

School Attendance Policy 2023



Introduction

In school **attendance is everyone's business** and is an integral part of Heaton Park's values. Regular attendance is important in supporting the learning, wellbeing and safeguarding of our pupils. We expect all pupils to attend school every day and be punctual. We believe attendance and punctuality are essential for children to learn and thrive within school, which can lead to positive outcomes in the future. We will work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and will act effectively to overcome any barriers affecting attendance. This policy will be applied consistently and fairly and we will consider the needs of individual pupils.

Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance' which applies from September 2022.

In case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – See: [How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster](#)

This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding, and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the 1996 Education Act.

Expectations

It is school's responsibility to maintain a positive environment that promotes good attendance and is supported by school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community. Our dedicated senior leaders with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is:

- Head teacher - Mr P Lord (On site) Can be contacted via email, phone or in person
- Deputy Head Teacher - Mrs J Kirkwood (On site) Can be contacted via email, phone or in person
- Governor – Ms Lindsey Tibbs

Other staff who can support attendance on a day to day basis are:

- School Attendance and Administration Officer – Miss K Hughes (On site) Can be contacted via email, phone or in person
- Pastoral Lead and Wellbeing Manager – Mrs E Read (On site) Can be contacted via email, phone or in person

We are dedicated to working with parents to promote positive attendance. **We expect the following from our parents:**

- Maintain effective routines at home, such as attending school regularly and on time, to support good attendance

- Contact school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and when they might return
- To try and make medical/dental appointments out of school hours
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time
- To inform us, in confidence, of any change in circumstances or problems that may impact your child's attendance
- Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school.
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues

We expect all our pupils to:

- Try and attend school every day and be punctual, unless they are ill
- Aim to achieve 96% attendance or above
- Be prepared to attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact their attendance or punctuality

The school will:

- Be responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes for the register, and documenting the reasons for the absence.
- Prompt contact from school when a pupil is absent and we haven't heard from parent
- Monitor attendance data across school and for individual pupils
- Arrange meetings with parents to discuss any attendance concerns

School Day

At Heaton Park Primary school starts at 8:45am. The school gate is opened at 8:40am and children are greeted by Mr Lord and other members of staff. The teachers greet children at their allocated doors and have morning work set out for them once they arrive. If a pupil is late they miss out on the start of the day and important morning work. The pupils should be in class by 8:55am.

Registers are taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.

Attendance registers are taken at 9am every morning. If a pupil arrives after 9am they will have to go through the main office and will be marked as late. The school register closes at 9:30am and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. Please note an unauthorised late mark will impact overall attendance.

Weekly late texts will be sent out on a Friday to notify you if your child was late. This will be monitored closely throughout the year and parents may be contacted if persistent lateness continues.

Our school day ends between 3:10pm – 3:20pm across the different year groups.

Absences

Minor Illness

If your child feels poorly in the morning please provide them with appropriate pain relief/medication and send them to school. Pupils should be in school if they have a minor illness. Class Teacher will monitor closely and should we feel the pupil is not fit to remain in school you will be contacted to collect your child.

Reporting an absence

Please report a child absence by contacting the school office via phone: 0161 773 9554 or email contact@heatonparkbury.com as soon as possible. When leaving a message please provide the pupil name, class and reason for the absence. Please contact us as soon as possible and preferably before 9:30am.

Should a sickness absence last longer than 4 days, the school deems it as a longer period of absence and medical evidence will be requested (Some pupils may be asked for medical evidence in the first instance as per case by case basis).

If a child is absent and we haven't heard from the parent we will try and get in touch to understand why they're absent and when they will be back in. Where an absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained. We will try and get in touch to find out why for five days, so we can code the absence correctly. If we don't hear from you after five days the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

In the instance where parental contact has **NOT** been made and a child is absent from school the following actions will be taken:

Day 1 - If your child is absent from school and no contact has been made from Parent the Attendance Officer will contact home by phone/text or email.

Day 2 - If no contact from Parent is made, the Attendance Officer will contact home by phone/text or email and in addition emergency contacts will be contacted.

Day 3 - If no parental contact is made a home visit by the Education Welfare Officer/Attendance Officer or Pastoral Lead and Wellbeing Manager.

Welfare Checks - At any point during the absence procedure, should School become concerned about the welfare of a pupil or family we may request a Police Welfare Check as part of our Safeguarding procedure.

Medical appointments -

Appointments should be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible you should try and ensure your child is able to attend school for their morning/afternoon registration mark and the appointment is outside of registration. A full day's absence will not be authorised for appointments unless absolutely necessary. Please notify the office as soon as you are aware of a future appointment. Copies of appointment cards/letters will be requested and it is beneficial to retain a copy should this instance occur.

Holiday/Absence Requests

To request a leave of absence during term time, please send a written request via letter to school or email: contact@heatonparkbury.com These include holidays, weddings, funerals and graduations. Please include the dates the children will be absent, where you will be travelling to and why they will

be absent. The request must be sent in a timely manner and further evidence may be requested. The absence may only be authorised due to exceptional circumstances and it is unlikely a family holiday will be authorised. When making our decision we take into consideration several different factors like the context and circumstances around the request. Once we receive the request it will be passed onto Mr Lord for his consideration.

