



HYTHE BAY
Church of England
Primary School

Attendance Policy

Signed	Designation	Date
	Headteacher	
	Chair of Governors	

Anchored by God, we strive to teach children to be confident, connected, and creative through outstanding teaching and care. We show our love, tolerance, forgiveness, and compassion, not just by talking about them but living them each day of our lives.

"We should love people not only with words and talk but by actions and true caring."

1 John 3: 18

Our vision is to be a Spirit- filled community where every individual flourishes and is respected.

Our Christian values allow us to be an inclusive school which, through our learning, strives to give everyone life in all its fullness.

Within our local and global culture of continuous learning and reflection, we aim to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum to all children in our care.

1.Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Luke Haisell is the link governor for attendance, and the Learning and Achievement Committee is responsible for attendance. They will monitor pupil attendance twice a year.

3.2 The Headteacher

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

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
 - Leading attendance across the school
 - Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
 - Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
 - Having an oversight of data analysis
 - Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
 - Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher and can be contacted via 01303 267802/headteacher@hythebay.kent.sch.uk.

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer is Sue Milton and can be contacted via 01303 267802 or smilton@hythebay.kent.sch.uk.

3.4 Class Teachers

Class staff are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office:

- Morning registration must be completed by **8.50 am**
- Afternoon registration must be completed by **1.10pm.**
- Contribute to and support the continued development of the warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for all children
- Welcome each child into the class by name and, with a smile, promote and reward good attendance at all opportunities;
- Welcome children who have been absent with warmth – “it’s great to see you – we have missed you and I am really pleased you are better/back” and never say “Where have you been? You have missed so much work....”
- Be aware of absences of each child or patterns in absence in their group and make sure the child is supported in catching up missed work
- Communicate with colleagues where necessary if there are any issues resulting from the absence that other staff should know (concern about work missed, response of other children, possible responses of colleagues) but also where there are possible safeguarding concerns reporting to the school’s DSL
- Notify the Headteacher if there is any suggestion of term time holiday.

3.5 School Admin Staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the SLT or Admissions Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

- Notify the DSL if there are any contextual safeguarding issues which might explain erratic or poor attendance
- Contribute to and support the continued development of the warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for all children
- Greet the children by name and always with a smile and a greeting
- Make a special effort to provide a warm welcome to children returning with anxiety issues
- If necessary, walk the child to the lesson/worship etc. if this is a cause of anxiety
- Reassure families that the school will monitor the child's welfare carefully during the course of the day and communicate with the family if there are any issues.

3.5 Parents/Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult when the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when their child is expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where not possible, inform the school of the child's absence in advance by emailing or phoning the school office.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority. If their child's absence rates are increasing and are causing concern, an attendance contract may be used to support parents to make improvements.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school .

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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 and position of the person who made the amendment.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am in class and 9.30am in the office. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must **notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

- Parents/ carers should call the school or email to inform them of an unplanned absence
- 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.

4.3 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. Parents/carers should inform the school of medical appointments in advance and the school will issue a leave of absence form/pupil pass.

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 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 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise. Holiday during term time will not, in line with all schools in the Hythe Hub, be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. Requests for term time holiday must be requested in writing.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct when

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child).
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings.

4.5 Following up Unexplained Absence

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

- Call / text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a School Liaison Officer.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via Report Cards or letters.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term-time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term-time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday

- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays.

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least six weeks before the absence, in writing. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletter and on our website;
- Report to you how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Set targets for the school and share attendance in the newsletter;
- Reward children when they are attending school through the Dojo points system;
- Deliver a stimulating and engaging curriculum that encourages children's enjoyment of school;
- Run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- Headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered.
- An attendance contract may be put in place to support progress towards improved attendance.
- School-based interventions may be offered: ELSA, Nurture, a consultation with STLS, soft starts, protected play, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success, Emotionally-based School Avoidance resources.
- External Interventions may be offered: referrals to NEFLT.
- Attachment figure: a child will be appointed as their Attachment figure. The attachment figure will support the child through the day with emotional check ins.

6.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- Headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered.
- If appropriate, the attendance policy will be implemented alongside the Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School and Children with Medical Conditions policies.
- School-based interventions may be offered: ELSA, Nurture, a consultation with STLS, soft starts, protected play, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success, Emotionally-based School Avoidance resources.
- External Interventions may be offered: referrals to NEFLT.
- Attachment figure: a child will be appointed as their Attachment figure. The attachment figure will support the child through the day with emotional check ins.

- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHCP) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

6.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

As soon as parents have informed the school of the expected date of return:

- Class teacher will organise ensure a warm welcome and recognise that child may need additional support to access the learning in class due to absence.
- Headteacher will meet with the parents (and child if appropriate) in advance of the first day to discuss expectations, reasonable adjustments .
- Soft start: parents/child will be given the option to arrive through the school office, where the child will be welcomed by an adult known to them.
- Attachment Figure: a known adult will be appointed as their Attachment figure. The attachment figure will support the child through the day with emotional check ins.
- ELSA or Nurture sessions will be available to support the child's return.

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, for all children across the school and fortnightly for those with absence below 90% at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Body.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

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

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

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

7.4 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.
- Meet termly with the KPAS team to monitor attendance.

7.5 How we will address persistent and severe absence with parents

- If you haven't called school to tell us, why your child is absent - we will text you
- If you don't reply to us by 10.30am – A member of the Senior Leadership Team will call you
- We will review your child's attendance every six weeks although severe absence will be reviewed fortnightly
- If attendance slips below 90% after term 2 you will receive a letter and may be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- If attendance continues below 90% your child's attendance will be discussed at the termly attendance meeting with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer
- If attendance does not improve within three weeks you will again be invited in to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- If attendance still does not improve within another two weeks we will make a referral to the School Liaison Officer. This may result in a penalty notice – a fine of £160 and prosecution.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by SLT. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Learning and Achievement Committee.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy.

Approved by the Learning & Achievement Committee on Monday 13th January 2025.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
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		
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	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
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
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q		Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Y1		Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2		Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.
Y3		Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4		Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5		Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6		Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7		Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Administrative codes		
Z		Prospective pupil not on admission register
#		Planned whole school closure