

Attendance Policy

Harvington C of E First and Nursery School



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Date: September 2026

Governors Responsibility: Safeguarding

Date read and approved by Governors: September 2026

At Harvington C of E First and Nursery School we believe in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils as regular school attendance is essential for every child to achieve their full potential, develop positive relationships, make progress academically and socially, and enjoy a successful first school experience. We are committed to providing a safe, calm, and supportive environment where all pupils feel they belong and want to learn. The intention is full (100%) attendance for all members of our school community for the academic year.

Our approach is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, which places attendance at the heart of our school culture. We view attendance as a **collective responsibility** shared by pupils, parents/carers, staff, Governors and external agencies. We recognise that children and families may experience circumstances that make regular attendance difficult and are keen to work with and support families to identify and remove barriers to attendance.

Our Attendance Aims

- To provide a school that has a "calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn" (Working together to improve school attendance, 2026).
- To promote a culture in which good attendance is valued, celebrated and expected.
- To ensure excellent levels of pupil attendance and punctuality, aiming for 100%.
- To ensure procedures within the school identify and follow up all absences and patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- Understand the reasons and barriers behind absence.
- To work collaboratively with parents/carers to fulfil our obligations to the children by placing high priority on the regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Provide appropriate support to pupils and families.
- Use attendance data to identify patterns and trends.
- Ensure our attendance procedures are fair, consistent, inclusive and compliant with statutory requirements.
- Use formal and legal intervention proportionately when support has not secured improved attendance.

Promoting Attendance

We have a number of ways to promote the importance of attendance and punctuality and our ethos that 'school attendance matters.'

- All staff reward good attendance and punctuality on a daily basis through praise and encouragement.
- Celebration assemblies promote attendance through the Attendance Teddy for the class with the highest attendance and the Punctuality Pups for the two classes with highest punctuality.
- Both class attendance figures and the overall school attendance figure are displayed on the school newsletter.
- Pupils who have previously had poor attendance/punctuality and make significant improvement following intervention will be issued with positive communication acknowledging their improvements.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School-Staff and Governors including the Attendance Lead

- Ensure attendance is treated as a strategic priority.
- Ensure we comply with statutory requirements.
- Promote a whole-school attendance culture.
- Have a designated Attendance Lead-this is the headteacher with support from the Home School Link.
- Take the attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session of every school day.
- Monitor attendance and absence data, identifying emerging concerns.
- Communicate with families, providing support where needed.
- Coordinate attendance interventions.
- Liaise with external agencies and the local authority where appropriate.

Pupils

- Attend school every day and be on time.
- Be ready to learn.
- Understand the importance of attending school as well as acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence.
- Speak to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.
- When walking to school independently, come to school directly and enter school gates at 8:30am.

Parents/Carers

- Have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Understand the importance of attending school, acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence, and the fact that an absence will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been given.
- Ensure they inform the office on the first day of their child's absence and where necessary all other days thereafter.
- To avoid unnecessary absence including term-time holidays.
- In circumstances where a parent is having difficulty getting their child to attend school, they seek the support of the school as quickly as possible through the Attendance Lead and Home School Link or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This can be done by phoning the school office.
- Attend attendance meetings when requested
- Work collaboratively with the school to address barriers to attendance.

Punctuality

- Pupils are expected to arrive at school at 8:30 a.m.
- Arriving after 8:40 a.m. will be considered as late.
- Pupils arriving after 8:40 a.m. must report to the School Office so their attendance can be recorded.
- Action to address lateness will be the responsibility of the Attendance Lead.
- Class registers MUST reflect the correct late code-'L' for late will be recorded for children arriving between 8:40am-9:00am, 'U' for unauthorised will be used for children arriving after registers have closed at 9:00am. For further guidance on register codes please see Appendix 1.

Procedures for Reporting Absence from school

- Parents/carers are asked to inform the school office no later than 9.00 a.m by telephone (01386 870412) if a pupil is absent, because of illness, on the first day of absence, providing the reason and where necessary on each subsequent day of absence.
- If school has not been contacted by the parents/carers, the office will make contact by telephone on the first day of absence. This will be recorded on the school system with the reason for absence.
- Where there has been no contact from parents/carers, this will be referred to the Attendance Lead and Head Teacher who will try to make contact with the parents/carers or any of the named contacts. If no contact is made a home visit will be conducted.
- If no contact can be and where there are safeguarding concerns this will be reported to Family Front Door (Social Services).
- Should there be frequent absence due to illness, the Attendance Lead will ask to meet parents/carers and may ask for medical evidence, such as prescription/prescribed medication /appointment letter/letter from GP or consultant. If these are not provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Appointments

- We encourage parents/carers to make appointments outside of school hours. Many GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals offer before and after school appointments.
- We accept occasionally there will be the need for emergency appointments, parents/carers are requested to provide written or verbal confirmation of these appointments.
- Pupils must be signed in and out at the office.
- We do not expect pupils to be absent all day for a medical appointment, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the appointment is at 10:30am children should still come to school for the start of the morning to achieve their attendance mark and participate in learning until the appointment rather than keeping children off for the whole morning

Planned Absence from School

- Government legislation states that no planned absence from school will be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Parents/carers must notify school of any planned absence from school in writing using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (Appendix 2), available at the office, or on the school website. This must be made prior to the absence taking place. Each case will be considered individually and leave will only be authorised where the circumstances meet the relevant legal requirements.
- Unauthorised term-time absence may result in consideration of a penalty notice or other statutory intervention where the relevant threshold and circumstances are met.

After 10 consecutive days' absence, we are required to report this on the Worcestershire Children's Services Portal. In line with the Education Regulation Act (1996) if a child is absent from school for longer than 20 days with no authorised reason the child's name could be taken off roll. We may also report this absence to the 'Child Missing in Education' Team.

