



‘Valued as Individuals, Inspired and Nurtured as Learners’

Respect, Resilience, Confidence, Kindness, Inclusive, Aspiration

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Highbury Primary and Nursery School’s mission is:

- To be an inclusive, safe and caring community where each member is equally valued and nurtured to develop their potential.
- To achieve academic excellence by ensuring each pupil performs to the best of their ability.
- To work together as a team with parents and carers within the community to promote respect responsibility for the benefit of all.

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Introduction

At Highbury Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business - everyone in School, the trust, the governing body, the local authority, the parents and carers and other local partners. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. In order to remove any barriers to attendance, we will continue to work with pupils and parents by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives this education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance, '[Working together to improve school attendance Guidance](#)' from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold, and it complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing body

The local governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governor for attendance of pupil attendance is Mr Tom Lloyd.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance team

The attendance team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Issues Medical 1 and Medical 2 letters to parents in consultation with the headteacher
- Liaises with the Local Authority with regards to attendance concerns
- Liaises with the headteacher regarding when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls or receive messages from Studybugs from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Registration Procedure

- The Register is called and attendance data is marked on Arbor register.
- Absences must be coded according to the given codes.
- All telephone messages or messages in person regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded on Arbor.
- All absence notes/ medical evidence from parents/guardians must be **kept** on Arbor. Registers will be retained for 5 years.

4.2 Unexpected absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8.45am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Notification procedure for our school are;

- **Report your child's unplanned absence on Studybugs**
- **Notification via the school office**

All parents and carers have access to the free Studybugs app, or can register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell the school whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school. Get the app or register now (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>)



At Highbury Primary School, designated staff support pupils and parents on attendance. Our attendance assistant can be contacted on a day to day basis and our pastoral leader can be contacted for more detailed support on attendance.

Attendance Assistant: Mrs Pitts

Pastoral leader: Mrs Hartt

Contact details: admin@highbury-prim.portsmouth.sch.uk

: 023 92 375404

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Notification procedure for our school are;

- **Report your child's planned absence on Studybugs**
- **Contact the school via phone on 02392 375404**

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and have medical evidence emailed to support the absence.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parents will be notified of their child's lateness and meetings planned to support the arrival at school on time.

The school doors are open at 8:30am. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am. **Any child arriving at school after 8:45am will be marked as late.**

If children are late (after 8:45 am) they must be brought to the school office and entered into the late book (with an explanation for their child's lateness).

The registers will be kept open until they are closed at 9:15am. Children who arrive after the register has been closed will be marked late after register. This is recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence. If a child is regularly late for school, teachers and attendance team should inform the Headteacher. The school will monitor lateness and will contact parents to address the problem.

In the afternoon, registers will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm. The school day finishes at 3:15pm. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child is collected at 3.15 pm.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by a telephone call to the parent
- Complete a home visit by the pastoral team if necessary
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported annually to parents through the written end of year report. If there is cause for concern parents will be invited in for a meeting to discuss support and guidance with regards to regular attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as;

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

All holiday requests will be **unauthorised** unless they meet the 'exceptional circumstances' requirement. Any illness either side of a holiday request will require medical evidence.

5.2 Processes for requesting leave of absence

For any absence other than sickness and medical appointments, a Leave of Absence from School (LOAFS) form (Appendix 2) must be completed. The request for leave should be made on a LOAFS form by the parent or carer the child normally lives with, at least 5 days prior to absence.

The Leave of Absence Form from School (LOAFS) can be downloaded from the school website, requested from the school office at admin@highbury-prim.portsmouth.sch.uk or requested via studybugs.

5.3 Reducing persistent absence

Highbury ensures there is open communication with parents to monitor attendance on a daily basis. If a child presents as persistently absent all means of communication is undertaken to ascertain the reason for the absence. Home visits are completed by the pastoral team and attendance reset meetings are held with Pastoral and attendance team to offer support and help to ensure the child attends school. Attendance data is reported to the Trust and weekly updates and communicated by the Local Authority.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Highbury, we aim to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. We recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.

In recognising the high importance of improving school attendance, we make use of pupil premium funding to increase our support resource. This includes the role of an attendance assistant and pastoral leader who work with families, conduct home visits and work in

partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.

These roles contribute to our school being able to set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils. This is communicated regularly to pupils and parents through school displays, celebration assemblies, newsletters, Studybug messages and the school website.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, we will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Rewards for good attendance

Class teachers constantly praise children for good attendance and this will also be highlighted in assemblies and the newsletter. Parents are actively encouraged to celebrate good attendance with their children.

At Highbury Primary School we believe good attendance is vital for our children to gain the maximum from their time in school. We aim to work collaboratively with all involved parties for the benefit of all of our children. Good attendance will be celebrated with children and parents.

7. Attendance monitoring

The schools data officer and attendance assistant at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to contact via Studybugs or call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The pupil's parent/carer is expected to contact via Studybugs or call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above **2.5 days**, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. A Medical letter will be sent to raise concerns with the child's attendance.

If the pupil's absence goes above **5 days**, the school will make contact and a Medical 2 letter will be sent, requesting medical evidence for all future absences. (See Attendance Letter)

In order to help support the authorisation of absences after the Medical 2 letter has been issued, a home visit may be undertaken by our Pastoral Team

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will arrange an Irregular Attendance meeting, in order to support the parent/carer to ensure the child's attendance improves.

If attendance concerns persist we may consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the local governing body.

Our procedures are to;

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE when updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body

At Highbury, we adopt a process of regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies in order to raise the profile of good attendance.

Date Approved	May 2023
Owner	Local Governing Body
Review Date	Two years from approval

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no

		alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Highbury Primary School and Nursery

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Attendance Letters

As part of our attendance procedures, we must send a letter to you to inform you of your child's attendance once it goes below a certain level.

A **Medical 1** attendance letter is issued should your child be off for 5 sessions (2.5days). Each day has a morning and afternoon session.

Should your child's attendance continue to fall a further **Medical 2** letter will be sent out. This means that your child has been absent for 10 sessions or more (5 days or more).

If your child's attendance drops below 90%, they will be classed as a persistent absentee.

In most cases, there is always a reason for missed learning and we generally do not ask for medical evidence however once you receive a medical 2 letter, we do ask for medical evidence.

Medical evidence may be in the form of an appointment card, note from the medical practitioner's reception, copy of prescription, copy of any medication given etc. This is **NOT** generally a doctor's certificate.

Our pastoral team may invite you to an informal meeting to look at ways the school can support you and your child with attendance.

The letters do seem very formal and that is because we must use Portsmouth City Council's attendance letters.

We do understand that children become unwell however we still need to follow procedures even if they are only off for a few days. Everyday counts. 😊

Punctuality

It is important that children are in school as much as possible. Being late/collected early can impact a child's education. Registers are taken at 8:45am, children should arrive from 8:30am and be ready for the registers at 8:45am. Arrival after 8:45am will incur a late mark. A message will be sent to parents on Studybugs should a child arrived after 8:50am.

If you need any advice or support concerning your child's attendance, please contact the pastoral team at school. We are here to work in partnership with you.

Many thanks
Highbury Attendance Team

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