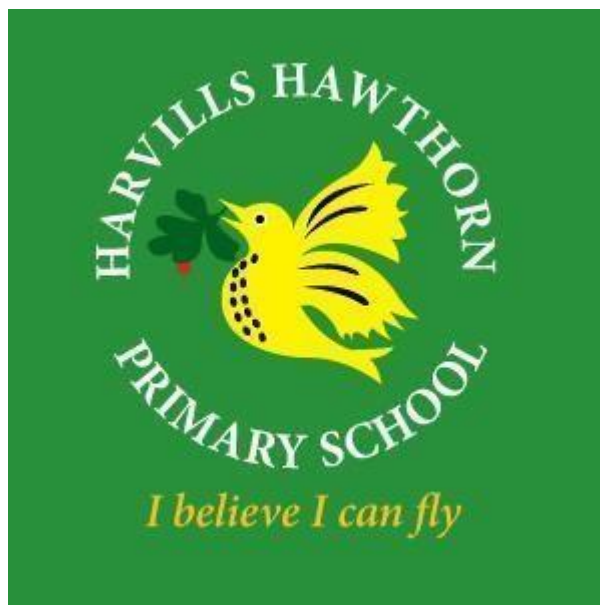


# Harvills Hawthorn Primary School



## Attendance Policy September 2023-2024

**Information for Parents, Learners and Staff**

**“Missing School Means Missing Out...”**

**Mrs. Marsden (Assistant Headteacher)**

# Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance and punctuality through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This includes the following:

- Promoting good attendance of 96% and above.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Improving punctuality.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of **Working together to improve school attendance** from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on **School behaviour 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.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The governing body

The governing body is responsible for the following:

- 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.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the following:

- Implementing this policy.
- 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 penalty notices, where necessary.

### **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for the following:

- Leading attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance and punctuality improvement.
- Providing regular staff professional development around attendance and punctuality.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and punctuality identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance and punctuality to the headteacher.
- Working with external agencies, including DT Attendance Consultancy Ltd, to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue penalty notices.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. Marsden.

### **Class teachers and learning support**

Class teachers and learning support are responsible for the following:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and straight after lunch.
- Managing behaviour well so they can provide calm, safe and supportive environments which children want to attend and where they can learn and thrive.
- Sharing attendance and punctuality information, in regards to any child, with the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Mrs. Marsden).
- Promoting the importance of good attendance and punctuality to their class on a weekly basis.

### **School admin staff**

School admin staff are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that the registers are accurate and that the correct codes have been used.
- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on Arbor.
- Checking the school's answer machine for any messages left by parents.
- Carrying out first-day-calling promptly (before 9:30am) when children are absent and no reason has been provided.
- Carrying out Late Gate and recording the number of minutes a child is late on Arbor.
- Informing the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Mrs. Marsden), the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and the Family Support Worker of the absence of vulnerable children, those whose attendance is below 90% or those who have previously been categorised as persistently/severely absent.
- Calling Dawn or Adam Thompson (DT Attendance Consultancy Ltd.) with the names and address of those children who are absent and a home visit is required.
- Updating Safeguard with the outcome of home visits.

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are responsible for the following:

- Making sure their child attends every day.
- Making sure their child arrives at school on time.
- Calling the school to report their child's absence, before 9am, on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Providing the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Attending meetings and engaging with school staff to discuss any concerns about their child's attendance.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are responsible for the following:

- Attending school every day.
- Arriving to school on time.
- Speaking to a trusted adult if they have any concerns that might affect their attendance and/or punctuality.

# **Recording attendance**

## **Attendance register**

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

Class teachers will use Arbor to send the attendance register for the morning session no later than 9am. The register will remain open in the school office until 9:20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken straight after lunch.

The attendance register will mark whether every pupil is...

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- On holiday, authorised of unauthorised.

We will also record the following:

- 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.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include the following:

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

## **Unplanned absence**

If a child is absent from school for any reason, their parent/carer must contact school as soon as possible on 0121 557 1034 and speak to one of the admin staff to explain the reason for the absence.

They are encouraged to keep in touch with school to let us know how their child is feeling and inform us of the intended return date.

If their child is absent from school, then the following actions may be taken to safeguard the child:

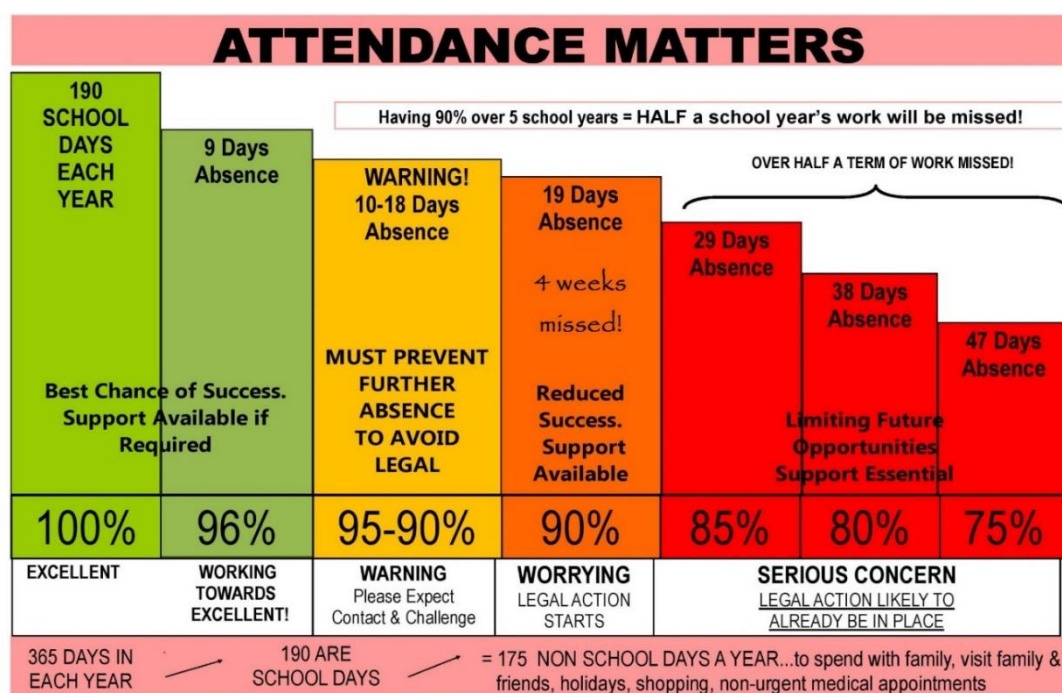
- We will ring before 9:30am if school have not been provided with a reason for absence. If the call is not answered, we will leave a voice message, asking for contact to be made with the school office as a matter of urgency.
- We will also send a text asking parents/carers to get in contact urgently.
- We will record the absence as unauthorised.
- We may call the 'emergency contacts' we hold for the child.
- We may complete a home visit, even if we have spoken to the parent/carer, if we have concerns about the child's attendance (below the 96% target set by Government). The visit will be conducted by DT Attendance Consultancy Ltd or two members of school staff.
- If we feel a family is vulnerable, or we have not been able to contact parents/carers, we may contact outside agencies as deemed necessary by the Head Teacher.

Examples of unauthorised absence are as follows:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going shopping
- Going for a family day out
- A child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- A routine doctor's or dental appointment
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation is considered unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. If a pattern of absence emerges, or if a child has a significant number of absent sessions, this may be considered a persistent absence. If this is the case, a referral may be made to the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Service. They have it within their power to use legal proceedings if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

## Impact of attendance



### Following up unauthorised absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will do the following:

- Follow up any unexplained absence by making a telephone call home every day of the absence.
- Send a letter to parents/carers if attendance falls below 92%. This letter will remind parents/carers about the importance of good attendance. This letter will explain that any further absence may require medical evidence in order for them to be authorised. In addition, an individual attendance audit may be completed to establish any possible reasons for poor attendance. This will include the following factors: health-related issues (including mental health), home-related issues, academic issues, social issues, transport problems and pupil factors (including low self-esteem and confidence).
- Arrange a meeting with parents/carers if attendance continues to fall to 91%. This meeting will allow staff/parents/carers to discuss the matter further and decided on any additional support that Sandwell Early Help may be able to provide. An individual attendance plan may be co-produced between staff, parents/carers and the pupil. This plan will outline strategies to be implemented by all parties, including referrals to external agencies if appropriate, and a timely review date. In line with our safeguarding policy and the Keeping Children Safe in Education document, the pupil's voice will be listened to at all points.
- Arrange for a home visit to be carried out by DT Attendance Consultancy Ltd.
- Raise your child's poor attendance our Designated Senior Leader, who may feel it necessary to make a home visit to discuss the issue with you further.
- Make a referral to the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Service if we continue to have concerns. This could ultimately result in court proceedings.

### Planned absence

We encourage parents/carers to make routine medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, for example a hospital appointment with a consultant, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Therefore, if the appointment is in the morning, the pupil should come into school first (if possible) and will be expected back in school for the afternoon session. If the appointment is in the afternoon, the pupil should come to school in the morning and be collected for the appointment. Evidence of appointments must be shown to a member of staff in the office.

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.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

### **Times of the day**

Nursery AM	8:45am - 11:45am
Nursery PM	12:30pm - 3:30pm
Reception, KS1 and KS2	8:50am - 3:20pm

### **Start of the day**

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise learning for the rest of the day. Late arrivals are also disruptive to the whole class.

The doors will be open from 8:45am and will close promptly at 8:50am.

- If a child is late, their parent will need to use the screen in the main reception area to sign their child in. They will be asked to state the reason for late arrival. The child will be given the 'L' code and the number of minutes late will be recorded on Arbor.
- Arrival after the close of registration (9:20am onwards) will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code), in line with the DfE guidance. The number of minutes late will be recorded on Arbor.
- A member of the admin team or the senior leadership team will be on Late Gate duty each day to speak to pupils and parents about the importance of being punctual. They will be able to offer support to parents if they feel this might be needed.
- Each half term, we will write to parents if their child has been late three or more. If it does not improve, a meeting will be called to discuss the matter further.

### **Impact of poor punctuality**

<b>Getting your child to school on time really matters</b>		
<b>If in a school year your child is late everyday</b> .....	<b>Your child would have lost approximately</b> .....	<b>Or they would have missed approximately</b> .....
<b>5 Minutes</b>	<b>3 days from school</b>	<b>16 lessons lost</b>
<b>10 Minutes</b>	<b>5 days from school</b>	<b>32 lessons lost</b>
<b>15 Minutes</b>	<b>8 days from school</b>	<b>48 lessons lost</b>
<b>20 Minutes</b>	<b>11 days from school</b>	<b>63 lessons lost</b>
<b>30 Minutes</b>	<b>16 days from school</b>	<b>95 lessons lost</b>

Very poor punctuality has a serious impact on education and reduces life chances.

### **End of the day**

School ends for Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at 3:20pm. Nursery PM ends at 3:30pm. Children should be collected promptly from the assigned door:

Reception and Key Stage 1 children from their exterior classroom door.  
Year 3 from the hall door on the back of the building.  
Year 4 from the Year 3/4 door on the back of the building.  
Year 5 from the hall door on the front of the building.  
Year 6 from the Year 5/6 door on the side of the building.

- If a parent/carer gives permission for their child to walk home alone, they must fill out a permission slip that can be obtained from the school office.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be taken to a place of safety for a short time. If the school is not contacted to explain the delay, children will then be moved into school's Wrap Around provision and a cost will be charged at £6. If the child is not collected from Wrap Around by 6:00pm, school will contact Children's Services in line with our safeguarding responsibilities. If there are concerns over the number of late collections, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss this with a member of the senior leadership team.

### **Reporting to parents/carers**

- The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' evening in the autumn and spring term and in their child's annual school report in the summer term.

## **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- A letter will then be sent with the Headteacher's decision as to whether the time requested will be authorised or unauthorised.
- If children are absent from school for longer than 21 days, proceedings may start to remove the child from the school's admissions register. This would be done in accordance with the guidelines and procedures given by Schools Attendance Support Service

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include the following:

- Illness that prevents the child from being able to attend school.
- Medical appointments that have been issued by a hospital.
- 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. A leave of absence form must be completed in advance in order for one day to be authorised.
- 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.



## **Legal sanctions**

The local authority can issue a penalty notice to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a 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.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice will take into account the following:

- 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 approval from the headteacher.
- 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.

## **Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality**

At Harvills Hawthorn, we consistently promote good attendance in a number of ways:

- Managing behaviour well to provide a calm, safe and supportive environments which children want to attend and where they can learn and thrive.
- Talk to the children about the importance of good attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis.
- Have a pupil-friendly attendance policy that is revisited half-termly.
- Awarding the class with the highest weekly attendance the attendance trophy. This trophy is proudly displayed in the classroom.
- Praising classes with attendance at 96% or above with a special mention in assembly.
- Organising a special reward for any children that achieve 100% attendance by the end of the academic year.
- Sharing class attendance percentages with parents via a weekly email.
- Hosting regular campaigns to promote good attendance and punctuality with incentives.
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality weekly to ensure we are reaching that 96% or above target.
- Contacting parents immediately if there is an issue with a child's attendance or punctuality.
- Having a member of staff monitor the Late Gate every morning.
- Reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the Home-School agreement and on our school website.
- Publishing children's attendance rates on their annual school reports to the parents and at parents' evening in the autumn and spring term.

## **Attendance monitoring**

### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will do the following:

Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected 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 local and national average, and share this with the governing board termly.

### **Analysing attendance**

The school will do the following:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will do the following:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Provide termly attendance reports to the governing body.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will do the following:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access, where appropriate, to wider support services and outside agencies to remove the barriers to attendance. This may include our family worker, drama therapy and parent courses.

## **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly, by Mrs. Marsden (Assistant Head Teacher). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Positive behaviour, culture and relationships policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day