

Haveley Hey Community School

Attendance Policy

Attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of all staff, parents, carers, pupils and governors. For sustained improvement and to ensure that the children get the maximum benefit from their entitlement to education, attendance issues are shared, given high profile and are underpinned by the school ethos and mission statement. At Haveley Hey we have adopted strategies to actively promote good attendance and punctuality from the earliest possible point.

Haveley Hey Community School is committed to placing the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of its ethos and values. Attendance at school is crucial if children are to achieve well, enjoy their education and have the best start possible to their life-long learning journey. All children have the Right to go to school and to gain a good education.

This policy links with the following Articles from the Convention:

Article 3 *All adults should do what is best for you. Everyone who works with children should work towards what is best for you, making the best decisions for you, including starting good attendance habits.*

Article 28 *All children have the right to good quality education. All children should be allowed to go to school to the highest level that they can and attend at all times possible.*

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

This policy is informed by the Department for Education document: 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (2022). It also takes into account the Human Rights Act (1998), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Race Relations Act (2000).

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, use legal enforcement. Schools have to act in accordance with this legislation.

Compulsory School Age

A child is of Compulsory School Age in the term following their 5th birthday. It is from this point that non-attendance for unauthorised reasons can be prosecuted. However, we track attendance from entry to school and work with parents from this point forward to promote good habits and expectations.

Punctuality

School doors open at 8.50am. Registration begins at 9am and closes at 9.10am for all children. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The late register will close at

9.30am. Pupils arriving after the final close of register will be recorded as absent for the morning session.

If a child is persistently late, a meeting will be called with the School Attendance Lead.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived after the final close of register without justifiable cause.

Unauthorised Absence

It is the responsibility of all parents to let school know why their child is absent. This should be done by phoning the school office on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Child does not have correct school uniform
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- Child 'would not get up' for school
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Illness of a family member

Absences that do not relate to illness or medical issues will usually be unauthorised. In exceptional circumstances, other circumstances may be authorised at the consideration of the Head of School. Any requests for authorised absences should be put in writing to the Head of School at least two weeks before the absence. **Holidays, and other trips abroad, will not be authorised under any circumstances and cases will be referred to the Local Authority.** This can result in a penalty notice being issued to any adult with Parental Responsibility for the child/children.

If a pupil is granted leave and fails to return, and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is still removed from school, the absence will be unauthorised.

If a child fails to attend school and a reason has not been communicated with the school, we will endeavour to contact parents to establish why the child is absent. This may be via text, phone call or through the school communication platform. If this is unsuccessful and the child remains absent from school, a home visit will be conducted to confirm the welfare of the pupil.

At Haveley Hey we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility between school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents, including sharing information about attendance at transition meetings
- Ensure that 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (2022) and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents to support with good attendance
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

We ask that Parents/carers:

- Talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and promote regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences, including, wherever possible, making medical appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties or is unhappy – school will listen to this and try and improve this situation
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage positive routines at home so that there is no oversleeping. Complete homework, prepare school bag and uniform the evening before, getting equipment ready where it can be found in the morning.

- Not keep their child off school for unnecessary reasons
- Talk to school if they have any concerns, rather than keep their child off

Using Attendance Data

Attendance data will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance data is collated and monitored by the attendance lead. Reports are provided to the Head of School and to teaching staff in order for good attendance practices to be implemented. Attendance data is used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. Parents are entitled to receive a copy of their child's attendance record upon request. Parents will be informed regularly about their child's attendance, including within the yearly school report.

Attendance Support

At Haveley Hey we endeavour to support our parent/carers and children with attendance related issues wherever possible. If you have any questions or require further support, please contact school on 0161 4989508 and ask for the Attendance Lead.

Support offered to families may include:

- Informal discussion
- Attendance meetings
- Letters to inform parents of concerns
- Referrals to support agencies
- Offer of Early Help Assessment
- General school support systems (SEND, behaviour, Place 2 Be, breakfast club, etc).

There is also an **Attendance Reward System** in place to support good attendance and to celebrate improvements.

If any child's attendance drops below the expected level, we will invite parents in for a meeting to discuss how this can be improved and to help remove any barriers to good attendance. If a child's attendance drops below 90%, they are then classed as **Persistently Absent** and their attendance is tracked by school and the Local Authority. In this situation, parents are at risk of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings being taken against them. **If your child is considered persistently absent, the school will require evidence in order to authorise further absences.** Suitable evidence could include written evidence of medical appointments, prescriptions in the child's name, letter from the GP, etc.

Poor attendance is also a safeguarding concern and can be referred to Children's Services.

Parenting Contracts (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2022)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to

improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Should the Parenting Contract fail to bring about sustained improvements to the child's attendance, further action will be taken. This can include the implementation of an Education Supervision Order, or criminal prosecution against those with Parental Responsibility (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2022).

Local Authority Requirements and Legal Actions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.