

HOMEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL & SSC

Aiming high together



ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Statutory)

Reviewer: Chris Yelling

Review Date: October 2025

Reviewed and Approved by C&L Committee: 15th October 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

Please refer to:

'Working together to improve school attendance'

Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'

August 2024

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn' (1.7)

'Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners' (1.8)

The law on school attendance says (1.9- 12):

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have
- It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at school
- If registered at a school, then parents have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly.

Homefield Primary School believes that regular attendance and good punctuality is important for successful learning at school. Patterns of good attendance and punctuality should be established, at an early age, as this is an important life skill, and is linked to positive attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

Overall Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved (95+%), through a meaningful and exciting curriculum, shared clear expectations with parent/carers, and by challenging persistent and regular absences
- To raise standards and ensure every child achieves well through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parent/carers, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify and challenge causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them. These include the Virtual School, Social Workers and the School Attendance Support Team at West Sussex

Head Teacher and SLT will:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of policy and procedures.
- To deal with parental/carers requests for "Leave from Learning" in line with Government legislation and the school policy
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with West Sussex Local Authority policies and procedures.

- To inform parent/carers of poor attendance and punctuality but also improved attendance and punctuality. To celebrate successes.
- Adopt an individualised approach to improving attendance and punctuality – know each learner and their circumstances.
- Where needed, to set up incentives for any learners and targeted groups of learners so that both attendance and punctuality improves
- To track attendance and punctuality regularly and challenge poor attendance and benchmark using available data.
- Liaise with outside agencies and support networks if necessary.
- If a learner is known to Children’s Services, to inform the team when there is an absence.
- To report on attendance regularly to Governors
- Communicate levels of attendance to stakeholders
- Liaise with other locality schools, when there are concerns around absences across families, to track patterns and address safeguarding concerns

It is the role of the Parent/Carer to:

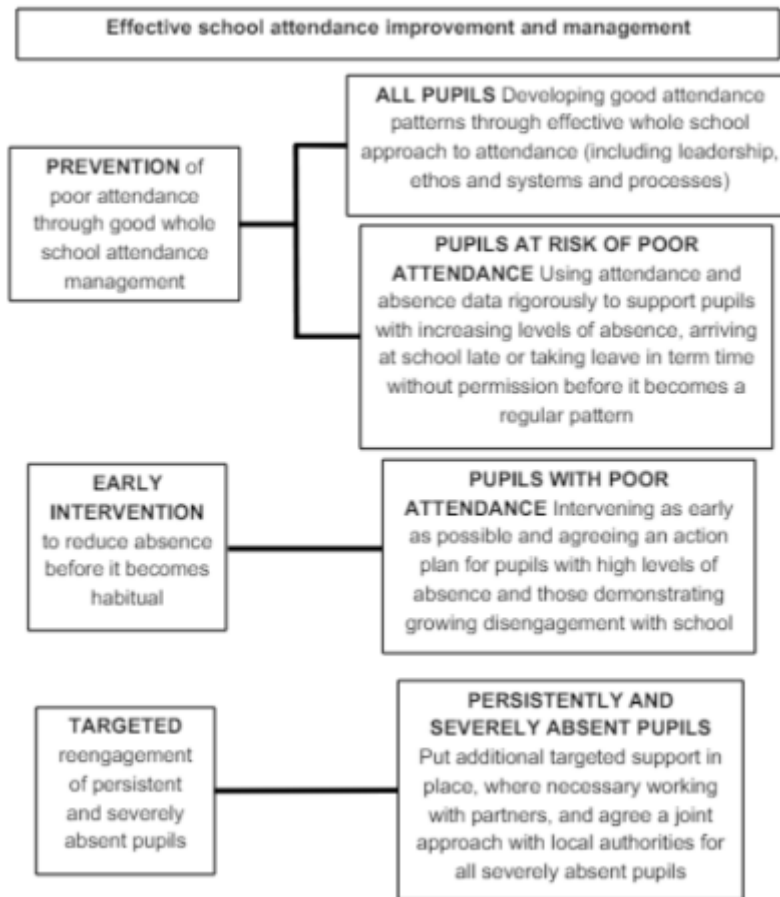
- Ensure regular attendance and punctuality for their child. This includes children of EYFS/non-statutory school age.
- When exceptional circumstances exist, to apply for “leave from learning” in advance where possible
- Inform the school on the first day of absence via the reporting platform or school office
- Contact the school in confidence, whenever problems occur which may keep children away from school.
- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach-aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don’t get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.
- Medical and dental appointments should not be arranged in school time wherever possible.
- We require parent/carers to work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child’s life, which may impact on learning.
- To organise and book holidays and “Leave From Learning” during the 175 days of school holidays and non-school days and not during the 190 days of learning time.
- Where there is persistent and severe absence (more than 10%) schools and the local authority are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers and reengage pupils.

It is the role of the class teacher and support staff to:

- Maintain accurate registers and records for the children
- Follow up all absences with parent/carers
- Identify patterns in lateness and non-attendance
- Build strong relationships with families and identify any barriers
- Hold initial conversations with parent/carers as they are the person who know the child best and can articulate how absence/lateness is impacting on a learner’s learning and social interactions

It is the role of the governors to:

- Support the school in challenging “Leave From Learning”
- Ask the Head Teacher/ Attendance Lead to report on Attendance termly



Leave from Learning

Parent/carers are reminded that all absences mean that a child will miss out on learning and teaching and they are, therefore, requested to keep absence to a minimum. All absences are required to be authorised or approved, wherever possible before they occur, and it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to seek this.

