



# New Hinksey C.E. Primary School

*Living life in all its fullness.*

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2023

### 1. Introduction:

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Your child should arrive on time every day.

### 2. The Importance of Regular Attendance:

Any absence affects a child's schooling; regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence can also disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

### 3. Promoting Regular Attendance:

It is the responsibility of parents, pupils and school staff to ensure regular attendance and, in order to achieve this, we will incorporate an attendance summary in every child's annual report.

### 4. Categories of Absence:

The school classifies every half-day absence as authorised or unauthorised. We will therefore require an explanation for any absence.

Authorised absences include illness and medical/dental appointments. The school may require evidence of the appointment.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This may result in the Local Authority instigating sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy before or during the school day, unexplained absences, late arrival, birthdays, trips and holidays, and excessive illnesses without medical evidence.

Children may be reluctant to attend school. In such cases it is important that the school is made aware of the problem in order that it can be discussed with the parents and child. Parents should not cover up the absence of reluctant attendees as this may exacerbate the problem.

Please support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having clothes and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school

## **5. Severe Absenteeism (SA):**

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. This level of absenteeism will cause significant damage to a child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. Any child who is identified as being severely absent will have an individual attendance plan which will include multi-agency support. Parents will be expected to engage with professionals with the aim of improving the child's attendance to 96% or above.

## **6. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year. This level of absenteeism may cause damage to a child's educational prospects and we appreciate parents' support and co-operation in tackling this.

Absence is thoroughly monitored, and parents will be contacted if there are concerns about a child's attendance level.

All cases of persistent absenteeism are automatically reported to the County Attendance team. Parental consent will be sought to complete a Strengths and Needs assessment.

## **7. Absence Procedures:**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence and then on subsequent days.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Request a meeting if the absence is deemed persistent
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance falls below 90%.

## **8. The County Attendance Team:**

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, the County Attendance Team may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, or take action via a Non-Attendance referral. This legislation is covered in sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996:

*“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”*

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs assessment. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance. If parents have previously been issued with Penalty Notices, further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Parents may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. The Team is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Its telephone number is 01865 323513 and email address is [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **9. Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children who miss the start of the day may miss vital work and also information from their class teacher.

The school day starts at 8.40 a.m.

Registers are marked by 9.05 a.m. and your child will be marked as late if they are not in by that time.

At 9.25a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with regulations, children arriving after this will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, however this will not count as a present mark and it will constitute an unauthorised absence. This could mean the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher. You may also be asked to meet with an Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. Parents may approach the school at any time if they are encountering problems with punctuality.

## **10. Exceptional Leave:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling in the same way as any other absence. Parents are not expected to take children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

**The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.**

## **11. School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96%, and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level.

Our target is to achieve higher than 96% attendance; good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be among the best in Oxfordshire.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements can be made.

#### **12. Those People Responsible for Attendance Matters in this School Are:**

Mrs T Smyth, Headteacher

Mrs E Clarke, SENDCO

Mr B Baines Safeguarding and Attendance Governor

#### **13. Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.