

School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Authorised by

Executive Headteacher

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Responsibility

Respect

Resilience

Kindness

Honesty

Cooperation



Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Why regular attendance is so important	4
3 Understanding Types of Absence	5
4 Absence Procedure	7
5 Lateness	8
6 School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:	8
7 Child Missing Education (CME)	9
8 Communication – What we Need to Know	10
9 Further information	10
10 Monitoring arrangements	11
11 Links with other policies	11
Appendix A Procedure for those with persistent absence – Local Authority procedure	12



1 Introduction

At Heronsgate our vision is to ‘discover and realise the genius in everyone’. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential.

It is very important therefore that all children attend regularly and this policy sets out how, in conjunction with pupils, parents, staff and governors, we will achieve this.

This policy outlines

- the procedures by which school staff record school attendance;
- the procedures used to encourage maximum attendance and punctuality;
- the procedures used to reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- the ways in which we can provide support to parents to achieve good attendance;
- the early and decisive action the school takes if a pupil’s attendance and punctuality record impede learning.

It is linked to our six school values:



Responsibility

Our children take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their actions so that they make the most out of every opportunity.



Respect

Our children show respect for themselves by recognising that they are unique and valuable. They respect all members of our community, our country and our world.



Resilience

Our children love learning and take a positive approach to challenges that help them develop their understanding. They build confidence to learn from their mistakes and move forward.



Kindness

Our children show kindness through caring, sharing and thinking about others. They reflect on how their actions can help and support others in our community and in our world.



Honesty

Our children are honest by being truthful when sharing their views and their feelings. They act truthfully when learning with others.



Cooperation

Our children develop excellent cooperation skills. They enjoy learning together and value the views that others bring to a task.

And links to the following articles from the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.



Article 13 Children have a right to find things out;

Article 18 Children have a right to be protected;

Article 23 Children have a right to special education and care;

Article 28 Children have a right to a good quality education;

Article 29 Education should develop children’s talents;

Article 31 Children have a right to play and rest



2 Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of your child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and achievement. Any pupils' absence disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class. When children miss vital key learning objectives, it can be very difficult to catch up, placing them at a disadvantage to their peers.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal and parental responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice being issued or court action/prosecution.

Research has shown that regular attendance and good punctuality are key factors in children achieving their full potential at school.

Attendance and Punctuality in the Early Years

Establishing good habits from the start will help your child to settle more quickly and build good habits for later life. Coming to school on time, every day helps to develop confidence.

Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at a disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem.

The school keeps a register of attendance for every child. This is a legal document and records every half-day attendance and/or absence. Absences are classified as either authorised or unauthorised. For this reason, the school will ask parents/carers for the reason for each absence.

Every School Day Counts

Although we recognise that some absences cannot always be helped, please take a look at the table below to see exactly how much time your child could be missing.

365 Days in a Year	190 School Days in Total	Absence
100% Attendance	190 Days	0
95% Attendance	180 Days	2 Weeks
90% Attendance	171 Days	4 Weeks
85% Attendance	161 Days	6 Weeks
80% Attendance	152 Days	More than half a term
75% Attendance	143 Days	9+ Weeks

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, including parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will give you details on attendance in our monthly newsletter and on our website.



Safeguarding

Effective attendance procedures are integral to ensuring all children are kept safe. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. As a result, any unexplained absences will be followed up quickly and robustly. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Guide for Parents for further information.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: -

- a. To age, ability and aptitude
- b. To any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance to school or otherwise.

If you wish to find out more information about the legislation around attendance, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

3 Understanding Types of Absence

Every-half day absence from school has to be classified by the Head teacher (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, either by telephone, by email or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be made outside of school time or unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to illness, parents/carers are requested to:



- **Provide medical evidence to the school. This can be in the form of GP/Hospital/Medical/Dental Appointment letters/cards, Copies of prescriptions/antibiotics issued (providing the child's name is indicated there on).**

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to an emergency or unavoidable cause, parents/carers are requested to:

- **Complete a Request for Leave form for the attention of the Attendance Officer and request the absence be authorised.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "authorised leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the use of sanctions and/or referring to the Local Authority for legal intervention.

Unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents/carers not communicating the reason for absence to the school
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Parents not providing medical evidence to the school to support the absence as being due to ill health
- Child who arrives at school after the Registration period has ended (9.30am)
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, holidays or overseas trips in term time
- 'Study leave' taken to prepare for entrance exams (any sickness before an external exam must be backed up by medical evidence)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Truancy

- If a child truants from school before coming into registration or onto the school site the school will inform the parent immediately.
- If a child truants from the school site after having come onto the school premises the parent will be informed and the police will be informed
- If a child regularly absents him/herself from school a support programme involving either the Designated Safeguarding Lead or SENCo may need to be established

The school will at all times seek to find the reasons for the truancy – if they are concerned with school e.g. bullying, name calling, learning difficulties etc. Help will be sought through the class teachers with the normal support packages within the school e.g. targets, rewards, stickers, mentoring etc.

Absence in Term Time

Holidays or overseas trip absences in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students away in school time.



Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday/overseas trip in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Because of the damage to your child's learning caused by this, **we do not authorise any holidays/overseas trips in term time.**

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

Any holidays taken during term time will result in a follow-up meeting with the school's Attendance Officer and may result in a referral to the Local Authority and a fine being imposed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling from the beginning of the school year **for whatever reason** (this includes authorised and unauthorised absences). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Intervention Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Royal Borough of Greenwich Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service, whereby legal action could be initiated.

4 Absence Procedure

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence, either by calling the school office on 0208 317 0809/0208 836 9636 or emailing sao@herongate.greenwich.sch.uk (A phone call will be made to parents each time the child has been marked with an unauthorised absence code and no reason has been given for the absence).
- Contact the school on the subsequent days of absence as necessary.
- Provide evidence where possible, supporting the reason for absence.

What School will do if Attendance is a Concern

- Emails will be sent to parents to alert them to the concerns school has about their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Invite you into the school to discuss the situation with the attendance officer.
- Undertake interventions and offer support where possible/appropriate, through school resources and/or outside agencies.
- Use Royal Borough of Greenwich's guidance to improve attendance.
- Undertake home visits, as necessary.
- Hold pre-referral meetings to address irregular school attendance, in the presence of the officer from the Royal Borough of Greenwich Attendance Advisory Service.
- Undertake a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service if your child's **unauthorised** absence reaches 10% or more.



The Attendance Advisory Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems related to attendance together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, and unauthorised absences continue, the school may refer to the Attendance Advisory Service. The Attendance Advisory Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve your child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Attendance Advisory Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

A fine may be imposed to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a Penalty Notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Parents may wish to contact the Attendance Advisory Service themselves to ask seek advice or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 020 8921 8510.

5 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and is categorised as ‘irregular school attendance’. If your child misses the start of the day they miss their Early Bird learning, spending time with their peers and their class teacher and getting vital information/news for the day. The Late arrival of a child disrupts lessons, places the child at a disadvantage and can be embarrassing for them. All of which can contribute to a reluctance to attend school.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **9.05am**. We expect all children to be in class at that time. All children need to be in the playground by 8.50am, ready to go to class.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U code on register).

Poor punctuality is classified as ‘irregular school attendance’ and action will be undertaken to address it, following the school’s attendance procedure.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer to address and hopefully resolve the problem.

Please approach us at any time if you are experiencing problems getting your child to school on time.

Every Minute Counts

Please see the table below for the impact of poor punctuality on learning:

Lateness = Lost Learning (figures below are calculated over the school year)	
5 mins late each day	3 days lost
10 mins late each day	6.5 days lost
15 mins late each day	10 days lost



20 mins late each day	13 days lost
30 mins late each day	19 days lost

6 School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:

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

The minimum level of attendance and punctuality for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance and punctuality compares. Our target is to achieve 97% attendance, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

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

Strategies the school uses to promote regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The strategies below outline how we achieve the aim of regular and punctual attendance for all.

- We hold an induction interview/meeting before the child enters school if their previous school has reported poor attendance
- All new parents will be given a letter outlining the school's early action system and what the expectations are with regards to attendance
- At the end of each term those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate
- At the end of each academic year those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate
- Each week the class in KS1/2 with closest to 100% punctuality will be awarded a class certificate and will get to keep the punctuality trophy in their classroom for that week
- Each week the class in KS1/2 with closest to 100% attendance will be awarded a class certificate and will get to keep the attendance trophy in their classroom for that week
- Targets for the school for attendance and punctuality are displayed around the school, on newsletters and on the school website
- The class teacher, on the end of year record, will add comments on attendance and punctuality. They will also report on attendance and punctuality at Parents' Evenings
- Where there has been a marked improvement in attendance of particular students, a letter of recognition may be sent to the parent/s, and a certificate given to the pupil
- The designated Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for attendance will work closely with parents, the Attendance Advisory Officer for the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the child to improve poor performance, in line with borough and national policies



7 Child Missing Education (CME)

Any child who ceases to attend a school, without notification as to their new address and/or the school they are transferring to, becomes a '**Child Missing in Education**'. Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing in Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and Safeguarding legislation, as necessary. This can involve the police. The school recognises that children going missing from education could be at risk of significant harm, and as such further information is provided in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The attendance procedures are crucial to ensuring the safety of all children. If a child has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days without good reason and their whereabouts are unknown, the school has a legal obligation to report the child as missing education to the relevant local authority. In accordance with DfE regulations the child may be removed from the school roll.

A child will not be said to be off roll until:

- the next school has contacted Heronsgate to say that the child has begun.
- 20 days have elapsed and there has been no contact with the parents and a referral has been made to the Children Missing in Education team.
- the parent has provided a UK address in writing.
- the parent has stated in writing the intention to move the child to another country and has provided flight details and a forwarding address.

8 Communication – What we Need to Know

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we have always got up to date phone numbers for yourself and emergency contact numbers, for if you are unavailable.

Home Address

Let us know when you move and where you are moving to.

Removing a Pupil from Our School

If you make the decision to transfer your child to another school, for whatever reason and have given the relevant notice period to the school, as a matter of priority you need to provide the school with all of the necessary details.

You must provide us in writing or by email with your new address and the school your child is transferring to/the local authority in which you are applying for schools. If we do not receive this information and your child ceases to attend our school, they become a '**Child Missing in Education**', and we will take action as per guidance from the DfE and Local Authority.

Elective Home Education

If you make the decision to educate your child at home, you are required to advise us of this in writing.



Once the letter/email is received, we will remove your child from the school roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with you regarding this matter.

If a letter/email is not received, your child remains on the roll of the school and their absence is treated as unauthorised. Action to address this unauthorised absence will be followed as detailed above.

9 Further information

Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance – Mr Tim Lings

Designated safeguarding leads – Ms Saima Hussain, Mrs Shahnaz Ahmed and Mr Hafeez Khan

RBG Attendance Advisory Officer – Mrs Pui-Ching Isted

10 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years by the Assistant Head responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

11 Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including our procedures for recognising and reporting children who are missing in education (CME).



Appendix A Procedure for those with persistent absence – Local Authority procedure

We work with the Attendance Advisory Service at the Royal Borough of Greenwich and work in line with their procedures and policies.

Stage 1	Child's attendance drops below 95%. 'Expression of concern' (letter 1) sent to parents informing them that their child's attendance will be monitored.
Stage 2	Further absences for child, whether authorised or unauthorised. 'Expression of concern' (letter 2) sent to parents informing them that medical evidence will be required before absences due to illness can be authorised in future. Admin team to not authorise absence for illness without evidence.
Stage 3	Further unauthorised absences for child. 'Parent support meeting invite' (letter 3) sent to parents inviting them for a supportive meeting to discuss reasons for absence and make plans for this to improve. This may then involve referral to outside agencies for support, including funding from Boremans.
Stage 4	Further unauthorised absences for child, with at least 10% unauthorised in total. 'Pre-referral meeting invite' (letter 4) sent, inviting parents to attend a pre-referral meeting, where AAO from Greenwich will be present. Head of School informed that meeting is happening.
Stage 5	Further unauthorised absences for child, whether they attended PRM or not. Referral to AAS made for possible prosecution or parenting order. Admin team to send weekly attendance certificates to AAS.