

Heptonstall J & I School

Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Shameem Hussain	Date: October 2024
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Last reviewed on:	October 2024
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Next review due by:	October 2026
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Designated Senior leader for Attendance:	Fiona Pether
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Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential for a child to achieve their full potential. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve their full potential. As a Rights Respecting School we acknowledge under Article 18 and 28 of the UNCRC the importance of working together with parents/carers to ensure children have access to the education provided for them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

Article 18: Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for their child.

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education

Aims:

- Heptonstall J & I School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential
- The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels happy, safe and secure
- All school staff will work together with pupils and their families to ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually
- The school will act early to address any patterns of absence
- The school has systems of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and we challenge the behaviour of pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure **all** staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand the following:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the following:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Communicating with the LA for issuing fixed penalty notices or prosecutions
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance: Fiona Pether

The designated senior leader is responsible for the following:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

The School Office Manager: Amanda Rhodes

The school attendance officer is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Consulting the Education Welfare Team regarding issuing fixed-penalty notices
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Informing the LA of any pupils absent in education or missing in education

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to do the following:

- Ensure their child comes to school regularly and punctually
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and expected date of return
- Try and avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make medical appointments outside of school hours
- Ask for help for their child if they are experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is avoidable
- Complete a leave of absence form to request leave from the Headteacher for exceptional circumstances
- Inform school of any change of address or contact details including telephone numbers.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to do the following:

- Attend school every day, on time

The senior leadership team will strive to maintain attendance above the national average by ensuring that all pupils and parents are provided with information, advice and support in order to do the following:

Maintaining Attendance as a priority

- All staff to apply the school Attendance Policy consistently
- Part of the SIP (School Improvement Plan) to remain high profile
- Include comment on attendance and punctuality in reports to parents, staff and governors
- Keep parents informed about levels of attendance in newsletters etc
- Display attendance-related materials at focal points in school.

Providing advice and guidance

- Provide clear information for parents about attendance and punctuality.
- Provide opportunities to discuss attendance with pupils
- Involve parents at the earliest stage when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance

Attendance procedures

Parents need to inform school 9.15am if their child is going to be absent from school. This can be done by phoning the school office (leave a voicemail if necessary or messaging Mrs Rhodes on Dojo).

School Opening Procedures

It is the responsibility of parents to contact school before 9.15am if their child will not be attending school that day (where possible)

8.45am	School doors open
9.00am	External doors will be closed and children arriving after this time should enter through the main office where they will be recorded as arriving late.
9.00am	Morning Registers taken
9.30am	Registers closed

Late (L code) is used for children arriving after close of registration.

Unauthorised (U code) is used for children arriving after 9.30am (30 minutes after the register has closed).

9.00 am Office Manager to check all registers completed
 Office Manager ensure all sicknesses/medical appointments are noted on Bromcom and input codes accordingly (from calls/texts/answer machine)

9.15 am Office Manager to make first day absence call to the first named contact to establish a reason for absence or leave a message for them to call school to notify and confirm the reason for absence. If a message is left, the Office manager will also send a dojo message / email.

9.30am Office Manager to call second contact if no contact has been made by the first named contact.

If we are unable to make contact following the above procedures, the Office Manager may contact the police and ask for a welfare check to ensure that all children are accounted for. This procedure is in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

If all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child, the Office Manager will also contact the EWO and inform them that the police have been alerted.

The Office Manager to update CPOMS of actions.

Afternoon registers will be taken at 1.15pm.

Attendance Registers

Registers should be marked at the beginning of each session on the Bromcom MIS. The registers are taken by **9.00 am**. Any child not present at this time should be marked as (N) absent. The office staff will sign in all children arriving late and subsequently add the data to Bromcom. Absent children must not be marked as present even if the teacher knows that the child will be in school later. If a parent or sibling informs a member of staff that a child will be absent then that member of staff should inform the office.

Absence

The Office Manager will oversee the daily absence, detailing any incoming information regarding individual absence and courses of action to be taken. Further details will be logged and, if no reason for absence has been received one week after the child's return, the absence should be marked as unauthorised and logged for future EWO involvement where legal action may be taken, e.g. final warning, penalty notice or prosecution.

Lateness

Pupils who arrive late will be recorded as late by the Office Manager stating reason for late arrival; these are then logged on Bromcom. We actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously, the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. Parents/carers of children who are late 3 times or more in any term will be contacted or spoken to by the Head of School to reach a satisfactory outcome. If there is still no improvement, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Team.

Rewards

- The class with the highest attendance will be rewarded weekly dojo points for each child. Office Manager to email round to announce highest attenders. Class teacher to share on Dojo.
- Individual pupils rewarded termly and annually with a certificate and a prize for 99/100% attendance.
- Pupils with above national average will be rewarded with a certificate of achievement at the end of the year.
- Pupils with improving attendance from the previous term/half term will be rewarded with a certificate and dojo points.
- School Council regularly reviews pupils' suggestions for rewards.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence

Only school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents (Section 199, Education Act 1993). These may be the following:

Illness, Medical and Dental appointments – If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the

absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) and on production of an appointment card. A record is maintained by the school office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site. **Children with sickness or diarrhoea must stay away from school for 48 hours following the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea to prevent illness being spread to other pupils and staff.**

Special Occasions – It is for school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not; much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally, the rule is that only truly exceptional occasions will be sanctioned as authorised absence after discussion with the Headteacher.

Family Bereavements – The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. School has discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request will be dealt with sympathetically.

Leave Abroad - Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, this will only be granted for a limited number of days and extended leave abroad is not deemed as exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted and this **will not exceed 10 days**.

All absences will be unauthorised and will lead to further legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Absence during the Phonics Check, SATs period and Multiplication Tables Check (May/June) will not be authorised for Y1, Y2 (if resitting the Phonics Check) Y4 or Y6 pupils.

Parents who need to take a child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request or complete a Leave of Absence application form. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**.

Days of Religious Observance – Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence.

Other absences – Shopping trips, airport trips, birthday trips, days out and family holidays will not be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence and Sanctions

Heptonstall J & I School will endeavor to work with families to raise attendance and avoid persistent absence. However, in some cases it may be necessary to move towards statutory measures to improve attendance.

Unauthorised holiday requests: If a holiday request is unauthorised and the child is still removed from school to take a holiday within term time, a referral will be made to the Local Authorities Education Welfare Service with a request to issue a Penalty Notice (fine) to each parent in respect of each child. However, in circumstances where the leave of absence exceeds 15 days, the matter will not be dealt with by penalty notice but will be referred to the Magistrates' Court for their consideration.

Persistent absence: If attendance fails to improve (above 90%) despite the best efforts of the school to work with a family, this will be referred to the Local Authority for a Pre-Court meeting at Heptonstall J & I School. The school will provide evidence at this meeting. An action plan will be drawn up with a review date. If there isn't a significant improvement at the review, the Local Authority will undertake statutory action, which could result in penalty notices being issued to each parent in respect of each child, or alternatively the matter will be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Collecting and analysing data

- The school will register attendance using Bromcom.
- All registers will be marked in accordance with DFE regulations
- Absence logs will be monitored by the Office Manager to establish trends in individual absence and target effective action
- All attendance data will be collated and analysed weekly, termly and annually to establish trends and to provide reports to governors, EWO and DFE.

Collecting children at the end of the school day

- Children should be collected from the playground at 3.30pm. Any child not collected by 3.40pm will be taken to the office. Parents will receive one reminder regarding late pick up and from then will be contacted by the Head of School.
- Any parent wishing to collect a child early for an appointment etc must contact the school and provide a copy of the appointment time before signing the child out from reception.

Record Keeping

Any attendance records containing personal information will be stored securely and in accordance with the data protection policy.

This policy has been written and reviewed in accordance with the school's Equality Policy and is therefore in full accordance with all statutory responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

Written September 2024

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	When a pupil is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil on a part-time timetable (only to be used in exceptional circumstances)
C	Leave of absence	Leave of absence to be granted only under exceptional circumstances – not a holiday/absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child
R	Religious observance	Pupil is absent for religious reasons

I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (Physical and mental health related)
E	Suspended/permanently excluded	Pupil is suspended or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds (still remains on the admission register)
Absent due to unavoidable cause		
Y1	Transport not being available	Pupil is unable to attend as the school is not within walking distance and transport is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend due to local, national or international emergency which has led to widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Part of school premises are closed	Part of the school premises are closed and out of use
Y4	School site unexpectedly closed	School is closed unexpectedly (adverse weather)
Y6	Unable to attend due to public health guidance or law	Pupil is absent in line with government guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease
Y7	Absent due to any other unavoidable cause	To be used when other codes above do not apply
Other Absences		
G	Unauthorised absence	Holiday not granted
N	Reason for absence not yet established	To be used until a reason is established – reason should be established within 5 days or O code to be used
U	Arrived after register closed	Pupil arrived after the register has closed but before the end of the session
Z	Prospective pupil not on the register	Advance of pupils joining the school to ease admin burdens
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned reasons e.g half terms, bank holidays, training days, polling days

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions when needed

Pupils with attendance between 97% and 100%

Certificates and rewards will be given out termly for pupils with above average attendance.

Pupils with attendance between 94% and 96%

School will confirm with the parent why pupil is absent if parent does not contact school.

Teachers will support pupils to catch up with their learning.

School staff to speak to parents regarding the child's attendance and set a target and set a review date.

Where improvement has not occurred following the intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This member of SLT will closely monitor attendance of the child.

EWO referral will be made.

Pupils with attendance between 91% and 93%

Head of School will meet with the pupil/parent to do the following:

- Identify any underlying home/school issue causing the pupil's absence
- Make arrangements for pupil to catch up with any work missed
- Work with the Attendance Officer to set a target
- Attendance Officer to closely monitor
- EWO Referral of attendance does not improve within 4 weeks of meeting
- Complete an Early Help pathway referral if required for multi-agency support

Pupils with attendance below 90%

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school.

The Senior Leadership Team, will do the following:

- Ensure that pupil/parent has already spoken to a member of staff at previous stages to discuss concerns and strategies to improve attendance.
- Additional support, where needed, has been offered such as breakfast or after school club.
- Ensure Parent/Carer is aware of next steps where attendance has not improved.
- If attendance fails to improve then the matter will be referred to the LA requesting a Final Warning or Pre-Court meeting at Heptonstall J & I School or the Town Hall. School will provide evidence at this meeting. An action plan will be drawn up with a

review date. During the review period both school or the Education Welfare office will conduct home visits where needed to ascertain the reason for absence.

- Within the review period, if attendance does not improve then the matter will be referred to the LA requesting legal action.