



Highters Heath Community School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

[Rights Respecting Schools' Article/s](#)

A28: encourage regular attendance at school. The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning the child. Every child has the right to an education.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Our aim at Highters Heath Community School is to provide the greatest opportunity for children's learning. We endeavour to provide all our pupils with an equal chance to make the most of the education that school offers, by providing a positive and encouraging atmosphere. A key focus for our school is to promote and support the mental health and well-being of every child. For this to be achieved, it is vital that every child attends school regularly and punctually.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. However, the school recognises that problems may occasionally occur which affect this. Through working in partnership with parents, we can find solutions to problems together and ensure children's right to a full education.

Aims

At Highters Heath Community School we aim to:

- Develop supportive strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Raise pupil, parent and staff awareness of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Set targets for attendance annually and submit data to the DfE.
- Use attendance data to identify/address any trends of individuals or groups.
- Identify and support vulnerable groups with school attendance and punctuality.
- Build relationships with the families of children with poor attendance, especially those form vulnerable groups.
- Follow a return to school protocol to ensure vulnerable children can catch up after absence and reintegrate successfully into school life.
- Communicate the impact of poor school attendance on attainment and social development regularly and with clarity.
- Reduce unauthorised absence/leave of absence within a legal framework (Fast Track and Penalty Notices).
- Take steps to provide learning for pupils unable to attend school due to serious health issues (and support their return to school).
- Take steps to support the mental health of all children in our care in order that school is a place they want to come to.
- Create an engaging environment, with a stimulating curriculum that children want to be a part of.

Procedures for dealing with absences

1. On the first day of absence, parents are expected to call the office and provide a reason for absence by 9:30am. If no contact is made, a phone call is made to children's parents and a record of the outcome is recorded on SIMs. Reasons for absence are available for class teacher/leadership reference.
2. Class teachers will follow up with a phone call later in the day to families of

identified vulnerable children. They will speak with the parents and the child, sharing information about learning that has happened during the absence and letting the child know they have been missed.

3. If the first day contact phone call has been unsuccessful in establishing a reason for absence, a message is left for parents asking them to contact the school immediately with a reason for absence. If there is still no response the attendance team/member of the senior leadership are informed. Home visits will be made to check well-being of missing children and recorded on CPOMs.
4. Where a teacher/office staff is not satisfied with the reason given for a particular absence or period of persistent absence, the child's name and details are referred (via email) to the attendance coordinator, who will pursue the matter.
5. Pupils with a record of persistent absence (below 90%) will be contacted by the attendance coordinator and unless attendance improves, medical evidence is requested for any further absence. Failure to produce medical evidence will result in an unauthorised absence. Vulnerable children will be given the opportunity to catch up on any lost learning on their return to school.

Personalised Pupil Progress Tracking Sheets

During pupil progress meetings, attendance issues that are impacting on progress are discussed and recorded in the space provided. These concerns are communicated to the attendance coordinator.

What do we define as being late?

If a child arrives at school after 8:50 (when the entrance doors close) the child is considered late and will be given a late mark 'L'. The time registers are 'closed' officially is 9:30am. If a child arrives after this time, they will be given a 'U' (late after register closes) mark.

Procedures for dealing with lateness

1. School doors are closed at 8:50am. After this time, children are classed as arriving 'late' and must report to the office, where names are recorded and the appropriate code added to the class electronic register on SIMs.
2. A letter is sent to parents of children who have arrived late three times.
3. If further periods of lateness occur parents are invited into school to meet with the attendance coordinator.
4. The attendance coordinator monitors punctuality on a regular basis. The impact of letters/meetings is evaluated over time.
5. Persistent lateness after the registers close will be dealt with by the attendance coordinator and the head teacher in liaison with the Local Authority.

Medical Appointments

Parents are actively discouraged from arranging routine medical appointments during the school day, as dentist and GPs' surgeries are open outside of school hours. Parents need to inform the office in advance of any medical appointments and show the appointment letter/card. If children arrive late during the morning due to a medical appointment, the register code 'M' is used. An 'M' code however may only be used for one session in a day. Medical evidence may be requested.

Registration

Registration takes place at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. This is completed using SIMs and is the class teacher's responsibility.

An 'N' is used for absence by teachers and the office updates these following first day phone calls.

If a class are on a day trip, the register must be completed for both the morning and afternoon sessions. The afternoon session should not however be completed for those children that are not going on the trip. (A list of all children on trips is left with the office by class teacher.)

Please note that registers must be completed accurately for safety reasons, such as in the event of a fire. They constitute a legal document and form part of a chain of evidence.

Raising Attendance Concerns

Any concerns should be raised via email with the designated member of staff in charge of attendance.

A class teacher concerned about the accuracy of their register should contact the office for advice.

Letters are sent home termly to inform parents of their child's attendance percentage and how this compares with targets.

Attendance Meetings

The attendance coordinator monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, vulnerable, SEN and pupil premium children. Patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence are identified. The systems and structures are then followed to improve attendance of these groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose attendance is below 95% with the aim of preventing a further decrease to 90% where the child becomes a persistent absentee. Parents who are concerned about their child's attendance are invited to work in partnership with the school.

Role of the Attendance Coordinator

Children are required to attend school 190 days every year. It is the legal responsibility of the parents/person/people with parental responsibility to ensure they do. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and when it is appropriate for school to act this will be undertaken, and feedback given to class teachers. Parents who fail to fulfil their responsibilities will be prosecuted.

Highters Heath Community School participates in the Fast Track to Attendance process in collaboration with Birmingham Local Authority to address poor attendance. Persistent unauthorised absence is not tolerated. As part of the Fast Track to Attendance process, parents may be issued with penalty notices and could be requested to appear in court. The attendance coordinator is responsible for gathering evidence/ communicating with parents who are part of this campaign and regarding any court proceedings.

Fast Track to Attendance Guide is attached for information.

Leave in Term Time (*no longer referred to as 'family holiday' or 'extended leave'*)

The Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2013 and the Education (Penalty Notices – England) Regulations 2013 are now in force and followed by this school. The law clearly states that parents have a legal duty to ensure their child/children attend school regularly and that head teachers can only authorise leave during term time in exceptional circumstances, which must be evidenced.

All parents are informed of this when children join the school, reminders are sent out termly and details appear on the school website. This is in line with the policies in all other local schools.

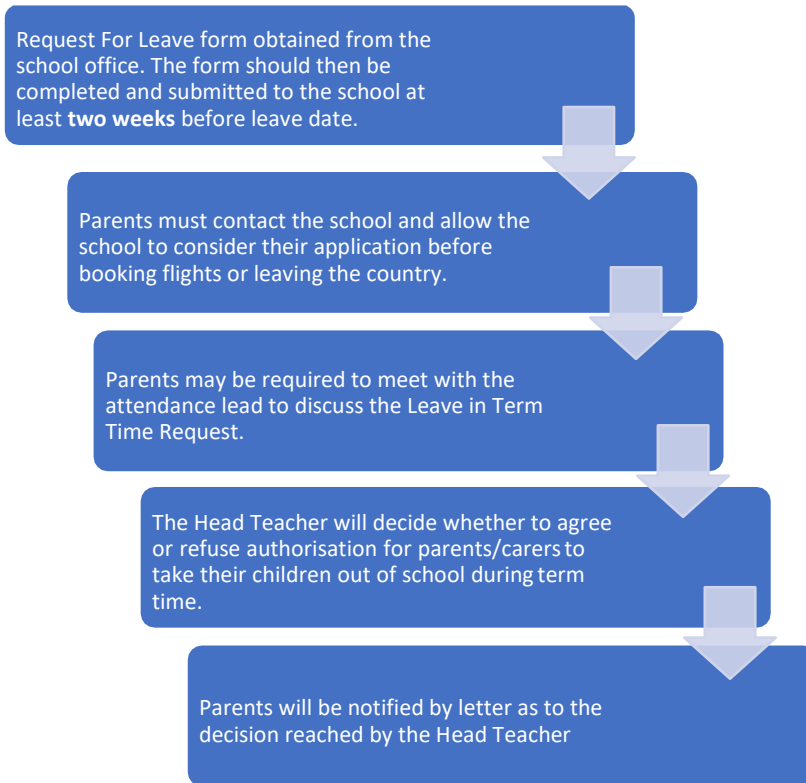
Parents requesting leave during term time are referred to the office, who will explain the procedures in person and the request is then passed in writing to the head teacher. Parents may be invited into school to discuss the request with the attendance coordinator. The outcome of the request will clearly state if the leave is authorised or unauthorised and the consequences. This will be posted to parents.

Highters Heath Community School does not authorise leave in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and this is supported with evidence. Advice is sought from Birmingham City Council Attendance Team when required.

If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practicing or affected community then the Headteacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether “cutting” of the girl will be undertaken during this holiday. The Headteacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to the Police.

Parents are also warned that penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

Request for Leave of Absence Process



Taking unauthorised leave in term time is grounds for issuing a penalty notice (£60 per parent, per child, eg: two children taking a one week leave of absence to visit family abroad could result in a fine of £240 for the parents, rising to £480 if not paid promptly).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The systems and policy are monitored and reviewed at least annually. The attendance and punctuality data is analysed by the attendance coordinator weekly. A half-termly report on the attendance of vulnerable pupils is presented half-termly to the senior leadership team.

Findings, patterns and trends are presented on a regular basis (at least termly) to Governors, parents, senior management team, teachers and children. Factors are recorded that may affect overall school attendance e.g. extended absences, religious festivals, pupil mobility etc.

Pupil records are transferred and received in line with legal requirements.