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. If completed incorrectly this can constitute a risk in the event of an emergency evacuation. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations. We use electronic registration (Arbor) to keep registers and the procedures for marking registers are as follows:

1. Registers must be taken by class teachers at 8:30 a.m. and 1:00pm
2. On each occasion we will record whether a child was present, absent or present at an approved educational activity. No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher.
3. Spaces must not be left in the register.
4. Reasons for absence will be recorded.
5. If staff taking the register are unsure of the code, they will leave as 'N' code – the code will be amended by Office Staff (no later than 5 working days after the session)
6. First Day Calling will take place to check absences where school has not been notified and to update the registers
7. Weekly monitoring of data to identify patterns and trends.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

If the school is forced to close due to circumstances beyond our control this does not affect pupils' attendance. School complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes

Reporting Attendance to Parents/Carers

A child's overall attendance will be reported to parents/carers at the end of the academic year distributed within the end of year school report.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent Absence is where attendance falls below 90%, Severe Absence is where attendance falls below 50%.

When there are concerns about a child's attendance and/or punctuality, parent/carers will be invited into a meeting to discuss barriers to attendance and how we can work together to resolve them. We will create a plan of support which will be reviewed. We may need to engage with external support such as the Education Welfare Officer. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we may need to enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Our Graduated Response

We will follow a graduated response to attendance concerns.

Stage 1 – Universal Support

All pupils and families will receive:

- Clear information about attendance expectations
- Regular communication about attendance through our newsletter
- Information about the importance of punctuality
- Support to understand the school's attendance procedures.

The school will aim to identify emerging concerns at an early stage.

Stage 2 – Early Intervention

Where attendance begins to cause concern, the school may:

- Contact parents/carers.
- Discuss attendance with the pupil
- Review attendance patterns.
- Explore barriers to attendance
- Offer pastoral support
- Agree practical strategies with the family
- Monitor attendance over an agreed period

Stage 3 – Targeted Support

Where attendance does not improve, the school will:

- Invite parents/carers to an attendance meeting
- Develop an individual attendance support plan
- Involve the SENCO or pastoral team
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- Refer to Family Help/Early Help or other relevant services
- Seek advice from the local authority
- Work with health or other professionals
- Establish regular attendance reviews

Stage 4 – Formalised Support

Where voluntary support is unsuccessful or is not being engaged with, the school may formalise the attendance support and involve an external agency such as the Education Welfare Officer.

The attendance meetings and plan will continue with a timescale for improvement.

Stage 5 – Statutory Intervention

Where appropriate support has been offered and attendance does not improve, the school may work with the local authority to consider statutory intervention. Depending on the circumstances, this may include a penalty notice.

SEND and Attendance

We recognise that pupils with SEND may experience additional barriers to attendance. Where SEND is contributing to absence, the school will work with the pupil and family to identify appropriate reasonable adjustments and support.

This may include:

- Adaptations to the school environment
- Support with transitions
- Additional pastoral support
- Support from the SENCO
- Liaison with external professionals
- A planned reintegration programme

Mental Health and Emotionally Based Absence

We recognise that anxiety, emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties can affect a child's ability to attend school.

Where this is suspected, we will:

- Listen to the child
- Work with parents/carers
- Identify barriers
- Consider reasonable adjustments
- Involve the SENCO/pastoral team where appropriate
- Seek advice or support from relevant professionals
- Develop a supportive plan for improving attendance

Safeguarding

Attendance is closely linked to safeguarding. A significant or unexplained change in attendance, repeated absence or failure to establish the whereabouts of a child may indicate that a child is at risk. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered alongside safeguarding information.

Staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Particular attention will be given to:

- Unexplained absence
- Sudden changes in attendance
- Repeated absence
- Children missing from education
- Children at risk of exploitation
- Children experiencing neglect
- Children with social workers or other vulnerabilities
- Patterns of absence that may indicate wider concerns

Where a child has a social worker we will inform them about unexplained absences from school and any attendance concerns.

Children Missing Education

Where a child is absent and their whereabouts or educational provision cannot be established, the school will follow appropriate Children Missing Education procedures.

The school will:

- Maintain accurate pupil records.
- Make appropriate enquiries.
- Contact parents/carers.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.
- Liaise with the local authority.
- Make referrals where required.

Schools and local authorities have statutory responsibilities relating to children missing education.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices may be served to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school. Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where a fixed penalty notice is deemed likely to change parental behaviour.

/	Present at morning registration
\	Present at afternoon registration
L	late
V	attending an educational visit or trip
P	participating in a sporting activity (international competitions..)
W	attending work experience
B	attending any other approved educational activity arranged by the school
K	attending education provision arranged by the local authority
D	dual registered at another school
C1	participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	attending an interview
S	study leave
C2	compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	illness
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
X	non-compulsory school age not required to attend school
Q	lack of access arrangements
Y1	transport normally provided not available
Y2	widespread disruption to travel
Y3	part of the school premises closed
Y4	whole school is closed-unplanned closure of whole site
Y5	pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	acting in accordance with public health guidance or law-transmission of infection or disease
Y7	any other unavoidable cause
G	holiday not granted by the school
N	reason for absence not yet established
O	absent in other unknown circumstances-no reason given
U	arrived in school after registration closed but before the end of the session

Appendix 2



Harvington C of E First and Nursery School

Request for Leave during Term Time

To: The Headteacher of:..... (School) **Date**.....

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for: my child (full name)

.....

for the period from (date) to (date).....

The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....

.....

.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))

School(s) attended

Signature of 1st Parent/Carer(s).....**Print Name**.....

Signature of 2nd Parent/Carer(s)**Print Name**.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Leave Authorised

Leave Not Authorised

Signed **Date**

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent