

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Approved by	Lisa Rees (Headteacher) Governors	Date	Nov 2022
Next Review Date	Nov 2023		

The Hendreds Primary School is committed to providing the best possible education for all of our pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We strive to provide an inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued, can learn about themselves and the world, and can learn and grow together.

For a child to reach their full potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance including, for example, through newsletters and end-of-term reports. Attendance of all pupils, especially those where levels of absence are causing concern, is analysed regularly, as is attendance at a class, group (for example, children in receipt of Pupil Premium funding compared to those who are not) and school level. Systems used to improve attendance are reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that we are meeting our set targets.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. This policy outlines the procedures the school will use to ensure it meets its attendance targets.

Why regular attendance is important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance; permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

The school uses all opportunities to remind parents of their responsibility to ensure their children receive full-time education. This is done through:

- regular reminders in the weekly newsletter,
- discussions with parents when children start Foundation Stage,
- half-termly ongoing discussions with parents of children where attendance is a cause for concern.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes. If this occurs, school may ask for evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' is therefore granted. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Absence which might fall into this category includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time;
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

Support for attendance can be through:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times;
- Helping with homework;
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before;
- Providing a healthy breakfast;
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly;
- Retaining open & honest communication with school;
- Being positive about school
- Encouraging child to invite friends home for play dates.

Severe Absenteeism (SA):

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress which can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the fullest support and co-operation of parents to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, or where attendance over time is lower than 90%, the school will try to resolve the problem by making contact with parents. Initially this will be done through an informal discussion, either face-to-face or by phone, which will be followed up by a letter to the parent from the Headteacher to document the conversation. The Headteacher will liaise with the County Attendance Team to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and / or punctuality are identified.

If attendance continues to be a problem despite these actions, the Headteacher will invite parents in to school to discuss the causes of the problem and possible ways forward. The Early Intervention Service may be involved at this point through the attendance of a Hub worker at this meeting. The

Headteacher will also consider the potential for involvement of other specific agencies and the possible need to complete an Early Help Assessment and begin Team Around the Family processes.

School Absence procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, it is recorded as unknown (N) in the first instance. When further information is obtained, for example, through first-day absence phone-calling, the code will be amended to reflect the reason for the absence. Where absence is not due to illness or for medical reasons, the Headteacher or, in their absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team, will determine whether the absence is authorised or not, and, again, the code will be amended to reflect this (U for unauthorised absence).

All authorisation of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher or, in their absence, a member of the senior leadership team with this delegated responsibility. The provision of a note or message does not authorise absence. Absence can only be authorised within the context of the law.

Telephone numbers

There are times when school needs to contact parents about many issues, including absence, so it is important to ensure current contact details are held by school at all times. To help us, we ask parents to ensure we always have both parents and at least a third emergency contact person's up-to-date contact details. These are then checked throughout the year, but parents can help by being proactive in letting a member of staff in the office know of any changes

First day absence - Parents are requested to inform the school on the first day of a child's absence. This can be done through a phone call to the office (01235 833379) or an email to the office (office.3250@hendreds.oxon.sch.uk). Messages from siblings are not accepted as reports of absence.

After the close of registers, any unexplained or unexpected absences are followed up by a phone call from a member of the office staff who have responsibility for ensuring this happens. Where there are concerns about a child's absence, the first-day phone call may be made by the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where it has not been possible to make contact (by phone and email) with parents or other emergency contacts, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will visit the house to check on the child's welfare. Where contact has still not been made, the Headteacher will speak to the Attendance and Engagement Officer for the school or the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Administrator and seek advice about next steps.

Information obtained from phone calls or from notes is transferred into the electronic register by the person making the phone call in the form of an attendance code.

Subsequent days of absence – Parents are requested to call in/email **every** day whilst a child is absent from school.

How we manage time keeping

The school day starts at 08:40 a.m. and we expect children to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 08:50 a.m. and children arriving after this time will be marked as late (Attendance code L).

At 09:10 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (Attendance code U).

Whilst there is no mandatory time for afternoon registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1:00 pm in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are late to return or whom do not return.

If a child has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but parents can approach school at any time if there are having problems getting a child to school on time.

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Pupils must attend as much of the school day around the appointment as possible.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head Teacher is responsible for considering all exceptional leave requests which must be communicated to the office by the parent.
6. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 95%.
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
8. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
9. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

Should a child be absent for 6 unauthorised half days or 3 unauthorised full days in a period of 6 consecutive school weeks, then the school will issue a warning notice and inform the County Attendance Team. The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

Record keeping and targets

Communications received from parents explaining absence are summarised and entered into RM Integrus, the school's Management Information System (MIS). By law, attendance registers must be kept for at least 3 years. At The Hendreds, registers are completed using RM Integrus software, which are printed and retained for the length of time required by law.

The school has targets to improve attendance. The minimum target level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and we will keep parents updated regularly about progress to this level and how children's attendance compares.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We analyse all absence carefully and draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses. We focus our attention on addressing these trends of absence.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Dr Clements, Business Manager
Mrs Barksfield, Administration Assistant
Mrs Rees, Headteacher
Mrs Jones, Senior Teacher

Summary

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council, ODST & the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with ODST, Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

Attendance data is shared with our governors to review our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising attainment, mental health and social well-being.