

Halesowen C of E Primary School



We care, we trust, we believe.
We share, we enjoy, we achieve.

Attendance Policy

Signed by

Head teacher:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z. Knowlton'.

Date: September 2023

Chair of Governors:

Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2025

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School vision

Halesowen Church of England Primary School was a school built for the local community. Right from the beginning it was an inclusive school built on strong Christian beliefs. It is our duty to ensure that this deeply Christian core runs through everything we do at Halesowen C of E in the modern day.

We believe children can flourish if they are loved and valued. We have high expectations of everyone because we know they can achieve if someone believes in them. We trust each other and are proud that we are one big family. We care about each and every one of our families. We enjoy the job we do and make school a fun place to be. We share this place Halesowen C of E; a place special to all of us, a place where we can feel safe, a place where we can learn and thrive together.

Statement of Intent

At Halesowen C of E we are proud of the work we do with our pupils. We want all of our pupils to learn in a high quality, happy and secure environment. We recognise that attendance and punctuality is paramount in raising standards and pupil attainment. We also recognise that attendance is “everyone’s business) (Working together to improve school attendance DFE 2022)

Introduction

At Halesowen C of E we believe that every child in our care is entitled to the best possible education. We work hard to develop aspiring young learners so they can gain the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed as 21st century citizens with British values. Our church school ethos works hand in hand with this as children live and learn by the values in our school motto. We recognise the key to learning at our school is quality first teaching. Learning here is fun and purposeful. Children aim high because we all have high expectations.

Aims and Objectives

The Primary aim of this policy is to make it clear to everyone the high expectations we all share for good attendance at Halesowen C of E. We recognise that good attendance and punctuality is paramount in raising standards in pupil attainment. If children attend school regularly, they gain the greatest benefit from their education as they can maximise their potential and take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

The objectives of this attendance policy are:

- To promote good attendance and punctuality.
- To establish and sustain good levels of attendance and reduce all absences and lates.
- To ensure the policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are applied consistently.
- To promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- To ensure every pupil gets the full-time education they are entitled to.
- To ensure that registers are completed fully and accurately.
- To ensure the principles of our Christian ethos, the school 'motto' and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) values are embedded throughout our approach to attending school.
- To articulate the expected standards of attendance to all children and families.
- To endeavour to make sure children enjoy school and want to attend every day.
- To ensure the school have a clear and consistent approach to attendance that all stakeholders are aware of.
- To explain how we celebrate good attendance.
- To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to achieve; this will be achieved through positive action regarding culture, religion, home language, gender and ability.
- To build strong supportive relationships with families.
- To establish working partnerships with the Education Support Service and other agencies to address attendance issues.

Legislation and Guidance

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) are required to receive an education. It is a parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child has an education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

Whilst compulsory school age is between 5 and 16, all parents who choose Halesowen C of E Primary for Nursery and Reception are expected to comply with the guidance set out in this Attendance Policy.

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.

Roles of Stakeholders

The role of Governors

Our governors support, monitor and review the school's approach to attendance.

In particular they should:

- Promote the importance of school attendance through the school's policies and ethos.
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance and attend any relevant training themselves.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Support the use of appropriate strategies to improve attendance by allocating resources effectively.

The role of the school

Ultimately, ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility. This is recognised in law and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

As a school we promote good attendance, track absence, and communicate with stakeholders so children attend regularly.

The role of Senior Leadership Team

- To have named member of the SLT responsible for attendance – at this school it is the [headteacher \(Mrs L Knowles\)](#).
- Implement the attendance policy.
- Share the attendance policy on the school website.
- Ensure the children and parents are aware of our high expectations for good attendance.
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- In collaboration with Attendance Officer, monitor school level absence data and report it to governors.
- In collaboration with Attendance Officer, inform parents in writing when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is being monitored.
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school development planning.
- Write in reply to leave of absence requests regarding exceptional circumstances.
- Meet with parents requesting leave of absence where necessary.
- Meet with parents following intervention from the Attendance Officer if attendance does not improve.

- Reports attendance data and concerns to Governors.
- Support the attendance officer with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitor the impact of any attendance strategies used.

The role of the Attendance Officer (Mrs A Bowen)

- Lead on attendance across school.
- Ensure calls to parents happen on the first day of absence where contact has not been made by parents.
- Ensure someone listens to voicemails/ collect messages from the office about children's absences.
- Add absence notes to Integris and / or ensure the office have done so.
- Contact Instill excellence to request home visits.
- Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded using agreed codes. (the C code must be agreed by the head teacher)
- Record late arrival and reasons and challenge families who arrive late.
- Send out half termly attendance summaries to keep families informed of attendance.
- Invite parents (working with Instill) in to discuss attendance issues and support them to improve in attendance clinics or signing an attendance contract/plan.
- In collaboration with head teacher, inform parents in writing when a child's attendance is giving further cause for concern and is being monitored.
- Arrange home visits if non-attendance becomes a concern.
- Celebrate good or improving attendance by rewarding children with certificates and 100% attendance pin badges at the end of the academic year.
- Praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance on the school website.
- Update attendance data using Integris.
- Provide attendance reports when requested to the headteacher.
- Liaise with the ESS (Education Support Service) on attendance matters.
- Work with outside agencies to support families struggling to ensure good attendance of their children. (Instill Excellence ltd)

- Produce attendance figures for end of year reports.
- Advise the headteacher when fixed penalty notices need to be given.
- Prepare relevant paperwork for attendance cases to refer to other agencies including ESS and Early help.
- Complete relevant paperwork and send out refusal letters for term time holidays.

The role of the school administration staff (Mrs M Dorrell)

- Take calls from parents about absence ensuring full reasons are given.
- Listen to voicemails on a day-to-day basis and record it directly onto integris.
- Sign in children who arrive late on the Inventory system ensuring reasons for lateness are logged and add these to the register.
- Sign out children who leave early (during the school day) on the Inventory system ensuring reasons are logged and add these to the register.
- Sign out children who are collected late on the Inventory system ensuring reasons are logged.
- Transfer calls from parents/ ask parents to wait when they arrive so they can speak to the attendance lead as necessary in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Complete first day calling as necessary (refer to instill as necessary).

The role of the Teachers

- To keep an accurate attendance register twice a day.
- Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance in parent's consultation meetings and annual school report.
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance
- To pass on any messages received from parents regarding attendance to the Attendance Officer.
- To monitor pupil absence and inform the Attendance Officer / SLT when attendance is impacting on achievement.
- To raise any concerns regarding attendance issues/ patterns of children in their class

The role of the parents/guardians

Ultimately, ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility. This is recognised in law and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Ensure children attend school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Support the school in implementing our attendance policy sending children to school when they are medically fit to attend.
- Always communicate with school if children cannot attend. Telephone the school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason by 9.15 am, also continue to do so on every day of absence unless advised otherwise.
- Provide medical evidence if requested.
- To do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school and to communicate with school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's attendance which they need support for.
- Ensure if a child has a medical appointment the parent/ carer tries, where possible, to book this outside of school hours but if an appointment during a school day is unavoidable the parent needs to contact the school office prior to the appointment to make arrangements for the child to be collected/ returned at an appropriate time. Parents need to provide proof of the appointment.
- To promote a positive attitude towards the school's ethos.
- To attend any meetings with staff as and when required to discuss attendance and work with the school to improve matters.
- Notify the school within 24 hours if there is change of address or telephone number. Also inform us of adults with parental responsibility towards the child. Ensure school holds more than one emergency contact number.
- Not take children out of school to go on a family holiday and understand if they choose to do this the absence will be unauthorised and a fine will be given.

- If leave of absence is required for exceptional circumstances apply in writing to the head teacher 15 days in advance (completing an electronic form)
- To ensure children are at school by 8.40 am every morning so they can be in class for the register. If children do arrive after the doors have closed, parents should take their child to the school office to sign them in on the Inventory system (for safeguarding reasons)
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day at 3.30pm.

The role of the pupils

- Attend school every day and on time

Key Considerations

At Halesowen C of E, we have identified the following key considerations for promoting good attendance:

School Registers

- School registers are legal documents that must conform to government guidelines (see attendance codes in appendix).
- Registration is taken twice during the school day, at the start of the first session and once during the second session.
- Morning registers from Reception to Year 6 are taken in class at 8:40am. The school opens at 8.30 am and the bell rings at 8.40 am. All children should be in school by this time in order for them to receive a present mark. Children are late after the bell rings at 8.40am. Registers will close at 9:00 am.
- Nursery starts at 8.30am for the morning session. Children are marked as late if they arrive after 8.40am (unless they doing shorter sessions for transition)
- If your child arrives between 8.40am and 9.00am they will get an L code for late. If they arrive after the registers have closed at 9:00am, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (a U code). This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- Any child not in attendance when registers are called will be marked with the N code. If we do not get a message from families by 9.15 with a valid reason the code is changed to a O code to indicate an unauthorised absence.
- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the head teacher (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is essential and always required.
- If children are absent for a medical appointment and proof of the appointment has been seen the register is coded as M.
- If children are absent due to illness they are coded as I.
- Unauthorised absences are coded as O.
- Other codes may also be given for other circumstances - See appendix

- Any amendments to the attendance register will include the original entry, amended entry, reason for amendment, date amendment was made and the name of the person making the amendments.

Reasons for Absence

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15 am.

- Calling the Attendance Line on 01384 818885, then press 1.
- Emailing the Officer at pastoral@halesowen.dudley.sch.uk
- Coming to the school office in person to report at absence.

Parents/carers should not report absences to a child's an adult on the gate or via another parent/carers or pupil. It is important that the office or attendance officer is informed directly by somebody who has parental responsibility for the child not attending school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and/or evidence requested has not been provided.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or a pupil has had a significant amount of absence due to ill health, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance. Where an absence hasn't been reported, parents/carers will be contacted during the morning requesting a response and reason for absence. Where this is not forthcoming, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and further action could be taken.

Parents/carers should note that not all illnesses or injuries require a child to be absent from school. Further information about whether an illness requires time

off from school or not can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment using the same methods as detailed above (for unplanned absences) and provides proof of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible (e.g. after school, Friday pm or during school holidays) . Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. It is expected that every effort is made to minimise the amount of time that the child is absent for the appointment, i.e., not leaving until just before the appointment and returning immediately afterwards. If an appointment is unavoidable, siblings must not be taken out of school. If they are taken out of school, this would be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The school may request confirmation of medical appointments or medical support of illness or injury. Medical evidence can include items such as a GP slip or letter, appointment card or letter, the original prescribed medication or the prescription itself.

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. Go to section on authorised and unauthorised absence to find out more.

Lateness and Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work, do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and it can also disrupt lessons for other pupils. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

If children arrive after the doors have closed (8.40am) they must be signed in by an adult. This is for safeguarding reasons to ensure we know children are safely on site and can be accounted for as they will have missed the register.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (before 9am).
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (after 9am).

Unacceptable reasons for being late could include:

- Missed the bus.
- Could not walk quickly enough.
- Delayed due to rain.
- Watch is slow.
- Alarm didn't go off.
- Parent is poorly and could not get up to get the children to school.
- Child would not get ready.

Punctuality will be monitored closely alongside attendance and action for unauthorised absences, due to arriving late after the register has closed, will be the same as an unauthorised session. If children are collected before the end of the day, their afternoon session may be marked as unauthorised and further action could be taken.

If the problem with punctuality persists parents will be sent a letter and / or be invited in for a meeting.

Authorised absence

Absence from school is authorised if children are absent from school in the morning or afternoon sessions for a valid reason such as ill health. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other

appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where possible all medical/ dental appointments should be made out of school time. If this is unavoidable proof must be provided. Absences for religious observance are limited to one day and should be confirmed with the relevant religious body.

Unauthorised absence

These are absences that the school does not consider reasonable and where no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These could include:

- Waking up late.
- Waiting in for a delivery, the council etc.
- Arrival of a new baby, moving house etc.
- Inclement weather if you live within 1 mile of the school.
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. for a parents birthday meal.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences are not properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children, haircuts, birthdays etc.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Time off due to another person being ill e.g. a parents/ brother or sister.
- Illnesses not requiring time off school (refer to public health guidance).

(This lists examples and is not exhaustive)

Leave of Absence Requests

The headteacher is only able to 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. Examples of exceptional circumstances may include:

- Bereavement of a close family member
- Attendance at a funeral

- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- Essential travel for a passport/ visa meeting that cannot be rescheduled.

(This lists examples and is not exhaustive)

All planned 'Leave of Absence' requests should be submitted on 'Leave of Absence' electronic form at least 10 days before leave is due to be taken. The head teacher will consider any exceptional circumstances and will reply to you in writing to summarise their decision in regard to your request. The head teacher/ attendance officer may request a meeting with parents to further discuss any exceptional circumstances requests and may ask for proof where appropriate.

If you take a leave of absence which **is not authorised** by the school for 10 sessions (5 days) or more **you will be issued with a fixed penalty fine** via the Education Support Service.

It is a legal requirement that parents/carers obtain the permission of the Head Teacher before removing their child from school. A leave of absence request must be made by the parent/carer with parental responsibility.