If the request is not granted it will be marked as an unauthorised absence and this could lead to a penalty notice. Once a child has 10 unauthorised holiday absences (5 full school days), it is down to Mr Lord's discretion whether a penalty notice will be issued.

You will receive a letter from school either authorising or unauthorising the absence. This letter is a standardised letter that is information only and is not a penalty notice.

Managing Attendance

It is vital we acknowledge good attendance and promote a sense of pride and achievement within our pupils. Each week the classes with the best attendance will have celebratory posters on their doors. Good attendance will also be celebrated through parents' evening and end of year reports. School will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers it is their responsibility to ensure their children are in school as often as possible.

We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable. We will also examine specific groups, classes and year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.

Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will frequently analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absent or severely absent.

We monitor the attendance on a weekly basis and identify pupils who have dropped below 93%. If this happens a 93% letter will be sent out so you are aware attendance has dropped. We will tell you the current attendance percentage and how many sessions have been missed. If attendance continues to drop and goes below 90% a pupil becomes 'persistently absent'. This is when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for **whatever reason**.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carer. We do this through inviting you to attend a pre-referral meeting with the attendance officer and a member of the senior leadership team. We will work in partnership with the parents to support improvements, identify and address the barriers that they may face when attending school. We also ask teachers to fill out a classroom concerns/positives sheet so you can get the teacher's point of view and an overview of how they're getting on.

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement or divorce/separation or any safeguarding issues. This will help us identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to find the most appropriate support.

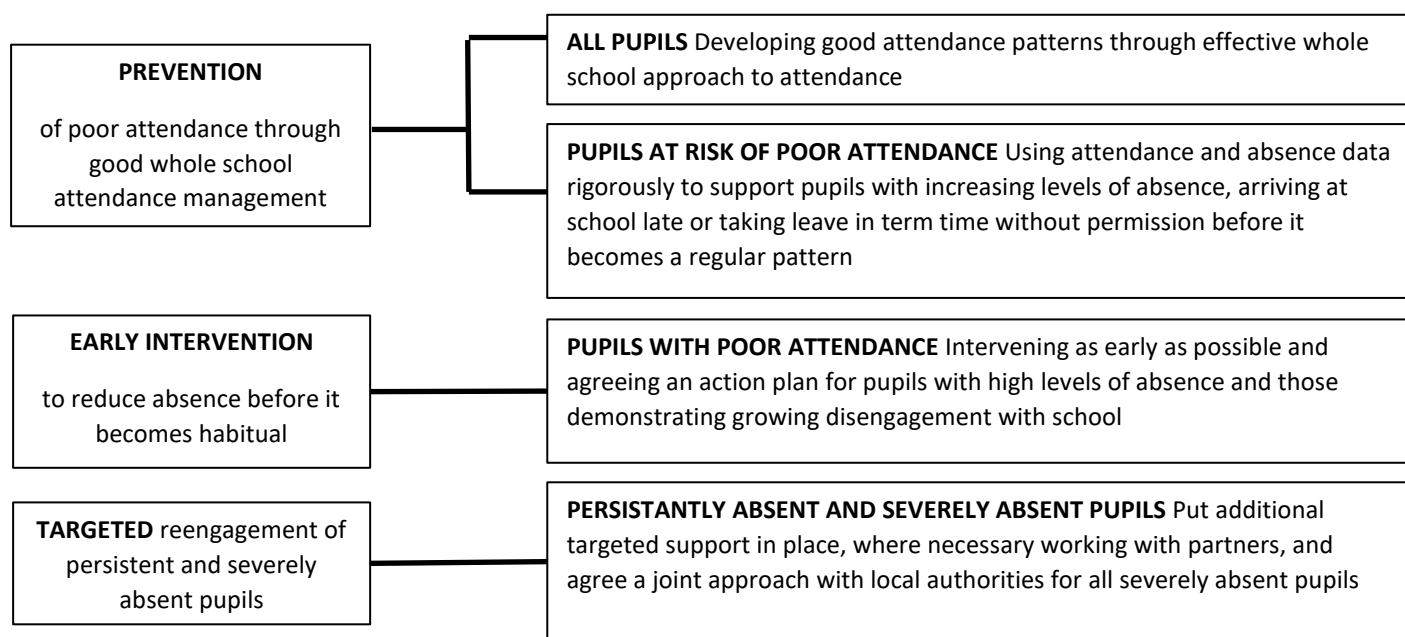
After the meeting we may send a letter explaining you have been placed on medical evidence. In order to authorise the child’s absence from this point we will need medical evidence. If this is not received the absence will be marked as unauthorised and if you hit 10 unauthorised absences you could be issued with a penalty notice.

We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children. So, we have regular meetings with SENCO and are kept up to date of any additional needs. We also communicate regularly with the safeguarding and pastoral leads. If needed they may also attend the pre-referral meetings.

SENCO/medical conditions will be accommodated and adjustments will be made for medical appointments and further support if needed. Pastoral can have regular meetings with the child to understand how they feel about school and what can change to improve their attendance.

If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.

If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Child Missing Education procedures.



Penalty Notices

School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil’s absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil’s attendance.

We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. **Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.**

Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must be notified by the school at the time of the exclusion days that the child must not be present in a public place.

Diagram – What to expect at the end of the school year

