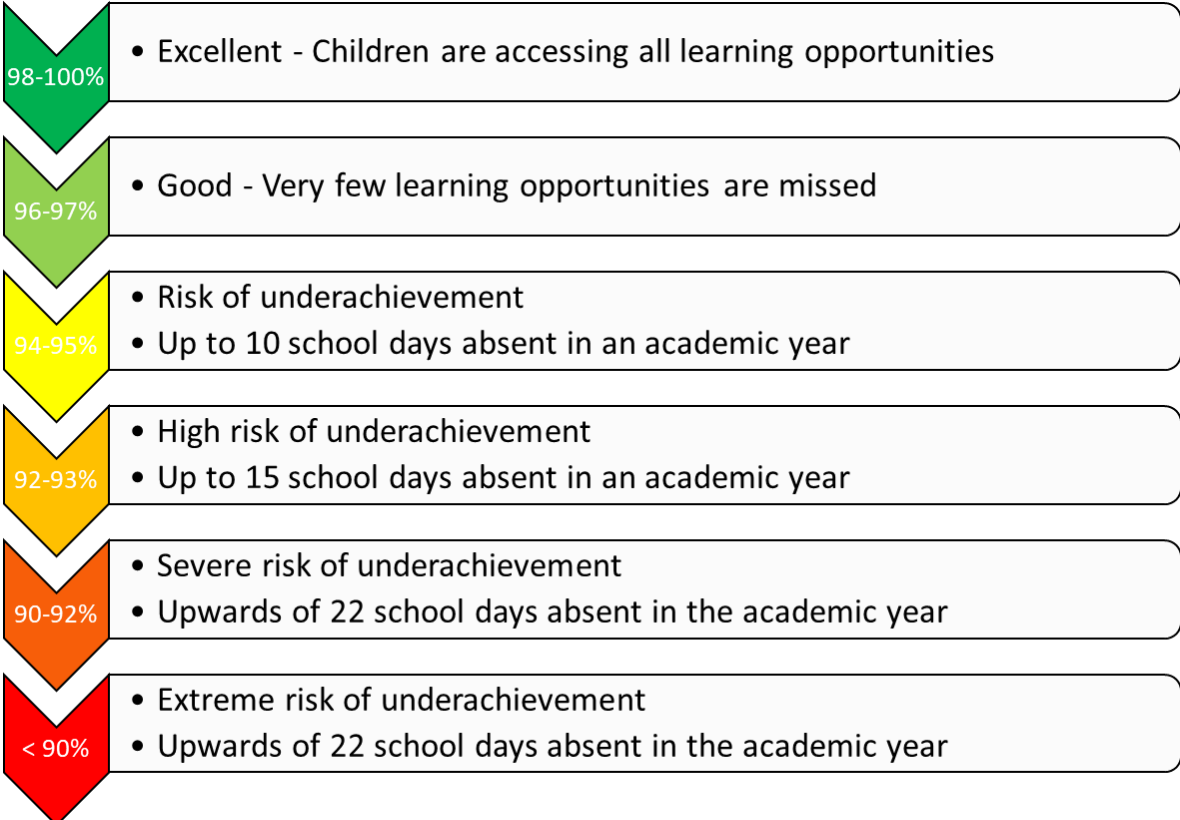
Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.

You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by 8:50 am.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence by calling the school office on 01895 634964 to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name and class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our

official register. Alternatively, email the school via [welfare@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk](mailto:welfare@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk) providing the same details

### **Leave of Absence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via [office@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk](mailto:office@whiteheath-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk). You will receive a letter or email in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in class by 9:00am.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact Mrs Ventin if you require any support with ensuring your child's regular school attendance.

**Appendix 3: Example Attendance letters**

**Exceptional leave refusal**

Dear

Re application for exceptional leave for .....

I appreciate that it will be disappointing but I am unable to authorise your application for exceptional leave for ..... days between the dates of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024. A total of seven and a half days. In line with the Department for Education and London Borough of Hillingdon guidelines, I am keen to optimise the learning opportunities for your child. There are 175 days per year allocated for school holiday & family activities.

I sincerely hope that you will reconsider your plans and allow us to educate your child during the period in question. I will consider referring to the attendance support team if the leave goes ahead.

The only acceptable reason for absence is when a child is ill, absence due to religious observance (as per government guidelines) or in exceptional circumstances authorised by the head teacher. Failure to do so may result in a penalty notice of £80 per parent with parental responsibility. **If this fine is not paid within 21 days it will be raised to £160 which must then be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice issued to you may result in a prosecution at Uxbridge Magistrates Court. In some instances a Court Summons will be issued instead of a penalty notice.**

A person found guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure that a child attends school regularly is liable to a fine.

A person found guilty of an offence under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 knowing that a child is failing to attend regularly at school and fails without reasonable justification to cause the child to attend school is also liable to a fine or a term of imprisonment.

**Please be advised that Penalty Notices are only issued on the first occasion. Any further unauthorised leave will result in a Summons to Uxbridge Magistrates Court for each parent, step-parent or carer.**

Yours sincerely

M Kenny  
Headteacher

**Attendance letter 1 (when attendance initially falls below 90%)**

Dear .....

Please note that child’s attendance is 87%. This is significantly lower than the 95% expected and, at below 90%, places your child in the persistent absentee category. When a child misses large amounts of school, their progress is greatly affected and they can fail to meet their full potential.

I will continue to monitor child’s attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement by date. Please contact me if there are any issues preventing your child from attending regularly that you feel I can support you with.

Yours sincerely,

L Ventin  
Pastoral Lead

**Attendance letter 2 (sent if no improvement after letter one has been sent)**

Dear

Re: Registered student at Whiteheath Junior School

On recent inspection of school register, it has come to my notice that your child's attendance is currently 78%. This is significantly lower than the 96% attendance expected by the school.

You have a responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly and failure to comply may result in a prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

The only acceptable reason for absence is when a child is ill, absence due to religious observance (as per government guidelines) or in exceptional circumstances authorised by the head teacher. Failure to ensure this may result in a penalty notice of £80 per parent with parental responsibility. **If this fine is not paid within 21 days it will be raised to £160 which must then be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice issued to you may result in a prosecution at Uxbridge Magistrates Court. In some instances a Court Summons will be issued instead of a penalty notice.**

A person found guilty of an offence under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 knowing that a child is failing to attend regularly at school and fails without reasonable justification to cause the child to attend school is also liable to a fine or a term of imprisonment.

**Please be advised that Penalty Notices are only issued on the first occasion. Any further unauthorised leave will result in a Summons to Uxbridge Magistrates Court for each parent, step-parent or carer.**

If there is no significant improvement in child's attendance by date, I will be contacting the participation service with regards to holding a meeting to discuss ways forward in supporting attendance.

Any absences must continue to be supported by medical evidence for the absence to be authorised.

Yours sincerely

M Kenny  
Headteacher

**Formal invitation to an attendance panel meeting**

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE THIS LETTER MUST BE EITHER POSTED OUT TO BOTH PARENTS, OR GIVEN IN PERSON AND NOT BE GIVEN TO THE CHILD TO PASS ON (PLEASE DELETE)\*\***

Parent(s)/carers name  
1st Line of address  
2nd line of address  
ABC 2DE

Date: <insert>

Dear <insert>

**Re: Invitation to an Attendance Contract meeting to discuss:** <insert>

**Name of Child:** <insert>

**D.O.B:** <insert>

**Registered pupil at:** <insert>

**Current Attendance:** <insert>

**\*\*Choose the most appropriate option below and delete accordingly\*\***

*1. Did not attend supportive meeting with Attendance Lead:*

*Due to the decline in the regular attendance of your child and the lack of engagement with previous attempts to support with regular attendance, we now require you to attend an attendance contract meeting on <insert> at <insert>.*

*2. Attended supportive meeting with Attendance Lead:*

*Unfortunately, your child's attendance continues to decline and regular attendance at school has not been maintained. At our supportive meeting held on <insert> we created a plan to help you and your child overcome barriers to attending school, however it has not been successful. To further support, we now require you to attend an attendance contract meeting on <insert>*

This meeting will be held at school. If you require the meeting to be held in a different setting such as virtually, via telephone, a home visit, or if this time or day is not convenient, please contact <insert> by <insert> for alternative arrangements to be made.

Your views and those of your child will be sought and taken into consideration during this meeting where we will complete an attendance contract agreement, the terms of which are negotiated.

Please be aware further action from the school will mean we have no alternative but to refer this matter onto the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council. You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a three-year rolling period, Hillingdon Council will need to consider other appropriate legal interventions.

Please bring with you any medical evidence such as a GP/Consultant letter or certificate, any prescribed medication (not bought over the counter) for any considerations that may be given to your child's absences being authorised on health grounds.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Attendance Lead**

Cc: Headteacher

**Punctuality letter**

Dear .....

Your child has arrived after the school gate was locked on x occasions this half term.

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time. Lateness can disrupt the learning of others and can result in a pupil feeling greater stress and achieving poorer outcomes. Arriving ten minutes late on a daily basis equates to missing 6.9 school days over the academic year.

Research shows a close link between attendance at school and a child's achievement. Being late adds up to a loss of learning. All time out of school affects learning and achievement for pupils.

The school gate opens at 8.30 and is locked at 8.50 every morning. This gives a twenty-minute period for children to arrive. If your child arrives after this time you will need to come in to reception and sign them in with a reason for their late arrival. For safeguarding reasons, it is important that you accompany your child into school if the school gate is already locked.

Yours sincerely,

L Ventin  
Pastoral Lead

## Appendix 4: Attendance Contract Agreement

### Attendance Contract Agreement

*(This document should be completed when a parent does not attend the schools' formal parenting contract attendance meeting)*

Date of meeting:					
Full name of pupil:					
DOB:		Age:			
Full address:					
School Name:					
School year:					
CIN/CP:	Yes/No	SEND support:	Yes/No	EHCP:	Yes/No

**Persons with Parental Responsibility** *(this includes the birth parent(s) and persons with parental responsibility or who have day to day care of the child)*

Parental Responsibility	Full name	Tick to confirm present at meeting
Father		
Mother		
Other:		
Grandparent		
Carer		

**All present at meeting**

Professional	Full Name
School senior attendance lead	
School attendance officer	
Other professionals:	
Keyworker/Social worker/Housing officer/SEND Officer/ YOS Officer/ School Nurse/GP or other health professional/ Safer Schools Police Officer	

**Reason for Panel meeting**

\_\_\_\_\_ attendance is currently \_\_\_% out of a possible \_\_\_ sessions.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ has only managed to attend \_\_\_ sessions.

**1. Actions taken to date to improve student's school attendance:**

**2. Pupil's comments:**

*(Where appropriate the pupil can attend the panel meeting. This may be with or with parents present)*

**3. How is this absence affecting the pupil's progress at school? What can we as a school do to support the pupil to attend regularly:**

**4. What is going well for the pupil in school:**

**5. Any other action or support provided by a named member of staff:**

**Decisions made by the panel in the parents absence**

**Parent/carers:**

- Must ensure their child attends every day that the school is open for them and is on time for registration
- Provide medical evidence to the school if the child's absence is due to illness
- Must contact the school should there be difficulties with the above points.

**School:**

We will only authorise any absence through illness if supported by medical evidence. Alternatively, you can bring \_\_\_\_\_ into school if they are unwell and allow the

school to decide whether \_\_\_\_\_ is well enough to stay in school. If the school feels that he/she is too unwell, then you will not have to provide medical evidence for that absence.

We will be available for advice and support during the review period. If the pupil named in the agreement does not attend regularly and punctually a referral may be made to the Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council who may consider:

- Issuing a Penalty Notice of £80.00 to each parent/carer
- prosecution at Magistrate Court
- an Education Supervision Order or
- a Parenting Order.

The pupil's attendance will be reviewed on:

I accept the Attendance Panel agreement decisions above and agree to comply with the requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signed Pupil (if Present)

\_\_\_\_\_ Signed Headteacher/School Attendance Lead

\_\_\_\_\_ Witness