



School Attendance and Access to Education Policy 2023

September 2023

Introduction

At Hatfield Woodhouse Primary School we want every child to reach its full potential by building self-resilience, achieve economic well-being and engage within the community. This can only be achieved by ensuring every child has access to a suitable education appropriate to their needs as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

The LAW

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of the parents, schools, academies, free schools, independent schools and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) is set out by a succession of education and other acts, guidance and regulations including the recent document (2022) Working together to improve school attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, every child has the right to access a suitable education, section 7 states:

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- a) to his age, ability, and aptitude, and
- b) to any special educational needs he may have,
 - either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Local Authority Responsibilities

To achieve this Doncaster City Council will exercise its statutory duty to ensure all children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education as defined in section 7 by working in partnership with schools, academies, free schools (referred to as schools) and parents to:

1. Provide support through the Attendance & Pupil Welfare Service. E.W.O for Hatfield Woodhouse: **Nigel Green**
2. Monitor pupil attendance and intervene when appropriate upon referral from schools.
3. Ensure schools provide a full-time education appropriate to child's needs and disabilities.
4. Request attendance data on a regular basis to ensure effective monitoring.
5. Request information, advice and guidance from health professionals for children with medical needs.
6. Allocate school places in accordance with the School Admissions Code of Conduct.
7. Ensure enrolments are not delayed more than reasonably practicable.
8. Uphold the law in respect of regular school attendance, child employment and performance licences.
9. Identify children who are not on a school admission register or missing from education (CME).

10. Ensure children who are electively home educated (EHE) are in receipt of a suitable education and take appropriate action where not.

Schools Responsibilities

Hatfield Woodhouse Primary School will provide a welcoming and safe educational environment that encourages full attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

We will:

1. Have effective systems for monitoring pupil attendance
2. Have a designated senior lead for attendance and punctuality: **Helen Acton/Carole Orridge**
3. Adopt a whole school approach to managing attendance with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.
4. Ensure registers are taken accurately and are up to date.
5. Accentuate the positives of good attendance.
6. Have clear lines of communication with parents or carers and discuss any concerns immediately.
7. Implement attendance management procedures as soon as necessary.
8. Work in partnership with the local authority and services to support the needs of pupils and families.
9. Provide up to date attendance data on a regular basis to the local authority, or when requested.
10. Notify the local authority of additions and removals from the school admission register.
11. Seek advice and guidance from health professionals for children with medical needs.
12. Adhere to safeguarding procedures and practices.
13. Work in partnership with other schools on requests for leave of absence.
14. Comply with the School Admissions Code of Practice and ensure allocations are admitted without reasonable delay.

Parents and Carers Responsibilities.

As previously stated, parents are responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable education, appropriate to age, ability and aptitude. Parents should acknowledge their responsibilities by:

1. Registering a child at a school.
2. Ensure the child is punctual, attend and remain in school during the required hours.
3. Ensuring a positive attitude to learning, and support any home school agreements.
4. Meet any social and emotional needs that may affect a child from accessing a full-time education. This may be through assistance from services or agencies.
5. Inform the school of any significant changes to a child's circumstances, such as bereavement, change of residence, or health needs.
6. Ensure their child complies with school's policies and procedures.

For parents who elect to home educate their child, notify the local authority as soon as possible.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academy year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)

It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, personally at the office or by appointment.

Procedures for recording daily Attendance at HWPS

- Staff complete electronic registration on Bromcom at beginning of both 1st Lesson and 4th Lesson
- Registration closes at 9.15am and 1:30pm
- Office to enter absence information from answer machine
- Before 9.30am office will send out text to parents, if attendance mark or reason code is not entered onto the system
- Before 10.30am the office will make a follow up telephone call to parents, if no contact has been made following the text.

Cause for Concern

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, followed by a home visit and a letter after 3 days asking for the parents to contact the school to explain the absence.

The principal will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Assemblies and class-time will be used to celebrate good attendance and Classes with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the academy weekly and individual children will be rewarded termly with a sticker and yearly with an additional prize.

We are aware that where attendance is an issue for families that often pupils and families require support from other sources to improve overall well-being and ultimately attendance. The following are examples of issues affecting many families.

Pupil	Parent
Well-being/Counselling	Well-being/Counselling
Health/GP	Health
Attainment and Learning	Finance
SEND	Housing
Personal development	Food/healthy living
Routines and boundaries	Work & benefits
	Parenting (Routines & boundaries)

Where attendance is cause for concern, families will be invited for a meeting with the attendance lead. Together school and family will explore the reasons for absence and potential solutions or strategies will be explored to make an Attendance Plan. Attendance will be closely monitored for the following 3 weeks for improvement.

Should any parenting contract not be adhered to, and outcomes achieved, the evidence can be used to apply to the court for a parenting order. This order will be for a specific period and include details of expectations and outcomes. Any case laid before the Courts under S 444 Education Act 1996 may be considered for a parenting order.

Medical Evidence

When children have time off school because they are unwell, school will seek to determine if any absences can be authorised for medical reasons. Guidance will be sought from your GP as to whether your child *was not well enough to attend*, and a diagnosis was made by a medical practitioner.

Family Holidays in Term Time

Family Holidays during Term Time

Every school day counts towards your child's future. Days off school add up to lost learning. In total there are 175 non-school days a year. This gives families the opportunity to:

- ***Spend time together***
- ***Go on family visits***
- ***Go on holiday***
- ***Go on days out***
- ***Attend routine appointments***

The law still says that parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. If you take your child on holiday during term-time without the school's permission this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in parents being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Why shouldn't I take my child on holiday during term time?

Many parents and carers think it is okay to go on holiday during term time however this has a negative effect on their children's learning and ability to achieve. .

- ***10 days absence = 95% attendance***
- ***19 days absence = 90% attendance***
- ***29 days absence = 85% attendance***
- ***38 days absence = 80% attendance***
- ***47 days absence = 75% attendance***

Children with over 90% attendance throughout their school-life are more likely to gain 5 or more A-C GCSE'S or equivalent qualifications.

How do I request leave of absence for a family holiday?

All requests should be made on an Application for Leave of Absence for Annual Holiday which is available from the school or via the website: www.hatfieldwoodhouse.org.uk

This should be submitted no later than 21 days before the start of the holiday.

Will the school authorise taking my child away during term-time?

From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation meant that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. The Principal may only grant leave in 'exceptional' circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances might be:-

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical issue. Medical evidence must be provided.
- Where a parent is employed in a company where their policy states that holidays can not be taken during school holiday periods.

These circumstances must be conveyed in writing to the academy. In considering whether to authorise leave for a family holiday, the school will consider each case individually, taking into account the exceptional circumstances.

Advice will be taken from the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service.

What happens if the Principal does not agree my request?

If you take your child on holiday during term time, without the authorisation of the principal, the absence is reported to the Local Authority. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child, per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days, after 29 days it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the Local Authority.

The school does not receive any funding from Fixed Penalty Notices.

Parenting Contracts

Taking holidays in term time impact attendance. Where school attendance is a cause for concern then parents will be asked to meet with a member of the senior leadership team and agree to an attendance support plan, this is a voluntary agreement between all parties involved. It is not legally binding, but should a parent not comply with the agreement it can demonstrate the parent has knowingly failed to secure school attendance.

Should any parenting contract not be adhered to, and outcomes achieved, the evidence can be used to apply to the court for a parenting order. This order will be for a specific period and include details of expectations and outcomes. Any case laid before the Courts under S 444 Education Act 1996 may be considered for a parenting order.

Education Supervision Order

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parents to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children from Hatfield Woodhouse Primary who meet the criteria for CME will be reported to Doncaster City Council. See CME Policy.

Lateness

The academy day begins at 8:55am and all children are expected to be in the academy by 8:50am. Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken and parents will be invited into school to meet with a member of the senior leadership team.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and will report annually to the Academy Advisory Board. This report will include overall trends, amendments made to the policy, as a result of best practice, or in response to Government guidelines

Approval by the AAB and Review Date

This policy has been formally approved and adopted by the Local Governing Body at a formally convened meeting

Policy approved: Chair of AAB:

Date: September 2023

Date of Policy review: September 2024