



# Hambleton CE Primary School Attendance Policy

## Our Christian Vision

Respectful      Creative      Resilient      Truthful  
Teamwork      Compassionate

'Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak. Their roots will grow down into God's love and keep them strong'. (Isaiah 40:31, Ephesians 3:17)

This policy is written in conjunction with *Working together to improve school attendance*, May 2022. DfE

## Introduction

The Headteacher and the Governing Body are responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school. Contact: [admin@hambleton.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hambleton.n-yorks.sch.uk)

*'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'.*

### **Working together to improve school attendance 2022 DfE**

*'Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. 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 nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners'.*

### **Working together to improve school attendance 2022 DfE**

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, but in doing so Hambleton School will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In the development and implementation of this policy,

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Hambleton School will consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Reporting Absence**

*'Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.'*

#### **Working together to improve school attendance 2022 DfE**

Children are expected to attend school every day of the academic year, unless there is a very good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (C / I / H / M) - Where the Headteacher approves pupil absence
- Unauthorised (G / O) - Where the Headteacher will not approve absence
- Late (before the register closes) – 'L'
- Late (after 9am – unauthorised) – 'U'

If a child is to be absent, parents should call the school on **each** morning of the absence stating a full and detailed reason – before 9.15am. The Headteacher will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation is refused, for instance because a child was kept off school for a birthday or a very minor ailment, then parents would be informed of the reason for not authorising the absence.

If contact explaining the child's absence is not made by parents or carers, then the school office will try to contact the home by telephone on that initial morning. If contact cannot be made with the person named as first contact, the school will leave a message and then proceed to try and make contact with other named people, until all possibilities have been exhausted. If a child's absence remains unexplained, especially after three days, the school would consider if support should be sought from Social Services or Early Help, whether a home visit may be appropriate. In exceptional cases, a police Welfare Check may be requested.

### **Completing the Register**

**The law requires that all schools maintain an attendance register which is taken twice, once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session.** Registers provide the daily legal record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons, registers are required to be marked accurately.



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The Admin Team are responsible for inducting new staff on completing registers and reporting any concerns about the completion of registers to the Headteacher.

Morning Registers are taken promptly at 8.45 am and submitted online.

Afternoon Registers are taken promptly at 1.00 pm and submitted online.

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a leave of absence during term time. **Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday**, but the Headteacher may choose to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave, the Headteacher will consider each case individually. The school will not authorise holidays for any pupils at the start of a new academic year or for Year Six in April/May as this is the time for National assessments for Year Six pupils. New leave of absence forms can be obtained from the school office, and all requests must be submitted at least four weeks before the first day of intended absence. No request for leave of absence can be granted retrospectively so in such circumstances, leave would be unauthorised.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which school, parents and carers must seek to avoid.

All unauthorised leave of absence in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) taken will result in action being taken by the local authority, at this point a Fixed Penalty Notice will be sought by the school.

### **Punctuality**

School begins officially at 8.45 am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 8:45 am should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. The child will then go to their classroom. If their parents are with them, they are asked to sign them in with reasons for lateness. School ends at 3.00pm.

Being late to school is embarrassing for children and arrival after the start of the school day means they are likely to miss vital learning e.g. phonics, maths and reading which are often taught at the beginning of the school day. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.



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### Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Let the school know as soon as possible, why your child is unable to attend that day.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is absolutely essential
- Talk to the Headteacher if your child develops any medical condition which may affect their attendance in the future. Support from the school nurse may be possible
- If you would like support with your child's attendance, please contact their class teacher in the first instance.

### Concerns Procedure

The DfE defines attendance below 90% as persistent absenteeism and attendance below 50% as severely persistent absenteeism.

Every pupil's attendance is monitored day-to-day by the school office and half-termly by the Headteacher. Where attendance becomes a concern, the Headteacher will make individual contact with the family. **Where attendance drops below 90% (persistent absenteeism) a formal letter is sent to the family and a 20-day monitoring may be put in place. If attendance does not significantly improve over this period, parents/carers must attend an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss how absence can be improved, followed by a second 20-day monitoring period. If attendance does not significantly improve over this period, the family may be referred to the Attendance & Enforcement Officer (see below).**

Persistent lateness will be monitored half termly by the Headteacher. **Formal monitoring and attendance meetings may be put in place if a child is regularly late for school. If punctuality does not significantly improve after school-level measures, the family may be referred to the Attendance & Enforcement Officer (see below).**

Individual circumstances are always taken into account. A child's attendance could decrease considerably due to one genuine period of illness but the Headteacher will expect that attendance will increase again after the period of illness.

Absences due to minor ailments/illness, regular absences and unexplained absences are significant concerns and it is always the school's intention to identify issues and intervene early. Support is always offered and by working together, parents and school can improve the situation. However, if this does not happen and the school continues to be concerned about a child's low attendance, the Headteacher may decide to code any future absence as unauthorised, unless robust medical evidence is given. All unauthorised absences, using the 'O' code, are



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monitored closely by the head teacher and this therefore, may be the trigger for involving external agencies. (e.g. Early Help Service, Health Worker or Social Care).

### **The Role of the Attendance and Enforcement Officer**

As a Local Authority maintained school, Hambleton has a linked Attendance and Enforcement Officer. Where internal school measures and support are not successful in improving the attendance and punctuality of a child and their family, school will refer to the Attendance and Enforcement Officer.

*'Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal duty. Failure to do so is an offence under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 and, following referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention, may be dealt with by the following: a Prosecution in the Magistrates Courts under s444 (1) or (1A) of the above Act, a Penalty Notice being issued or an application made to the Family Courts for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989'.*

**(Initial Warning Letter)**

### **Incentivising Attendance**

Effective schools should be consistent in conveying their positive regard for regular attendance to parents, pupils and teachers. Children quickly pick up the message that their attendance is important.

Hambleton School will incentivise high attendance with measures including reward systems and highlighting excellent attendance.

### **The Role of the Governing Body**

*'Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. We therefore expect all trusts and governing bodies 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, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most*
- *Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance'*

### **Working together to improve school attendance 2022 DfE**

The governing body at Hambleton School will review attendance data at each meeting. This will include:



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- Overall attendance as well as attendance for groups including Pupil Premium children, children with SEND – benchmarked against national and regional data where this is available
- Data on persistent absenteeism and, when appropriate, severe persistent absenteeism
- Data on punctuality including any school actions to improve the punctuality of families who are regularly late

**Date of policy review: June 2023**

**Next Review: Autumn 2026**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)