

# Hazlemere Church of England Combined School



## **Attendance Policy**

**2024-26 updated**

*“Encourage one another and build one another up”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Head teacher

Signed on behalf of Governing body

Last reviewed September 2025

Next reviewed September 2026

## Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

At Hazlemere C of E we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Hazlemere C of E values all children. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Hazlemere C of E recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before (9:10) on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

**The governing body** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor for attendance is Mrs Krok-Pazskowski. Contact via school office: enquiries@hazlemere-ce.bucks.sch.uk

**The Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader)** (*Mrs Tamara Brocklehurst*) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence

**The class teacher** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office (*no later than the time the register is closed*)

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents.
- Monitoring and analyzing attendance data with the senior attendance champion.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher.

### **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made
  - The name of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:10. The register for the afternoon session will be taken 1:05pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm.

### **First Day Contact**

If a child is absent from school and we have not heard from the parents then as a school we would then follow the procedure below:

1. Start first day contact for children absent without explanation; a text will be sent home.
2. Should there be no response a telephone call will be made to the main contact number and all other contacts in order until contact is made.
3. Should there be concerns about a child or no contact is made by the parents following a repeat of the above the next day a home visit will take place.
4. If there is no answer at home then we would immediately refer to children's services / MASH / Police.

## Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9:10 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

Parents must call the absence line leaving the reason for absence with a specific reason for absence - where illness is concerned 'poorly' or 'ill' will not be accepted as a reason.

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 and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late – between 8:50am – 9:10am (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent – after 9:10am (Code U)

*Should a pupil receive 10 or more U codes within 10 weeks the Appendix - 'working together to improve attendance flow chart' - will be followed.*

## Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least *two week* before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here

<https://forms.office.com/e/UTZQmaE6Vm>. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may issue a Penalty Notice. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include: *These must be made to the absence line before 9:10 on the day of absence and earlier if possible.*

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R) - In the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.
- Illness (Code I)

### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age

- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

Hazlemere C of E will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

### **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:

- 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 to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

### **Support Systems**

Hazlemere C of E recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Hazlemere C of E also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

### **Using Attendance Data**

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

Weekly attendance meetings will be held between the Senior Attendance Champion/ School Secretary and Head Teacher. Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those children of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children.

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. It is the responsibility of school Governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance, regular reports will be presented to this body. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix – working together to support attendance Flow Chart). Hazlemere C of E combined School will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Legal sanctions**

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

### **Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements**

This policy is written in conjunction with:

Child protection policy

Behavior policy

Mental health and wellbeing policy

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher