Hunton & Arrathorne Community Primary School

Attendance, Absence and Lateness Policy



Date: October 2026	Headteacher: Mr S Donaldson
Review Date: October 2027	Chair of Governors: Mrs A Peacock

We understand the important link between attainment and learning. Therefore, this policy should be closely linked to the other policies referencing teaching and learning. This policy is informed by the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026), which emphasises that securing good attendance is a shared responsibility between schools, families, the local authority and external partners. The guidance highlights the importance of a whole-school culture that promotes the value of regular attendance, early identification of emerging attendance concerns, and timely, supportive intervention. In line with this approach, the school uses accurate attendance data to identify patterns, remove barriers to attendance, and work collaboratively with parents and relevant agencies to support pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable or at risk of persistent absence.

Our Vision

Throughout their time at Hunton & Arrathorne Community Primary School, we aspire for children to excel by:

- Growing as caring, open minded and confident
- Developing enquiring minds
- Becoming life-long learners
- Aspiring to achieve their full potential
- Learning from mistakes
- Celebrating achievements

To achieve this all staff in school will:

- Create a culture of safety and care
- Meet the needs of all pupils
- Provide our children with learning experiences which ignite a passion for learning
- Set high expectations of behaviour
- Create a stimulating and clean environment with up-to-date resources
- Engage with parents in the education of their children
- Encourage children to take an active role in the community as global citizens and change-makers.
- Involve children in assessing their achievements and setting next steps to develop further.

At Hunton & Arrathorne CP School we have high aspirations for pupil attendance. Our Governing Board has set a target of 95% as the minimum expected 'good' attendance. In order to monitor our attendance carefully we implement our 'Attendance Plan'.

Rationale:

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Hunton & Arrathorne Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact

on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives:

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Prevent Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Definitions:

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent absence

- With effect from 1st September 2015, a pupil will be deemed to be a 'persistent absentee' where their attendance falls below 90%. Missing this amount of school has a significant, detrimental impact on a child's learning and parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher to identify how we can work together to improve their child's attendance.

Statutory Duties:

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Prevent Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to North Yorkshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Head teacher who has the responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities:

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Head teacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders will raise attendance with specific responsibility for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the Prevent Service
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration Staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Completing daily absence forms

- Following school procedures for tracking absence with related to persistent absentees.
- Ensuring the register is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact

How we monitor attendance daily:

1. Registers open at 8.45am when children begin to arrive.
2. Teachers complete the attendance register by 8.55am.
3. Registers close at 8.55am.
4. Children who arrive between 8.55-9.30 will receive a L – late mark.
5. After 8.55am, children should only use the office door where their arrival can be marked and they will be escorted to their room. This will be recorded with an L mark on Arbor.
6. If children arrive after 9.30am they will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and their arrival will be recorded on Arbor.
7. Any children who are absent will be recorded on Arbor along with the reason – this is checked daily by Senior Leaders.
8. Between 9.00-9.30am the Office Manager will analyse the attendance information for the day - if children are absent without prior reason a phone call will be made, explanation given and the correct code marked.
9. If no contact can be made on 'first call' it is imperative that this is followed up by the Office Manager throughout the day.
10. If no contact can be made by 9.30am the DSL / DDSL must be informed.
11. If no contact can be made the DSL must be informed and a decision made as to which further action should be taken – a home visit, a phone call to wider family, Early Help etc.

How we monitor attendance weekly and half-termly:

- Senior Leaders monitor attendance on a weekly basis against national and local measures. This includes producing a whole-school analysis for all pupils and vulnerable groups.
- Attendance is then categorised in three categories:

  Red Level - Attendance below 90%

  Amber Level - Attendance between 90 – 94.99%

  Green Level - Attendance above 95%

- Pupils on these levels are monitored for a half-term and then procedures follow. In some instances, where faster intervention is necessary (for example when a child is at risk of moving between groups) then intervention will take place earlier.
- Children who are categorised as 'amber' are placed on a watchlist which is continuously monitored on a daily and weekly basis by senior leaders. Where children are on the amber list there will be a conversation between the parents and the class-teacher to see if school can help support the child's attendance. Parents of children on the 'amber' list receive a letter at the end of the half-term.
- Children who are categorised as 'red' receive a letter as per Stage 1 of the NYC Attendance Policy. If future monitoring shows that attendance continues to be below the expected level further meetings in school will be arranged between teachers, senior leaders and parents.

<u>How we will promote good attendance:</u>

- Tips for good attendance are shared intermittently on the school newsletter / website.
- Termly class newsletters promote the importance of good attendance.
- Whole school initiatives such as 'Scores on the Doors' and 'Golden Tickets' promote the importance of excellent attendance amongst pupils.
- Any pupils who have attendance of 100% in each half-term have the opportunity to win a shopping voucher.
- Parent / teacher consultations promote attendance, particularly in cases where a child's attendance is not categorised as green.
- Following regular monitoring, if the need arose for attendance rewards as a means of boosting attendance levels these would be considered by senior leaders.

<u>Where attendance causes concern:</u>

Where attendance causes concern, we will follow the guidance outlined in the document entitled:

'School Attendance - Advice and requirements of all schools for consideration of legal enforcement by the Local Authority' Produced by North Yorkshire County Council.

A clear series of stages will be followed as outlined below:

Stage 1

As a school we will aim to support pupils and families to improve and maintain good attendance and reduce persistent absence levels. In accordance with Ofsted Inspection guidelines we will implement a clear escalation of intervention to address absence from the first day. Some or all of the following planned interventions will therefore commence as early as possible in those cases where it is identified to be appropriate:

Telephone calls
Letters
Home visits
Meetings in school
Consideration of alternative education packages/programmes
Referral to other agencies
Referral into the LA's Prevention Service

Stage 2

The next stage of the procedure will begin if there is no improvement in attendance or engagement with support by the parent/child. At this point, time restricted case management ('fast track') procedures will be followed.

If the attendance of a child in the current school year (also the preceding summer term if appropriate) includes evidence of unauthorised absence and/or early intervention not achieving the required improvement, then the following procedure will be followed:

An Initial Warning Letter will be issued to parents (which will include the intention of possible legal action being pursued). A copy of the Time Restricted Attendance Procedure and 'Information for Parents/Carers' booklet will be included with the letter.

Normal first day response, telephone calls and letters will continue to be implemented by the school. Absences deemed to be for justifiable reasons will also continue to be authorised.

There will follow a minimum 10 school days monitoring period. If the attendance of the child has not improved to the required standard, with further evidence of unauthorised absence, then the case will be progressed as follows:

A Panel Meeting will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to agree a support plan to address any problems the young person/family may be experiencing with attendance targets and timescales set. The parent, school and other agencies involved, will sign the actions agreed and this will then constitute a 'Parenting Contract'.

Stage 3

If there is no improvement in attendance following all support offered, an appropriate manager in the Early Help Service will refer the case to the LA's Attendance and Enforcement Officer for consideration of legal action. This process includes consultation with schools and other agencies. If legal action is required, then a PACE Caution Formal Interview will be arranged with the school and the parent and chaired by the Attendance and Enforcement Officer.

Stage 4

Following agreement that there is sufficient evidence to proceed to the next stage, a PACE Caution Formal Interview will be arranged and chaired by the Attendance and Enforcement Officer when the parent will be cautioned under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984). A decision will be made from this interview regarding the most appropriate way forward, i.e. an
Education Supervision Order is pursued through the Family Court. Prosecution in a Magistrates Court under s444 (1) or (1A) or a Penalty Notice Warning Letter is issued as an alternative to prosecution.

Links to Other Policies:

The contents of this policy link closely with:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy