



Challenge, Equality & Opportunity

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Aim

At Havannah First School, we believe that good attendance at school is essential to ensure the best possible progress for every child across the curriculum and in all aspects of school life. Good attendance helps to establish a positive learning attitude for all and ensures that pupils all have a strong sense of belonging to our school family.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (DSLRA)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Gary Burnett and can be contacted via 0191 285 5141 or via admin@havannah.newcastle.sch.uk

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 every morning and afternoon session, each day.

School Admin Staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Liaise with the designated senior leader responsible for attendance

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:25am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Recording attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Registers are taken in electronic format using RDS. Should the RDS platform be inaccessible staff will take a paper register and office staff will update the system once RDS is back on line. In the event of staff absence due to illness or training, office staff will update RDS following the completion of a paper register by covering supply staff.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at not later than 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:55pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Any children arriving after 8.55am will enter via the main entrance with their parent/carer; children arriving after 8.55am will be marked as late by office staff. Via the electronic sign in system, school will record the time of arrival and the reason for absence. Children arriving late but before 9.25am will be marked as L (late before register closed) and children arriving after 9.25am will be marked in the register as U (late after register closed/unauthorised). Children are taken to classes from the entrance by school staff.

Parents are asked to inform school before 9.25am by telephone if their child is absent. We have a dedicated message service for daily absence reporting.

Monitoring attendance

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular uninterrupted attendance is vital to the child's educational progress.

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

The office staff provide the Headteacher/DSLRA with absence/punctuality information regarding any children whose absence is being monitored and parents will be contacted.

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 governing board.

Supporting and Promoting Good Attendance

School informs the school's named access and attendance officer, Yvonne Devine, if there are ongoing concerns. She will then liaise with school staff, contact families on behalf of school and attend meetings, as appropriate.

- **Monitor attendance as and when needed**

Should any member of staff have particular concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality this will be raised immediately with the Headteacher in line with safeguarding good practice. Concerns will be recorded in CPOMS, school will contact families and the access and attendance officer will be informed if necessary.

- **Monitor attendance half termly**

The DSLRA meets with the Headteacher at least half termly to monitor all children who have attendance less than 95%, 1 or more unauthorised absence, or a pattern of absence (eg mostly on one particular day of the week).

Any concerns, and all children with attendance less than 90%, are recorded and tracked. Letters are sent to parents of children who have attendance which concerns us.

Should attendance not improve, the school will contact the parents again asking them to attend a meeting in school to complete a Parenting Contract. Should the parent decline a parenting contract, this may be used in evidence during any future prosecution.

If school is still concerned about absence, we may ask for medical evidence to confirm a child's illness/absence, before authorising an absence.

In the event of prolonged unauthorised absence (ten sessions within a ten week period) resulting in a child's attendance falling below 85%, the Head teacher may request that attendance is legally monitored by the Local Authority.

At the end of the school year, parents are informed in their child's report about their attendance and the number of unauthorised absences. The reporting dates run from the beginning of the school year until the end of the first summer half term. Teachers also

inform all parents of their children's percentage attendance at parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms.

To support good attendance school expects parents to:

- Remember that you have a legal, as well as moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory age attend on a regular and full time basis.
- Ensure your child arrives on time each day. We do understand that there will occasionally be circumstances beyond your control when your child is late. If this is the case, we would much rather you bring your child to school late, than not at all.
- Contact school by telephone before 9.25am if your child is absent due to illness. School should then be kept informed on a daily basis, unless otherwise directed by a member of staff. If you are unsure of whether to keep your child off school due to an illness please contact the school office so that we can advise you. In the event of sickness and diarrhoea children must be absent from school for 48 hours after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea, even if they feel well, this is to stop the spread of viruses to others, especially vulnerable children in school.
- Ensure that your child has everything they need ready for the school day e.g. reading book, PE kit, musical instrument (if needed for a lesson). Please keep up to date with newsletters and the calendar.
- Try, when possible, to make medical appointments outside school hours. If you need to take your child to an appointment during school hours please let the school office know in advance.

To support good attendance school expects children to:

- Eat a balanced diet. We offer children in EY and KS1 a piece of fruit each morning and invite KS2 children to bring a piece of fruit each day for a snack. Water is available to drink throughout the day. Our packed lunch policy is available online for families who choose to eat a packed lunch.
- Keep active and enjoy physical activities in and out of school.
- Go to bed at a sensible time and have a good night's sleep.
- Tell a member of staff if you feel unwell when you are in school.

Requesting absence during term time

We acknowledge that occasionally children may need to be absent from school for reasons other than unavoidable illness and appointments.

We believe that families should not plan to take holiday in term time for the following reasons:

- There are 13 weeks of the year available to take family holidays therefore giving plenty of opportunity and scope which will suit most families.
- Teachers plan learning opportunities for children in a sequence of steps to encourage effective development of skills and knowledge, therefore children out of school miss important learning time and find it difficult to continue their learning when they return to school.
- Some objectives from the school curriculum will be missed completely and therefore children have gaps in their learning which can affect their confidence and subsequent learning, even in the next year group.

- Young children benefit from regular routines and following the same routines as the rest of the school family.
- Children find it easier to maintain friendships in school if they have good attendance.
- Young children need to learn that school attendance is an important element in succeeding; the pattern of good attendance is established in the first years of school.
- Parents need to demonstrate that they value education by prioritising school attendance.
- All pupil attendance is monitored by school, the Local Authority and Ofsted. A child's record of attendance forms part of their academic record which will be passed on to subsequent year groups and schools.

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 the 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

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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

Regulations from the DfE (September 2013)

In 2013 the DfE made some changes to the Education Regulations of 2006. These changes mean that head teachers can no longer authorise time off school other than when there are

exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In order to comply with the regulations:

a) an application must be made in advance to the school by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and

b) the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

There are some circumstances in which we are able to authorise leave in term time. These *could* include:

- Compassionate leave (bereavement or illness in the family)
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Family celebrations eg. weddings

Every request is considered individually and the Headteacher will take into account the specific circumstances of each case. Children's percentage attendance and previous absences will always be taken into account as part of the decision making process.

Process and Procedures

Request for absence forms are available from the school office.

Forms must be completed by a parent/carer with whom the child/children usually reside and who has parental responsibility for the child/children named on the form.

The form will be signed by the Headteacher and returned to the person with parental responsibility who completed the form.

Please note that holidays taken during term time, without prior permission from school or are extended beyond the permitted period, could result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken. These legal sanctions are set out as amendments to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force from 1st September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedure for issuing penalty notices (a £60 fine payable within 21 days or £120 within 28 days) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Pupils could be taken off roll if they are absent for 10 days after the agreed return date, if there are no grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of illness or other unavoidable cause and if the school and the LA have failed to locate the pupil after reasonable enquiry.

Policy written December 2010

Reviewed and updated: December 2012, September 2013, May 2015, March 2017, January 2018, January 2021, March 2023