The Head Teacher (or a representative of the Head Teacher) and the Governing Body are within their rights to decline an application and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time. Such a decision will have been made in the best interest of the pupils' educational progress and attainment. If the child is subsequently taken out of school this absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. The Head Teacher's decision is final and there is no right of appeal with the decisions taken.

Parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without the authorisation of the Head teacher not only damage their children's educational opportunities but also risk being issued with a penalty notice, being prosecuted in court, and sometimes losing the child's place at the school

The school considers each application for term time absence individually. When making a decision, the Head Teacher will consider a range of circumstances in addition to reason for absence including the child's previous attendance, the dates requested (e.g. impact on statutory tests or assessments), the length of absence, previous leave requests and the welfare needs of the child.

Family holidays

Parents/ guardians do need to complete a leave of absence request for family holidays for safeguarding reasons- so we know where the child/ children are however the Department for education document "Working together to improve school attendance" states:

"As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday."

In line with this, absences from school for the purposes of a term-time holiday will **not** be authorised at Halesowen C of E unless there are exceptional circumstances which are considered on a case-by-case basis. (see examples on previous pages)

Family emergencies

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the child nor wholly appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult members of the family. School and school friendships/relationships can provide the children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar anchor to life during times of upheaval.

Official representation for a sports team or a performance

If a child is involved in a sporting event or a performance, which requires time out of school, then a license may need to be applied for. In this situation, parents/carers should write to the Head Teacher with the details and official confirmation from the organising body. Previous attendance will be taken into account.

Religious observance

At the Head Teacher's discretion, a limited amount of time may be authorised for religious observance. At Halesowen C of E absences for religious observance are limited to one day and should be confirmed with the relevant religious body.

Summary on leave of absence/ Unplanned

Where the Head Teacher has judged there to be genuine and exceptional circumstances for a child to be absent during term time (other than for illness/ medical reasons), **they may only agree to a maximum of 5 days' absence in any a year.** It must be clear that the 5 days is not an entitlement for any individual but can be used, at the discretion of the Head Teacher, for exceptional circumstances. (C code) The only exception to this is children on reduced timetables.

Persistent and severe Absence

The school has a responsibility to work with parents/ carers and the Education support service to reduce persistent and severe absence.

Absence that falls below 90% is categorised by the Government as persistent absence.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

Absence data is on a rolling basis so the previous academic year is taken into account.

Long Term Sickness

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we may ask you for permission to contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would mean that your child is being educated off site and therefore their absence would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

If a child leaves hospital and following this is at home for 2 weeks, or more, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit to request support for your child at home.

For any other long term sickness the school will work with the parent, school nurse and GP to try to reintegrate the child back into school. If the child is deemed not well enough to attend they will be referred to other services such as Cherry Tree, Early help etc. and work will be sent home to complete.

Elective Home education

If a parent/carer chooses to elective home educate their child, and effectively remove them from roll at Halesowen C of E Primary School, they must put this in writing. The school will then inform the local authority.

Parents/Carers should ensure their child still attends school until a removal from roll date has been agreed, in writing, with the Head Teacher.

Further information can be found here: [Elective home education: guide for parents \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61424/elective-home-education-guide-for-parents.pdf)

Part time timetables

The DFE document “Working together to improve school attendance” recognises that although all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education that there are exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil’s best interests, for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.

We will review these arrangements regularly. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

Removal from School Roll

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision and schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties. Regulation 8 sets out fifteen grounds for removing a pupil of compulsory school age from the admission register.

The most common grounds include:

- A child attended your school as a result of a School Attendance Order issued by ESS but the Order has been revoked or another school has been entered into the Order
- A child has transferred to another school
- A child who has registered at more than one school i.e. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- The pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education)
- The child has ceased to attend and is no longer ordinarily resident within a reasonable distance from school
 - A child has not returned to school within 10 days of an agreed leave of absence
 - A child has been certified as medically unfit to attend the school and is unlikely to return before the end of compulsory education
 - A child has been absent for 20 school days with no contact from parents and all reasonable enquiries have been made to locate them (at no point was the any of the absence authorised)
 - A child has been detained in custody for more than 4 months and is unlikely to return
 - A child is deceased
 - A child has been permanently excluded from school

Child Missing education (CME)

Children are classed as missing education when they are not registered at a school or receiving suitable provision elsewhere and are of compulsory school age. To avoid children becoming CME, it is important that they are placed on and off a school roll according to Department for Education (DfE) guidelines. It is vital that schools and local authorities work together to safeguard children and ensure that they receive their educational entitlement.

At Halesowen C of E Primary School, we work closely with the Local Authority and inform them when we have concerns over a child missing education.

These are the practices that we have put in place in order to safeguard children from becoming CME

- Pupils are entered onto the admission register at the beginning of the first day that child is due to enrol. If the child fails to attend, then enquiries will be made to establish their whereabouts and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) will be notified if we cannot make contact.
- If a pupil does not return to school for ten days after an authorised leave of absence, or is absent without authorisation for twenty days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register. This can only be done if the school and DMBC have made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- If a child is temporarily excluded from school for more than five days, the governing body will arrange suitable alternative full-time education. This must begin no later than the sixth day of exclusion. For permanent exclusions, the local authority will provide alternative education.
- Attendance will be monitored through our daily registers and any unexplained absences will be investigated as part of our safeguarding duty.
- The school will notify DMBC when a pupil's name is removed from the school admission register at non-standard transition points.

- The school will notify DMBC within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.
- If the school cannot locate a pupil by reasonable enquiries (emergency contacts, home visits, contacting other professionals involved with the family), then a Pupil Tracking Referral must be made.

If a child is not able to attend school, due to being incapacitated, chronically poorly or for any other long-term medical condition, the school will agree appropriate provision with the parent/carer and any other professionals involved. This could include a hybrid range of activities such as remote education provided by Halesowen C of E Primary School alongside any other provision allocated such as hospital education or tutoring.

Tackling absence from school

The DfE's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance](#) states that prosecuting parents should be a last resort. As a school we want to work with families to support them so children can attend school and get the education they are legally entitled to.

Therefore, all avenues of support to improve a pupil's attendance should have been explored, actioned, and reviewed. All strategies and interventions must be exhausted prior to making a request for legal intervention to the Education Support Service Dudley (ESS) The only exception to this is for family holidays.

Attendance Monitoring

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. (see appendix 4)

Voluntary supportive measures

We want to support families as we are aware there are often numerous reasons why children do not attend school. To do this, we ask that you are open and honest when giving us reason for absence. If we can foster this open communication, we can support families who may be experiencing difficulties. Where there is attendance concerns we will make regular contact with families, will write to you, may conduct home visits or work with another agency to do so and will complete an attendance support plan. If pupils or families have any additional needs, we may make reasonable adjustments to ensure children can attend. If we feel further support is needed, we will offer Early Help. We will keep a log of all support offered whether it is taken or not.

Instill Excellence

Halesowen C of E are working with Instill Excellence to help us to improve attendance and support families where attending school regularly has become an issue. Instill excellence will work with Mrs Bowen (our attendance lead) to:

- Follow up absence by knocking on doors. (see flowchart In appendix)
- Provide a late gate service – speaking to families arriving late to school and addressing these issues.
- Attend meetings with families where persistent absence is a concern.
- Complete safe and well checks
- Offer tailored support for vulnerable families.

Legal Sanctions

If all support options have been explored and attendance is still not improving we have no choice but to refer the case to the Education Support Service (Dudley) who have the authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £120 per parent, per child or pursue legal action through the courts under Section 444(1)(a) Education Act 1996.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling 12 week period- this can be over different terms/ school years. (12 sessions or more)
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission (10 sessions or more)
- 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.

Role of the Education Support Service (Dudley)

The Education Support Service (ESS) is Dudley MBC's statutory service for the enforcement of school attendance and other education related legal interventions for children in employment, entertainment and elective home education.

The head teacher and governing body have the responsibility to ensure they inform ESS when attendance becomes a matter for concern and all voluntary

support options have been exhausted. ESS has the legal power to put in place interventions that school cannot, including issuing fixed penalty notices.

Contact Education Support Service on:

Phone: 01384 814317

Email: ess.cs@dudley.gov.uk

Promoting Good Attendance

We want to promote good attendance and have high expectations for pupils to attend school whenever they are well enough to do so. Good attendance and punctuality is essential to ensuring every child achieves their potential.

At Halesowen CE, we promote good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- We share with the children that we have high expectations for everything – this includes school attendance
- The importance of good attendance and punctuality is promoted by everyone. This may be through circle time, class assemblies, PSHE or just one to one chats with pupils and / or parents.
- Work in partnership with the Education Support Service to communicate their legal obligations and consequences of condoned absence.
- Improvement in attendance recognised and commended.

