



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Our Christian Vision

Respectful
Teamwork

Creative
Teamwork

Resilient
Compassionate

Truthful
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 reflects the new *National Framework for Penalty Notices and Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024*. DfE

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for Hambleton pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Nationally, and at Hambleton School, children's attendance has not yet returned to the levels it was at pre-COVID. The impact of children missing school is recognised nationally with pupils with the highest attainment at the end Key Stage Two having higher rates of attendance compared with those with the lowest attainment. At Hambleton we also see that children missing school, or late to arrive in school, are likely to miss key areas of the curriculum which they may struggle to catch up with.

*'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. **Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly**'.*

Working together to improve school attendance 2024 DfE

We recognise that some children may have medical conditions which mean their attendance is likely to be lower than others, or that some children may struggle with anxiety about coming to school. We are committed to working supportively with our children and families to help them achieve the highest attendance possible.

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

Creative Resilient
Truthful Compassionate
Respectful Teamwork



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

'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. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.'

Working together to improve school attendance 2024 DfE

The Headteacher and the Governing Body are responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school. The School's Attendance Officer is Mrs V. Brigham. Our NYC Attendance and Enforcement Officer is Mrs V. Nightingale

Reporting Absence

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 and two register codes for lateness:

- 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.

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

Creative Resilient
Truthful Compassionate
Respectful Teamwork



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Morning Registers are taken promptly at 8.45 am, closed at 9am and submitted online.

Afternoon Registers are taken promptly at 1.00 pm, closed at 1.15pm and submitted online.

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.

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.

School will check the punctuality of all children at the end of each month and at the end of each half term. If a child has been late to school more than four times in a month, we will write to the parents warning them that this has happened, explaining the likely detrimental effects on their child's learning and put in place a two-week monitoring period during which we expect punctuality to improve. We will also seek to support a family in these circumstances e.g. with embedding morning routines.

Please note that it is a parent/carers responsibility that their children arrive at school punctually.

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.

An APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and preferably at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested.

Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** Exceptional Circumstances Leave of Absence forms can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the school office.

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.



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Appendix 1 details the exceptional circumstances in which leave of absence may be applied for and also the issuing of fixed penalty notices. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the changes to penalty notices.

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 school Attendance Officer. Where attendance becomes a concern, school 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).**

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 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. The Attendance and Enforcement Officer may



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

represent North Yorkshire Council in taking legal action against the parent/carer of a child with poor attendance.

'North Yorkshire Council believes that regular school attendance is essential if children are to gain the full benefit from their education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it is the duty of all parents to ensure their children receive an efficient, full time education. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996'.

NYC Notice to Improve letter

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 2024 DfE

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

- Overall attendance as well as attendance for groups including Pupil Premium children, children with SEND
- 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: October 2024

Next Review: Autumn 2027

Signed _____ (Headteacher)

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors)



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Appendix 1

Term Time Leave of Absence- FAQs for Parents- from September 2024

This document has been updated to reflect changes from September 2024 in the law and information from the new National Framework for the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

1. Who can make the decision not to agree / authorise the requested leave of absence?

The headteacher at the school makes the decision about whether to authorise term time leave requests. **However, statutory regulations make it clear that headteachers are not allowed to class any term time holiday as exceptional.**

Therefore, headteachers can only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances'. There is no statutory criteria for exceptional circumstances but some of the following reasons may apply:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Leave is only authorised where such 'exceptional circumstances' apply and cannot be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. The potential savings made by travelling on holiday during term time are also not a factor which can be considered.

2. What evidence is required for meeting the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'?

Supporting evidence **must** be submitted if parents wish the headteacher to consider their application as an 'exceptional circumstance'. This would be in the form of a letter (must be dated and on official headed paper) or email from a verified email account. Examples may include:

Deployment records

Correspondence from an employer stating that no other dates are available for their employee to take leave during any of the 13 week school holidays available

Medical records or a letter from a medical practitioner



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

This evidence forms part of the legal record for authorising absence. The headteacher reserves the right to independently verify the source of the source of the evidence and may make contact with employers, if required.

If the request for leave of absence does not have supporting evidence then leave of absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued if the leave is taken without the permission of the Head teacher.

3. Can a leave of absence be agreed/ authorised retrospectively?

No. If parents/carers have not applied to the school in advance then the request cannot be agreed / authorised retrospectively and should be coded as unauthorised absence. Leave of absence cannot be applied for retrospectively. Parents must apply for leave of absence at least 6 weeks prior to the first date of absence. Parents must obtain permission from the school before making any arrangements for leave.

4. When are penalty notices (fines) issued by the Local Authority? (This has changed from September 2024)

Penalty notices will be issued when the threshold is met. The threshold is:

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. A session is a morning or afternoon- each school day consists of 2 sessions.

This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence :

e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks.

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week)

or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

*** NEW From September 2024 * Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

From the start of the autumn term 2024, **only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:**



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. (previously £60 if paid within 21 days)
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. **This will often include considering prosecution**, but may include other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

5. How do I apply for term time leave of absence?

Parents must complete an official request form and submit it to school at least 6 weeks prior to the first day of absence requested. Forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website. Evidence must be provided if parents wish the headteacher to consider any exceptional circumstances.

6. How will I be notified of the decision?

The headteacher will respond in writing to your request. As the letter is key evidence in any possible future court case, the letter is posted out to you. This ensures that the letter is deemed as served to you, the parent, with regard to legal requirements.

We will address the letter to both parents if they live in the same household. If parents live in separate households, we will also send the letter to the absent parent.

7. Will children under 5 years be issued with a penalty notice if un agreed leave of absence is taken in term time?

Children become of mandatory school age the term after their fifth birthday. Only children of mandatory school age come under the regulations. This means that some children in EY may not be of statutory school age and therefore no penalty notice would be issued.



Hambleton CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

8. Does the school or the LA make the decision to pursue the issuing of a penalty notice?

Following parents/carers taking the child/ren on an agreed/ unauthorised leave of absence which meets the criteria for the issuing of a penalty notice i.e. 10 school sessions within rolling 10 school weeks, the Headteacher must submit relevant documentation to the LA as follows:

- Certificate of absence for an agreed leave of absence for the period in question
- Witness statement written and signed by the Head teacher
- Copy of leave of absence application form from parent/carer including reason for request and the Head teacher's reply (if possible)

The LA will then determine whether a penalty notice should be issued.

9. What if I take my child out of school without completing prior a written application?

No request for leave of absence can be granted retrospectively so in such circumstances, leave would be unauthorised.

10. Is the Penalty Notice issued per parent per child?

A penalty notice of £80/ child is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £160 thereafter. The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer.

Legislation indicates that the LA can issue penalty notices per parent per child. However, current NYCC policy is to issue penalties per child per family. The authority will determine on a case by case basis which option is most suitable based on information received but can still exercise its legal right to issue penalties per child per parent.

11. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, what happens next?

The LA would consider progressing the case to the magistrates' court under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1). An officer of the Education Social Work Service would present the case initially but, if a not guilty plea is entered by the parent, then the initial hearing would be adjourned to prepare for a full trial.



Hambleton CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Appendix 2

Attendance is Changing

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notices issued after the 19th August 2024

