



Hindhayes Infant School

Attendance policy

January 2023

At Hindhayes, we believe success is based on the partnerships between pupils, staff and the parent community. We endeavour to enrich and develop each child to be a successful individual that will become an active community citizen of the future.

Approved on: _____

Signed: _____

Role: _____

Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures when support and celebration are needed. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils at Hindhayes Infant School receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential. With a direct relationship between attendance, punctuality and attainment this policy aims to set out how Hindhayes Infant School will achieve the best possible attendance percentage.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out in clear terms the roles and responsibilities of class teachers, Headteacher, Governors, office staff, educational attendance officers, parents/carers and pupils at Hindhayes Infant together with the procedures to be followed in ensuring that the aim is met. It provides a framework for the school community.

1. Specific Aims

The policy has the following elements

- To outline the procedure for recording and reporting attendance and punctuality
- To achieve an overall whole school attendance and punctuality target of at least 96% in all year groups
- To highlight the importance of good attendance in the first three years of school for setting a solid foundation for future success.
- To ensure attendance and punctuality is a priority for all those associated with Hindhayes Infant School including pupils, parents, staff and governors and others working in partnership with Hindhayes Infant School
- To set out the interventions and rewards which will be implemented to improve attendance and punctuality; and
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for attendance and punctuality

2. Specific Roles and Responsibilities under the Policy:

- It is the responsibility of each individual family to ensure that their children attend school, on time, for every day that school is open. The only exception to this should be if a child has a medical condition which could prevent them, or others, successfully engaging in learning.
- In the instance of absence due to a contagious illness (e.g. chicken pox, measles, diarrhoea) it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that the child is no longer contagious before returning to school, for the health and safety of all members of the school community. NHS Guidance recommends at least 24-48 hours after the last episode for sickness.
- It is the responsibility of parents to arrange (where possible) for medical appointments and such to take place outside of school hours (9.00am – 3.00pm). Where this is not possible children should attend school as soon as possible after the appointment.
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform school of any absence by 9.30am on each day of any absence.
- It is the responsibility of the school to praise those children and families with good or better attendance. (see the whole school Relational Policy for further information on rewarding children at Hindhayes)
- It is the responsibility of the school to take an attendance register twice daily and to ensure that all families are kept informed at timely, regular intervals of their child's attendance and any issues that may arise from that. (this will be through termly letters, reports home to parents and termly attendance data at the end of each half term)
- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. The register will be taken electronically by the class teacher or teaching assistant.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the attendance of vulnerable groupings is tracked e.g. those with identified barriers such as a special educational need or those who might be identified as pupil premium

The school highlights when children should or should not be off in school in the weekly newsletter. At the time of writing this policy it also notes the up to date guidance on attendance at school with COVID 19.

3. Strategies to promote Attendance and Punctuality

3.1 Recording and Reporting Attendance and Punctuality

- Teachers will take the register AM at the start of the day (by 9.10am) and PM following lunchtime (by 1.10pm) which incorporates the two legal registers of the day (AM and PM).
- The School Office will check that the AM/PM registers have been taken by teachers. The School Office will listen to all messages on the dedicated absence line/email, left by parents reporting pupils to be absent or late between 9:30am and 10.00a.m. Once the register has closed at 9:10a.m and has been checked, the School Office (attendance administration) will record all absences via our computerised system. Where there is no message/reason for absence recorded by the parent/carer the absence will be logged as unauthorised. It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of the child's absence and daily until the child has returned to school.
- The attendance administration will endeavour to make contact with all parents after 9:30am of children absent from school; this will be through text message or phone call
- Periods of Absence with no parent contact. During any period of absence the school office will make contact with the family to ensure that there are no further concerns for the pupil. If a pupil is absent for a period of 10 sessions and there has been no contact with parents/guardians the attendance administrator must contact the Local Authority: Education & Attendance Service. If there are concerns about the student's welfare then these enquiries must begin earlier. In the case of Looked After Children or any children who are considered vulnerable on the second day of no contact agencies will also be contacted in line with safeguarding at Hindhayes Infant School.
- Pupils arriving after 9:10am The Parent/Carer will be required to sign in the late arrivals book at the school office. The office will check the signing in book before 9:10am and at intervals thereafter to record L or U marks after 9:30am.

3.2_ Reporting Attendance and Punctuality

The School Office (attendance administrator) will

- Report attendance and punctuality figures on a weekly basis for each class broken down (in the case of attendance) into the categories set out in Appendix 2 for the Head Teacher and Class Teachers. Attendance will also be reported for the different groups in the School (FSM, Ethnicity, Gender, SEN, Year Group);
- Provide any necessary information for the Local Governing Body;
- Provide all necessary information for annual attendance returns; and
- Support the Class Teachers with their role in Attendance and Punctuality and let them know on a weekly basis those students who are below 90% in each year group and the weekly attendance for their class
- Provide necessary information for reporting to parents during the year at regular intervals.

3.3 Recording Punctuality

- **Pupils arriving at Hindhayes Infant School in the morning will** receive a late mark (L) if they arrive after 9.10am and before 9:30am. If pupils arrive after the register has closed (9:30 am) they will receive a U mark.
- In some cases the lateness will be for a legitimate reason and the school will receive notification from a parent or guardian. For example, a car breaking down or sudden illness in the family.

3.4 Definitions of terms related to attendance

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as Authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence Authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school for a recognised ballet exam this is permitted and so it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- An absence is marked as unauthorised if parents do not inform the school of any reason for absence.

Lateness

If a child arrives after the registers have been completed at 9.10am but before 9.30am they will be marked with an 'L' code. If they arrive after 9.30am they will be marked with a 'U' code. If a child is attending a medical appointment and is therefore late in, they will be marked with an 'M' code and this will be an authorised absence.

Parents or guardians should inform of absence on the first day by telephone call to the office or by sending a note giving reason for absence. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child in the morning the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. This is to ensure the safety of our children and families and must be the first priority within the school office daily calendar.

4. Supporting Students with their Attendance the following strategies will be followed to provide both parents/carers and pupils with support, advice and guidance to improve pupil attendance

Table 1) Attendance Categories at Hindhayes Infant School

Stage	% Required
GOLD	100% Perfect !
SILVER	Above 97%
GREEN	Above 95%
YELLOW	Take Care 95%- 90%
RED	Grave Concern – Action 90% (ESW service referral)

5. Implement a system of rewards

In order to highlight to pupils and parents and carers the value of attendance and punctuality the following rewards will be in place:

- Through the school newsletter the school stakeholders will be informed of the attendance percentages of the whole school and the highest class for that week
- The class with highest attendance will be rewarded termly with a certificate in assembly
- Class Teachers will promote good attendance and raise awareness through ongoing pupil praise
- Class Teachers will also ensure that they celebrate good attendance with parents and carers at parent evenings
- When classes have the highest attendance, they will be rewarded by the Head Teacher with e.g. a new book for their book corner

4.1 Attendance Targets and Parent/Carer discussions

The importance of the 96% target as a minimum for attendance is discussed with parents when they start school and also when reporting on progress throughout each academic year, as is the importance of punctuality. The link between attainment and attendance is also stressed.

4.2 Informing parents and guardians

All parents and carers will receive a weekly update on the whole school attendance % in the school newsletter. They are updated on their own child's attendance through termly parents' evenings, annual written reports and when required attendance letters.

4.3 Students whose attendance falls below 95% - Take Care - Attendance Action

Through attendance monitoring with the attendance team the Head Teacher is aware of those families where a pupils attendance falls below 95%. Through DSL discussion, the safeguarding team will consider if there may be any wider safeguarding issues for this family. If so additional support can be requested from the PFSA. More often than not, the children in this group have had periods of illness, which means that over time attendance % will raise above the required 95%. Class teachers are informed of their class attendance through staff meetings and they are vigilant to this when registering their children and reporting concerns.

4.4 Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% - Grave concern, attendance action, warning letters:

Should a pupil's attendance fall below 90% students they will be on **attendance action** monitoring. The Head Teacher and the school attendance team will complete this. This team consists of the school ELSA, an office administrator and when required the school PFSA. Together they will:

- discuss families causing concern and what evidence there is behind the attendance %.
- if the evidence requires they will then inform parents through the Local Authority Letter 1
- inform class teachers of the pupils on attendance action
- monitor the attendance of the pupil for improvement until their attendance is back at the required 90% and

If there is no improvement within 20 days of the first letter then HT will invite parents/carers in to meet for a Cause for Concern meeting. At this meeting a Parent Contract will be signed detailing actions to be taken by parents/carers, the School, and if available or applicable the Education & Attendance Service. If parents do not attend the meeting or refuse to sign the agreement the meeting and contract must still be finalised by the team in their absence and sent to them. If required the plan may also be sent to the A&E to ensure that there is the documentation in place to support with any further actions that may need to be taken.

If there is no improvement the pupil could be referred to the Attendance and Engagement team and they could face penalty fines and prosecution.

6. Time away from school in Term-time

6.1 Any time off during term time is strongly discouraged due to the impact this will have on a student's learning. Time off during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. These circumstances shall be considered by the Head Teacher but by way of guidance the following would not be exceptional reasons;

- If the reason given is that the time off is for a holiday that is cheaper in term time
- If the reason given is the availability of the holiday
- If the reason given is the overlap with Hindhayes Infant School holiday time

Permission is likely to be refused if;

- A student's attendance is below 95%
- It is near an exam or test time
- It is the first term of the school year
- It is the view of the Head Teacher that it may have a harmful effect on a pupil's education

6.2 Procedure for applying for time –off in term time

Parents/Carers need to apply for approval of time away from school on the standard application form held at the school office at least three weeks before the proposed time away.

Any requests need to include supporting evidence to support the application. This should include, by way of example;

- Doctor's notes;

Hindhayes Infant School will respond to this request giving reasons for the decision to approve or not. If the application for leave is approved the letter to parents will state;

- The expected date of return
- The need for the parents to contact the school should any delay occur
- What action will be taken if the pupil fails to return on the agreed date

If the application for leave is refused Hindhayes Infant School will write to the parents/carers and what actions will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away.

7. Penalty Notices

As a school, Hindhayes would not want to fine families for taking term time leave. However, in line with local and national guidance the school must follow the processes and practices delegated to them by Somerset County Council and the Department for Education.

In line with our Attendance Policy and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

- a request will be made to the Local Authority to issue you with a penalty notice if there are unauthorised absences resulting from no holiday request being made or
- a child has authorised term-time leave is taken due to a holiday. In this occasion, both parents/carers can be fined.

8. Chronic Illness over time

If a child is deemed to be ill for a period of time medical evidence will be obtained from the child's doctor. Parental permission must have been given through signing a permission form. This documentation is important to support the bank of evidence around the attendance of the pupil.

9. Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with regular oversight from the governors. Parent/Carers will be consulted with particularly in relation to rewards for good attendance and punctuality. This policy will be formally evaluated annually, prior to the annual review by the Governing Body of Hindhayes Infant School.

10. Helpful links

Links are embedded here for you to the local authority letters that the school are required to use. These can also be found on our school website if you are unable to access an electronic copy of this policy.



Attendance-Letter-t Fixed-Penalty-notic Somerset-LA-Letter-o-parents.27861533le-letter.278615330.p 1.278615330.pdf



Somerset-LA-Letter- Somerset-LA-Letter- Term-time-leave-res 2.278615330.pdf 3.278615330.pdfponse.278615330.pc

These and all actions taken with regard to attendance are taken in line with national and local requirements.

At all times the DSL/DDSL are monitoring vulnerable families through ongoing safeguarding vigilance.