Monitoring and Review

We are aware of the need to monitor the school's attendance policy and to review it regularly. We will review this policy annually or sooner if new government guidance or local guidance is published.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding / Child protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Teaching and learning policy
- Parent Code of conduct

Appendix 1: Our Ethos

All of our policies reflect our Christian ethos which underpins everything we do in school:

We care

Our school is a caring community with a family atmosphere. We achieve this through respect for one another and the world around us, treating others as we would wish to be treated, and working co-operatively. As an inclusive community everyone is valued and nurtured equally regardless of gender, race, religion, colour or ability. There is a clear understanding of what it means to be a valued as an individual, and how we work together as part of the school family.

We trust

Our school is a safe place. We provide a stimulating, safe and happy environment where everyone is encouraged and motivated to learn. We achieve this through our committed approach in all we do.

We believe

Our school welcomes and celebrates our diverse community. This helps us to understand each other, and respect each other's beliefs and cultures. We develop children's spirituality through daily worship and by celebrating together. We are proud of our links with St. John's Church and other faith members of the wider community.

We share

Our school builds positive relationships between children, staff, parents, governors and members of the community. We achieve this by valuing all contributions, encouraging teamwork and celebrating successes together.

We enjoy

Our school builds children's confidence and self-esteem to create a love of learning. We achieve this through a vibrant curriculum with real life learning experiences which reflect the needs and interests of all. We actively praise and reward effort, creativity and success.

We achieve

Our school enables each child to develop in order fulfil their potential, and flourish in a supportive but challenging environment. We know each child well and through our individual tracking of their progress, we offer opportunities which enrich their physical, social, emotional, moral and academic development. We aim to equip children with essential life skills and enhance their personal qualities so that they can become successful learners.

Appendix 2 - Absence/ Punctuality - Procedures for Parents

Attendance

If your child is absent the parent/carer **must** follow these procedures:

1. Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.15am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call or you can email pastoral@halesowen.dudley.sch.uk
2. Come into the school personally and report absence to the school office or the Attendance Officer. **Please do not give messages to staff on the gates**
3. Keep the school informed every day of your child's absence unless you have been advised otherwise by the school's Attendance Officer.

If your child is absent without prior notification, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.15 am and continue to call you and any other contacts listed if we do not hear from you.
- If there has been no response by 10.30 am. Details will be passed onto Instill Excellence so they can come out to knock your door to check on children and discuss the absence from school.
- If you do not answer a note will be put through your door asking you to contact the school office. (If no one is home we may need to contact the police for a self and well check or Dudley children's services.)
- If absences persist, we will invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and / or head teacher accompanied by the Education welfare officer from Instill excellence
- Work with Instill excellence to promote good attendance
- Refer the matter to the Education Support Service if attendance falls below an acceptable level.

Punctuality

If your child is late the parent/carer must adhere to the following procedure:

1. Any child arriving at school after the bell at 8:40am must be accompanied by an adult to the school office. They must be signed in on the InVentry system with a reason.

2. We will track children getting late codes and will request a meeting.
3. Children arriving after the register close at 9.15 are marked with a U code to show they are at school but that the start of the session was missed so they have a logged unauthorised absence.

Appendix 3 - Register 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
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (only the headteacher can give consent for this code limited to 5 days in a year)
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 4 - Attendance monitoring

Our attendance officer Mrs Bowen monitors attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. Each half term we are going to send you all an attendance summary, so you are all fully aware of your child's record.

If attendance is causing concern, we will act swiftly to inform parents. Our feedback is that sometimes parents do not realise and would like to know sooner.

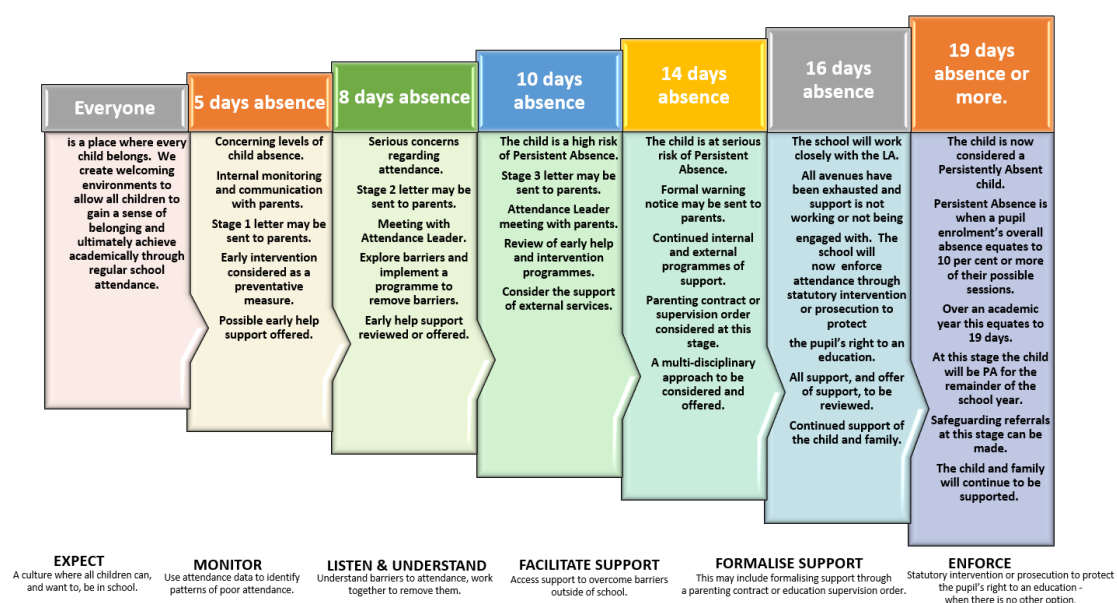
STEP 1- MONITOR- Attendance is beginning to cause concern as the child has had 5 days of missed school or has an unauthorised absence (not family holiday as that is dealt with separately). A Stage 1 letter will be sent inviting parents to an informal meeting with the attendance officer, and Early Help can be offered if appropriate.

STEP 2- LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND- Attendance is not improving and now there have been 8 days of absence or more than 1 unauthorised absence. A Stage 2 letter will be sent inviting parents to a school attendance review meeting with the school attendance officer where an attendance support plan will be implemented and Early Help can be offered if appropriate.

STEP 3- FACILITATE SUPPORT- The child has missed 10 school days or has further unauthorised sessions. The child is now at risk of persistent absence. The attendance leader and EWO from Instill excellence will meet with the parents, and Early Help will be offered. The attendance support plan will be reviewed.

If attendance still does not improve support is formalised and enforcement services can become involved.

**** Please all families who request leave for a family holiday will receive a refusal letter and may be subject to a fine.*****



Appendix 5- Instill Excellence

excelinstillence

admin@instill-excellence.com • www.instill-excellence.com

We would like to take the opportunity to introduce ourselves as we will be working closely with Halesowen C of E_supporting with school attendance.

We care about and know the importance of your child's attendance and will therefore be working alongside the school, pupils and yourselves to ensure we can offer the appropriate support to enable them to attend school on time and every day.

Our role is to carry out the following:

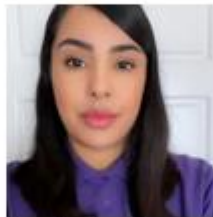
- To support with parent meetings within school to help identify any concerns or barriers that may be preventing your child from attending school.
- Carrying out safe and well checks thought home visits on children who are absent from school.
- Working with families who are identified as needing low level support and early intervention to improve school attendance.
- Working closely with school to improve overall attendance and attainment for all pupils.

Our overall aim is to work together to ensure that each child at Halesowen C of E receives the best possible education and start in life.

Meet our staff who will be working with you:



Cheryl Green
Attendance and Safeguard
Consultant



Shanice Chopra
Education Welfare Officer



Kim Jones
Home Visits Attendance Officer



excelinstillence

admin@instill-excellence.com • www.instill-excellence.com



Helen Walker

Home Visits Attendance Officer



Katie Whitehead

Home Visits Attendance Officer

We look forward to working with you all.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Green'.

Cheryl Green

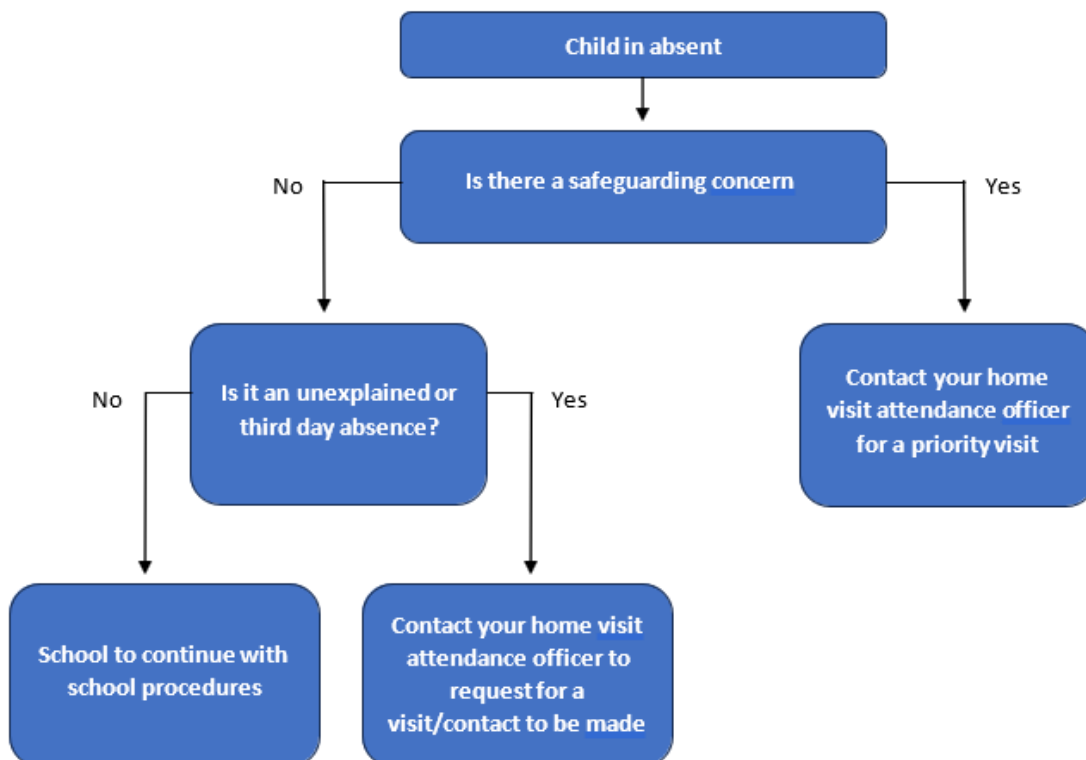
 Instill Excellence Ltd



Appendix 6- School action for absence flow chart

School Initial Actions:

- Run attendance report to identify absent pupils. Check messages to the office, phone calls, voicemails and emails. Parents should contact us by 9.15 am
- If we have had not contact or the reason is not clear we will call the parent/carer of each absent pupil to ask for the reason of their absence and record it.
- If the first phone number is not working or no one answers we will try another one or a different way to contact them.
- We will request a visit from our home visit attendance officer before 11:00am if there is no response, the absence is unexplained, it is a third day absence or there any safeguarding concerns.



[Appendix 7- When to keep children off school](#)

Is my child too ill for school? NHS Live Well

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school or nursery when they're unwell.

There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about [managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](#). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know.

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [common cold](#). But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

High temperature

If your child has a [high temperature](#) (30 degrees or higher) , keep them off school until it goes away.

Chickenpox

If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Cold sores

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#).

Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#). Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

COVID-19

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

What to do if your child has tested positive

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.

Ear infection

If your child has an [ear infection](#) and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand, foot and mouth disease

If your child has [hand, foot and mouth disease](#) but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

Impetigo

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics.

Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

Ringworm

If your child has [ringworm](#), see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP.

It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

Scarlet fever

If your child has [scarlet fever](#), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.

Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](#) because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious.

But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away.

A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of [tonsillitis](#).

Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](#).

Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) must stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

Appendix 8- School Closures

The academic year is 190 days. Schools also have to have an additional 5 days that they can use for staff training; often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are not part of the 190 days which is every child's free entitlement.

The Headteacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days. However, in some circumstances, the school may have to close.

The Headteacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site, pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, to use the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Headteacher must close part or all of the school. Such events may be:

- Not enough staff to safely supervise the pupils and ensure the safe running of the school.
- Lack of fresh running water and/or toilet facilities.
- Lack of appropriate lighting and/or heating .
- Damage to the structure of the building e.g. fire, water or weather damage.
- Instruction to close due to a local emergency incident / COVID-19 restriction
- Severe weather - In the event that severe weather is forecast, or is developing, the Headteacher, will consider either closing the school in advance of the school day, closing the school early, or opening the school later than usual. The action taken will always result from consideration of pupils, parents and staff facing 'significant risk of serious injury' in school or whilst travelling to or from school.

Once a decision is made, the Headteacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place.

Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise. If the Headteacher decides to close the school, then the register is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.