



Hempsted C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

Growing Together in God's Love

Approved by: Full Governing Body **Date:** March 2024

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Signed by: *Ben Nash 6/3/24* on behalf of the Governing Body

Hempsted C of E Primary School Christian Vision
Growing together in God's Love

We will aspire to achieve our unique God given potential by 'living life to the full' (John 10:10). We will share an inspiring education underpinned by the strong Christian values of our community.

"I can do all things through God who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13:

Our Mission Statement

We will achieve our vision together by:

- Enabling our children to be happy, creative and successful learners who strive to be their best; truly celebrating everyone's unique abilities.
- Providing a broad, structured and challenging curriculum, reflecting our Christian beliefs, so that each child can flourish; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and academically.
- Being an inclusive school where everyone can feel safe, hopeful and happy.
- Fostering self-esteem, dignity and respect, founded in our deeply Christian values.
- Placing our church school at the heart of our community. Being welcoming and working in partnership to nurture our families, 'Friends', the church and wider community.
- Developing our knowledge and understanding of the Bible and the Christian faith; the faith of others and the cultural values of the world.
- Structuring our Collective Worship with the children to understand our Christian values and live them in our daily lives.

... the child grew and became strong; Jesus was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. Luke 2:40

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1. Aims

Hempsted C of E Primary School believes that all children have the right to a full-time education in order for them to achieve their God given potential. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

› [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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 Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Our attendance governor is Pam Quick

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher 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

Head Teacher is Richard Waller

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer, in conjunction with the Head Teacher is responsible for:

- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Working with the Education Inclusion Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Liaising with the Head Teacher regarding when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Kate Subryan

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance twice daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School administrator

The school administrator will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- If required, transfer calls from parents to the pastoral lead/attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Input attendance codes into SIMs, based on codes recorded in the paper registers.
- Check that there has been a notification of absence from a parent/carer for all children who have been recorded as absent.
- If a child is absent, and there has been no contact from parents/carers, call the parent and/or refer to SLT or pastoral lead.

The school administrator is Diane Beddall

3.7 Parents/carers

We also encourage parent/carers to promote an ethos with their children/family which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. We would ask parent/carers therefore to encourage good habits by:

- Ensuring their child attends school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.
- every day on time
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Making sure your child gets enough sleep so they are able to wake up in plenty of time to get ready for school and eat a good breakfast
- Make sure your child arrives on the school playground between 8.50am and 9am
- Contact the school as soon as possible in the morning if your child will not be attending school stating the reason
- Make sure that your child attends school wearing the correct uniform and brings appropriate kit and provision for lunch
- Help your child by showing an interest in school life
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- If your child appears reluctant to attend school, contact the child's class teacher immediately to discuss any concerns. There could be a number of reasons for this reluctance such as difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important to identify any reasons for a reluctance to attend school quickly and before it becomes a more serious issue.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to take responsibility for themselves and others and to play a positive role in the life of the school, making the most of educational opportunities available. We therefore expect children to:

- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually (e.g. getting up on time/when they are asked to);
- Be kind and caring to each in order to create a sense of belonging;
- Talk to an adult if they have any worries or concerns over school that make them feel like they don't want to come;
- Wear the correct school uniform and arrive at school ready to learn.

Vulnerable Pupils

Any attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils will be discussed immediately with a designated safeguarding lead to ensure any actions are taken at the earliest possible opportunity.

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 second 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:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, 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.

The school opens at 7.45am for pupils who attend breakfast club. Children may enter the school from 8.50am and the school day begins promptly at 9am. Children remain the responsibility of their parents/carers until 8.50am when staff will begin supervision duty.

4.2 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for their child's absence as near to 8 am on the day of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence (you can leave a message on the phone)

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.

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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9.30am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (9.30am) will be marked as unauthorised absent, using the appropriate code
- Any child arriving after 9am will need to enter school via the school office to be registered.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- 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 email the parent/carer or conduct a home visit.
- 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 the Education Inclusion Officers

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels 3 times a year (at the end of each term).

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as personal circumstances that are out of the control of the parent that could not reasonably have prevented or accommodated; e.g. a wedding, funeral, or if an employer can provide evidence that holidays cannot be taken at any other time

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 7 days before the absence, and in accordance with our leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website under the Parent tab. The Head Teacher 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, **each** parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

- Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with parent/carers.
- Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers and arrange a meeting with the parents. This is known as an Attendance Improvement Meeting (A.I.M)
- Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will discuss the attendance concern with the Local Authority
- Stage 4: If the concerns persist the Head Teacher will make a formal referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act.

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.

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 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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 |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| 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 | Pupil from a traveller community is |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| | absence | travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| 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 | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| 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 |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |