



## Hesleden Primary School

# Attendance Policy

## 2022

Hesleden Primary School seeks to ensure that all its children receive an education which maximises opportunities for each child to realise their true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all children benefit from the education we provide, and regular attendance plays a vital role in their wellbeing and education. The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all children to ensure they maximise their learning and build upon their ability for future learning.

All school staff will work with children and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of 96% has been set and various measures will be put in place to help work towards this.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of children to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those children and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DFE 'School Attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (June 2022) and 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (January 2015).

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Policy adopted: ..... [Date]

On behalf of Governors: .....

*To be reviewed annually*

## 1. Expectations, Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked. Data has shown children who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% compared with 3.5% absence rates for those achieving expected standard and a 2.7% absence rate for children gaining a higher standard.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### We will ensure that:

- All children have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative. (UNCRC Articles 28 & 29)
- Attendance is a priority across the school and aspires to high standards of attendance.
- Children will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of children.
- Children and parents will be advised of any noticeable patterns or decline in attendance and given support to resolve this.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## 2. The Law

When you register your child at school you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time and will be **breaking the law** if there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem**. If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue you with a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the law.

If you go to court and are found guilty of an offence, you could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

## 3. Attendance Procedures

### On the first day off and any further absence

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office [01429 836376 – option 1] giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctor and dentist appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary and to enable an authorised absence, confirmation of the appointment should be given to the school. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the

Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

***Help, Support & Communication:***

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance. Parents are asked to remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date. It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The School will analyse absence across the school on a regular basis. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due frequent hospital appointments and/or long-term medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter or invite you to a meeting in school depending on the circumstances.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend, please share any such concerns with us and school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help, but the quicker we know about a concern the quicker we can work to solve it.

***Enforcement Action:***

If, following the schools attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

**Punctuality:**

Registration time is usually at 8.55am at which point the pupil entry doors will be locked and parents with children who are late must use the main entrance for access. Afternoon registration is taken at **1.00pm**. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after morning registration, then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

***If your child is late for school:***

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (Arbor).

***If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;***

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head Teacher will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to children e.g. improving their punctuality over 2 weeks to earn a school reward.

***If lateness becomes persistent*** with no identifiable reason –

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

***If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;***

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **due to exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the child's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

***Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of statutory or internal assessments (especially May and June); the school does not authorise absences either side of a school holiday.***

**4. Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will give out the weekly 'Attendance Monster' for the class with the best attendance. Further to this, any children who achieve 100% attendance over each term will receive a certificate in assembly. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents on a termly basis, at termly parents' meetings and annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual children' attendance.

**5. Children Missing from Education:**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### **Monitoring & Maintaining Attendance**

- In School Mrs Medcalf monitors and manages the attendance processes, this is overseen by Mrs Dunn.

### **Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the behaviour and attendance sub-committee (ECM) take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including children on school roll who are educated off site.

### **School Leadership Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with children and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that children are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to the Governors each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with children and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that children are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to children that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, children and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

**Parents / Carers:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children’s education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child’s attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

