



Attendance Policy

Autumn 2025

Approved by: Governing Body	Autumn 2025
Last reviewed:	Autumn 2025
Next review due by:	Autumn 2026

This outline policy should be read alongside the statutory guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101441/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk))

Aims and objectives

At Haydon Abbey School and Pre-School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Buckinghamshire Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

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 that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101441/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) 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](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part-6)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/26/part-3)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/59/part-7)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/2682/2010/2011/2013/2016/amendments)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/1234)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2682)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/1234)

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 9:15 am 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
- Attend every timetabled session 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 will also monitor school attendance and seek information about patterns of absence and the strategic plan to improve attendance at the school.

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
- Analysis of attendance data trends and patterns

The Senior Attendance Champion Headteacher- Miss Ferdinand 01296 482278 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.

The school attendance officer *Mrs Parker- 01296 482278* is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data and sharing this information with the Headteacher and Attendance Team
- Daily first day calling and emailing
- 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
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or Senior phase link SLT member*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office via the online platform no later than the time the register closes.

School administration 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

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

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 8:30am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at *the start of the afternoon session for that year group* and will be kept open for a period of 15 minutes afterwards.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9AM or as soon as practically possible by calling the school. If a child is unable to attend school, the parent/carer must notify the school office by 9:00am on the first morning of absence. They will need to contact the school on every subsequent day of absence either by email using the following email address: pupilabsence@haydonabbey.bucks.sch.uk or via telephone on 01296 482 278. Messages can be left on the school's answerphone (option 1), with the child's name, class and reason for absence from 8am.

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 (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

The school is committed to working with families to address persistent punctuality issues. We actively monitor pupil arrival times and will first try to identify the underlying reasons for lateness. If a pattern of lateness emerges, the school will arrange a meeting with parents to discuss the concerns and create a plan to improve the child's attendance. This may include setting up a 'Punctuality Action Plan' or working with other agencies. If the lateness continues to be an issue and a child is late for school six or more times within a 4-week period, the school reserves the right to request that **Buckinghamshire Council** issues a **Penalty Notice**. This is a fine that can be issued in accordance with the Council's code of conduct and national guidelines for persistent unauthorised absence, which includes persistent lateness. The school's ultimate goal is to ensure all pupils arrive on time to maximise their learning opportunities and avoid disruption to their education.

Penalty Notices may be considered in the following circumstances:

- Penalty Notices will be considered when there are 10 or more consecutive sessions recorded with either the 'G' or 'O' attendance codes, excluding weekends and official school holidays.
- Penalty Notices will also be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period. This will be judged on an individual case and a blanket rule will not be applied. Patterns of absence will be closely monitored to spot signs when there is a pattern of behaviour that clearly indicates that the parent is trying to get around the National Framework to avoid the Penalty Notice process. For example, if there are 8 sessions of 'G' codes plus two other unauthorised sessions within the last 10 weeks.
- Students are of compulsory school age when the leave of absence was taken i.e. the term after the student turns five and up to the end of June in the year when the student turns 16.

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.

Where possible, the school encourages parents/carers to book medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is unavoidable a copy of the appointment details should be provided to the school office before the day of the appointment. Children must be collected from the school office and signed out.

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 school does not advocate term time holidays and it is expected that all holidays, visits to see family etc take place during the school closure periods. All school holiday dates are published to parents one year in advance. If they need to go away in an emergency, a Notification of Absence form must be submitted to the Headteacher before they go away. If the family plan to go abroad they will be expected to provide evidence of the return journey.

- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- **Bereavement:** Attending the funeral of a close family member (only one day will be approved)
- **Medical:** Hospital or specialist medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.
- **Family Crisis:** A sudden and significant family emergency, such as a fire, flood, or serious illness of a close relative (only one day will be approved)
- **Court or Legal Proceedings:** The child is required to attend court or other legal proceedings as a witness or for other legal reasons.
- **Religious Observance:** Days of religious observance for the family. The school should be notified in advance (only one day will be approved)
- **Specialised Training/Opportunities:** The child is taking part in a regional, national, or international competition or performance that requires their absence. This applies to elite-level sports, music, or performing arts.
- **Special Educational Needs:** Absences that are part of a pre-agreed plan to support a child's specific educational needs, which may include phased return to school.

This list is not exhaustive, and each request will be judged on a case-by-case basis by the head teacher.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here from the school's website or from the main school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include: In contrast to unplanned absences, parents or carers must notify the school of any **authorised absence** requests in advance of the absence itself. All requests for absence from school during term time, including for exceptional circumstances, must be made by completing an **Absence Request Form**, which is available from the school office or the school website. This form should be submitted to the head teacher at least two weeks before the requested date of absence. The head teacher will then review the request and determine whether the circumstances meet the criteria for an authorised absence. The school will not grant requests for family holidays or non-essential trips. A written response will be provided to the parent or carer, informing them of the decision and, if approved, the specific dates the absence is authorised for.