Clear instructions from the Government state the following:

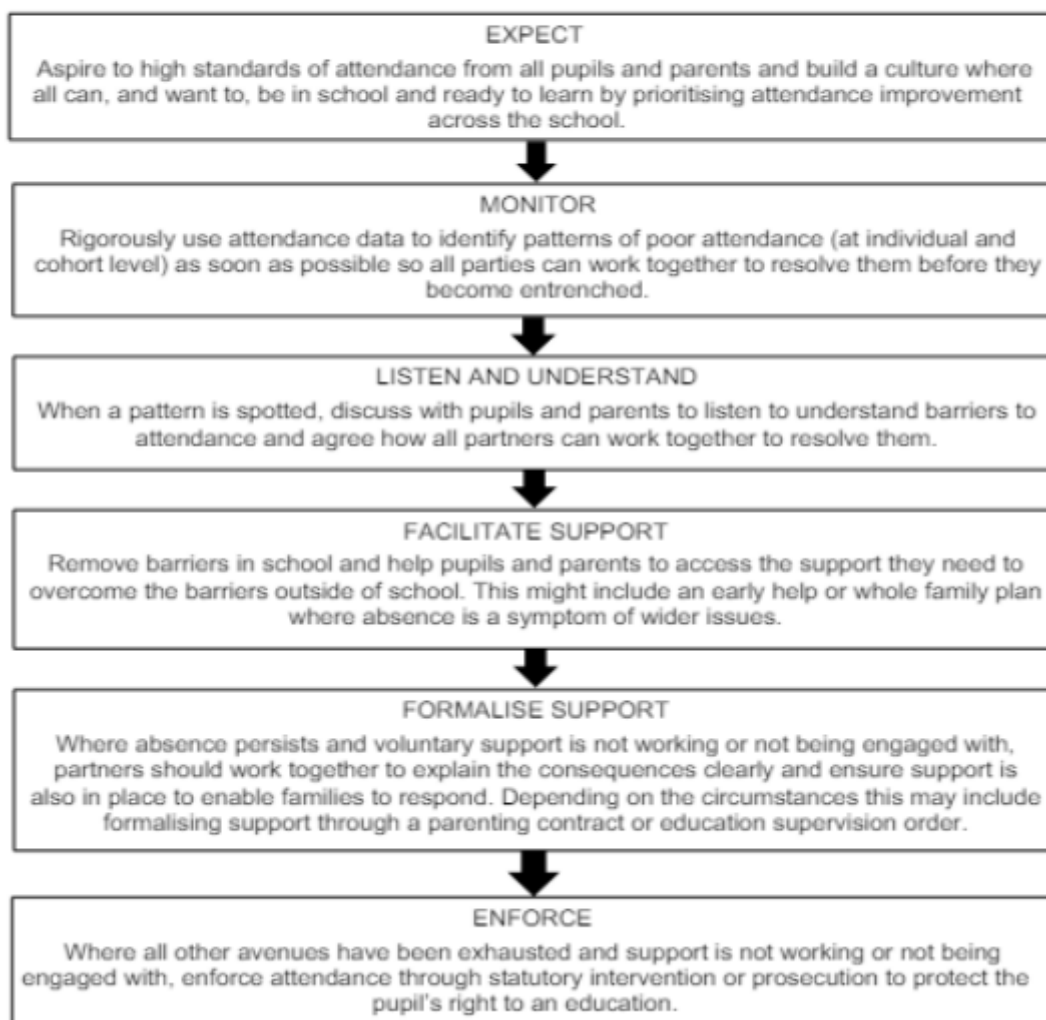
'Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations removing references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments made clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These amendments come into force on 1st September 2013. For further details please follow the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Homefield Primary School will work to remove barriers and support improved attendance by following the Dfe guidance

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Office follows this system:

- Phone parent/carers contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- If there is a genuine concern (for a child at risk), then 2 members of the school team will visit the home address and follow our safeguarding procedures.
- If known to Children's Services, inform the Social Worker.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- The Office must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

- We recognise that some learners face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. For example, those with long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and their attendance

ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. However, they may need extra targeted support including adjustments, seeking support from other services, any in-school adjustments such as uniform etc.

- Data for these cohorts should be monitored regularly and interventions reviewed.

School Attendance Support Team

All local authorities are expected to have a School Attendance Support Team

Other Measures that may be put into place following West Sussex guidance:

- Part time timetables – these must only be in place for the shortest time possible and is not a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme must have a time limit
- Parenting contract
- Education Supervision Orders
- Fixed Penalty notices
- Attendance Prosecution

Equal Opportunities

We will aim to ensure that all children will have an equal and equitable opportunity to explore their potential regardless of gender, ability, cultural or religious background with reference to our school's equal opportunities policy.

IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school.

Flexi Schooling – see Flexi Schooling Policy

Learners educated off-site – the school must phone each day to ensure that the learner is attending the off-site provision

Children at Risk of Missing Education

School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school, and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Senior Leader responsible for attendance: Chris Yelling

Relevant legislation

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
The Education Act 2002 The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Other DfE guidance
Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and Behaviour
Children Missing In education
Keeping Children Safe in Education

Attendance: What does it mean for my child?

We aim for 95%+ attendance.

This is a maximum of 9 % days off school over the year.

That means at least 180 % days at school.

9 % days off over the school year is nearly 2 weeks of missed learning.

To get 90% attendance would mean having 19 days off over the year.

That means 171 days at school.

19 days off over the school year is nearly 4 weeks of missed learning.

To get below 80% attendance would mean having more than 19 days off over the year.

That means less than 171 days at school.

85% attendance would mean having 29 % days off school in a year. This is equivalent to nearly half a term of missed learning.

EVERYDAY COUNTS

There are 365 days in a year.

190 of these are school days.

The other 175 days are weekends, bank holidays, INSET days and school holidays.

You'll never know what you missed unless you show up!