- 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 (*see definition above*) (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 required 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)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send an email, send a text message. The school may also visit the family home, contact extended family relatives, speak with a neighbour, make contact with the school of the child's sibling, contact the police, liaise with Children's Services
- 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 conduct further visits to the family home, contact extended family, speak with a neighbour, make contact with the school of the child's sibling, contact the police, liaise with Children's Services, report the child as Missing in Education

Strategies for promoting attendance

At our school, we believe that promoting, incentivising, and celebrating good attendance is key to a child's success. We have a multi-faceted approach to encourage all pupils to attend school regularly and on time. We start by building a strong foundation, working with families and pupils from the very beginning. During transition meetings, we actively discuss the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and in the early weeks of the new school year, we even help our younger pupils rehearse daily routines to make coming to school a positive experience. Our commitment is further reinforced through regular school meetings with parents, where we can discuss any attendance concerns in a supportive and collaborative way.

We make sure to regularly celebrate pupils' efforts. Each week, we update our school-wide displays to show which house has the best attendance, creating a sense of friendly competition and shared responsibility. We also share this information with families and the wider school community. At the end of every term, we hold special assemblies where pupils with good attendance receive certificates as a tangible reward for their hard work. But the celebrations don't stop there. The house with the highest attendance for the term earns special privileges, such as additional playtime or a unique activity day, making the effort to attend school a truly rewarding experience for the whole team.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly share information about your child's attendance. This includes sending out attendance reports to all families at the end of each term, which are included with your child's academic report. Furthermore, we closely monitor attendance on an ongoing basis. If we notice a change in your child's attendance pattern, we will notify you immediately following a review period of every four weeks. This proactive approach allows us to offer timely support where attendance has dropped, or to provide well-deserved recognition where attendance has shown a significant improvement.
- Monitor attendance and absence data on a weekly basis, collating data over each half term and across the school year. This will be done across the school and at an individual pupil level. We don't do this

- Identify whether 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 board.

- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, Senior Link Teachers for each phase, SENCo and Achievement Lead 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

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

The school's strategy for poor attendance is a **graduated pathway**, which means we use a step-by-step approach to identify issues, provide support, and take action. This pathway is designed to be proactive and supportive, aiming to address the root causes of absence before they escalate into more serious problems. The process is a cycle of **Assess, Plan, Do, and Review** (APDR), allowing us to continuously adapt our support to a student's changing needs.

Trigger Points and Actions

Our policy has specific trigger points that initiate different levels of intervention:

- **Initial Concern (Attendance below 95% or a pattern of absence):** At this stage, the attendance officer conducts an initial review. The information will be shared with the Senior member of the Leadership Team (SLT) linked to that phase. This might include a phone call to the parents to discuss the absences, verify reasons, and offer early support. We aim to have an open, non-judgmental conversation to understand any underlying issues. A record of this communication is kept.
- **Persistent Absence (Attendance below 90%):** This is a key trigger point.
 - The Attendance Officer meets with the Family Support Worker and the Headteacher to review the student's attendance report. This information will be shared with the Phase Leaders and the SLT Link Member.
 - The Attendance Team identifies cases for an **informal support meeting** and a letter sent to invite them to the meeting. This letter invites parents to an informal support meeting at the school. This is a crucial step for opening a dialogue and is documented with a 'Support Meeting Invitation' form. This meeting may be with the Family Support Worker and the Phase Leaders and the SLT Link Member in order to work collaboratively to support the family and pupil.

- The purpose of this meeting is to work together to identify the barriers to attendance and agree on a plan. This may involve using the 'Support Meeting Form' to formalise agreed-upon actions, such as referrals to internal or external support services (e.g., school counsellor, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), or a health professional). If a medical condition is a factor, an **Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)** may be created.
- **Monitoring Period (Four weeks):** Following the support meeting, the student's attendance is closely monitored for four weeks. During this time, absences will only be authorised with clear evidence, such as a doctor's note or a formal appointment letter.
 - **Improvement:** If the student's attendance improves, a **1B letter** is sent to the parents, acknowledging their efforts and celebrating the progress. The case is then moved to a less intensive monitoring status.
 - **No Improvement:** If attendance does not improve, a **2A letter** is sent. This letter is a formal warning that the situation has not improved and parents/carers will be contacted by the schools Family Support Worker.
- **Lack of Engagement:** If parents do not respond to the initial support meeting invitation, or do not attend a rearranged meeting, the school's response escalates immediately. A **2B letter** is sent, and the **County Attendance Team** may be informed. This is a critical action to ensure that the County Attendance Team is aware of the situation and can offer their support, which may include legal intervention.
- 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

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 will be used in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection
- Behaviour and Relationships

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Ashleigh Ferdinand- Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.