

Harrow Lodge Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

REVIEWED:	Spring 2024
EFFECTIVE PERIOD:	Summer 2024- Summer 2025
DUE FOR REVIEW:	Spring 2025
RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)	MRS L SEARLE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Harrow Lodge Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.
- 1.2 This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:
- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
 - ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
 - ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
 - ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.
- 1.3. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Having a good education will ensure you provide your child with the best start in life and the best possible opportunities for their future. If your child does not attend school regularly, they will fall behind with work and may lose friends, causing them to lack in essential social skills.
- 1.4 Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 1.5 The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age (between 5 years old and 16 years old) registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence and punishable in law. In the event of regular unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Education Welfare Service. An offence is not, however, committed if it can be evidenced that:
- the pupil was absent with agreement of the school;
 - the pupil was ill or prevented from attending school by an unavoidable cause – this must be evidenced by a medical report or other suitable documentation;
 - the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- 1.6 Only the school, within the context of law, can approve the absence, not the parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note (or phone call / email / text) in explanation does not in itself oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. **If, after investigation, doubt remains regarding the absence or no reason is provided for the absence, it must be treated as unauthorised.**
- 1.7 The school is committed to improving attendance based on the '*DfE Guidance 2022 Working together to improve school attendance*' by successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home and in school. We will do this in partnership with the Local Authority and families.

All partners will work together to ensure the following:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

2. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

- 2.1 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils, all members of school staff, the Local Authority and external agencies.
- 2.2 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. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. The school aims to provide such an environment.
- 2.3 The school, in collaboration with the Local Authority and partner agencies, will work together to remove barriers and encourage early intervention where required to promote high levels of attendance across all year groups.

- 2.4 Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.
- 2.5 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to have an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational need they may have.
- 2.6 By law, all children between the age of 5 and 16 must receive full-time education, from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and to the last Friday in June of the academic year in which he/she turns 16 years old. During this time your child must strive to remain above the school attendance target (96%) and attend school as regularly as possible. If your child's attendance falls below **90%**, they are deemed in law as a 'persistent absentee' and your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service. It is the school who must give permission for your child to be absent, not the parents/carers. If your child does not attend school regularly, your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service and legal action (under The Education Act 1996 – Section S7 444(1) and 444 (1A)) may be taken.

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 states:

“The parent/s of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to his age ability and aptitude and***
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”***

If found guilty of your child not attending school on a regular basis, the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500.00 and/or a custodial sentence of up to three months. If a parent is being prosecuted under Section 444 (1A), defendants are required to attend court as a custodial sentence may be imposed; if they fail to do so, a warrant may be issued.

- 2.6 We will report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report. However, we will report attendance and punctuality to parents of year 5 & 6 children on a weekly basis.
- 2.7 Parents/carers will be contacted should their child's attendance falls to 90%

3. REGISTRATION

- 3.1 The school will keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked as either present or absent. Registers must be completed by an allocated time on each morning and afternoon by law. Registers must also show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school.
- 3.2 Accurate registration and the preservation of security of registers are the responsibility of the Head Teacher. Registers may be needed as evidence in court where parents are

being prosecuted for school attendance offences and inappropriate authorisation of absences could compromise proceedings.

- 3.3 Registers will be maintained and completed in SIMS. Should manuscript registers be necessary they must be completed in black ink and any corrections/amendments made in such a way that the original entry, and the correction/amendment, are clearly distinguishable. Correction fluid **MUST NOT** be used on legal documents such as registers.

4. PUNCTUALITY

- 4.1 It is important for your child to arrive at school on time as lateness is detrimental to their learning and the learning of others. **It is important to note that persistent lateness constitutes irregular school attendance in law.** Registers will be taken at 8.50am, your child should arrive to school around 5-10 minutes before this time. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as 'L' (late before registers have closed). Arrivals after 9.20 (AM) or 12.30 (PM) EYFS / 1.30 (PM) Years 1-2 (PM) / 1:00 (PM) Years 3-6 will lose their mark and will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence – late after registers have closed). Figures of lateness will appear on their school report and attendance certificates. Below is a graph showing how arriving late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



- 4.2 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day.
- 4.3 Late-arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

5. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

- 5.1 Leave of absence during term time

The school takes a firm view on any absence during term time. Under new legislation introduced in 2013, the school **cannot** authorise any leave of absence during term time. If a student is absent prior to or does not return after a school holiday (half term, Christmas, Easter or Summer), the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. All absences are shown on school reports and copies are passed onto secondary schools.

- 5.2 There are rare occasions which may be deemed as 'exceptional circumstances', where the leave would be authorised by the Head Teacher. These circumstances would usually

be something which cannot be planned for in advance. Therefore, weddings, family holidays, birthdays, parties and surprise trips, etc. will not be authorised. The decision of whether the leave is deemed as 'exceptional' is the Head Teacher's.

5.3 If you are planning to take leave during term time you must complete the "Application to remove child from Learning" form which you can obtain from the Parent Foyer. If an application is refused and the parent/carer decides to take their child out of school anyway, the details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued. The Penalty Notice will be issued at £60 per child, per parent. This amount will increase to £120 per child, per parent if it is not paid within 21 days.

5.4 This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

5.5 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an appropriate reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

5.6 Illness, medical and dental appointments

- A parent/carer must phone the school on the child's first day of absence to inform them of the reason. If no reason is forthcoming within 2 weeks following the reminder letter, the absence is likely to be marked as unauthorised
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last symptom. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school
- In the case of repeated absences, the school will require written evidence of why a child has been absent. A member of the school office will request this when it is required.
- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school will request parents to provide medical evidence to support the illness. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness or medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and parents will be advised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, GP/hospital letters etc.
- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required
- Parents are asked to inform the school in advance by letter, email or appointment card if their child has a medical appointment
- Children should attend school around the appointment wherever possible
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless they are collected by an adult

5.7 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;

- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

5.8 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/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to try to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the Attendance Officer, School Nurse or the Home School Support Worker.

5.9 Reporting Absences and First Day Calling

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible. This communication should ideally be made before the morning registration is taken. Parent contact on the first day of absence should be the normal expectation. If the school have not been notified by mid-morning of a child's absence, a telephone call or text message will be made to the parent requesting the reason. If no contact is made by the parent and the school cannot make contact with the contacts provided for the child, a home visit may be completed by the school staff or Education Welfare Service. It is essential that you keep the school updated on a daily basis should your child be absent for more than one day. If your child has been absent for 5 days or more, please provide the office with some form of medical evidence as to why your child was absent on their return to school.

5.10 Unavoidable Closures

Unavoidable closures through bad weather, difficulties associated with the premises, elections etc should be indicated on the school registration system. Pupils will be marked as a 'Y' (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). This mark will not affect the child's attendance figures.

5.11 Traveller Absences

If your child is unable to attend school due to travelling you must provide the school with evidence of the fair, event, etc which you will be attending in advance. If the details are not given to the school before the leave is taken it will be marked as unauthorised and your child may be considered as 'missing in education' and referred onto the relevant agencies. The school must know the whereabouts of all children, at all times, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each individual child.

5.12 Travellers and Show People are granted, by law, up to 200 sessions (100 whole days) 'travelling' each academic year. During this time, the child will be marked on the register as a 'T' (Travelling Absence) if evidence of the event where the family are working is given to the school in advance. Once a child reaches the 200 allowed sessions, the parents will be notified and any further leave will be marked as unauthorised. If you are travelling with a registered tutor, please notify the school of this and information of your child's current curriculum can be shared to ensure the correct work is completed.

6. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

- 6.1 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when attendance falls to 90% or below across the school year for whatever reason.
- 6.2 Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.
- 6.3 We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.
- 6.4 PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.
- 6.5 All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a Support Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Home school Support Worker or Attendance Officer.
- 6.6 We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Head Teacher / Attendance Admin Assistant

- Operational management of the policy.
- Consider requests for authorised absence.
- Give approval in advance in extenuating circumstances, taking account of the child's attendance record to date.
- Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted.
- Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or lateness.
- Complete Head Teacher witness statements on pupil absence for court use.
- Oversee attendance procedures.
- Monitor pupil attendance and take action according to this policy.
- Analyse trends in attendance data to identify appropriate action.
- Investigate reasons for absence exploring any underlying cause either at home or in school.
- Ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported [e.g. bullying/behaviour].
- Ensure that anti-bullying and behaviour policies are followed.

- Work in partnership with parents to improve poor attendance.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer and make referrals as necessary.
- Work with the Attendance Officer towards improved patterns of attendance for referred pupils identifying the course of action that should be taken.
- Make referrals to other agencies where appropriate.
- Work with Class Teachers to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.
- Work with relevant staff to plan reintegration for pupils who have been absent for a period.
- Compile and update standard letters re: under 96% attendance, under 93% attendance, under 90% attendance, notification of reasons for absence, lateness.
- Manage incentives to encourage regular attendance.
- Ensure data is accurate for the termly and annual DFE attendance returns.

7.2 Class Teachers

- Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
- Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable work for all pupils.
- Alert the attendance lead within the school of any children who demonstrate an unsettled pattern of attendance or whose attendance pattern changes.
- Report percentage attendance at parent consultations; encourage regular punctual attendance; work to secure this.
- Work with the Head Teacher to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.

7.3 Attendance Admin Assistant

- Daily overview of attendance.
- Update data.
- Record late arrival and reasons.
- Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded.
- Update records using agreed codes.
- Make calls to parents when first day of absence contact has not been made by parents.

- Prepare standard letters requesting reasons for absence when this is unexplained.
- Prepare letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is being monitored
- Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence.
- Meet with the HT and take agreed action.
- Provide attendance reports when requested.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer on attendance matters.
- Complete the annual DFE attendance returns.

7.4 Parents

- Ensure their child attends daily and on time.
- Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school.
- Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason.
- Provide any medical evidence if requested.
- If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to improve matters.
- Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence.
- Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates.

8. THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- 8.1 Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.
- 8.2 If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer from the LA or the Trust.
- 8.3 He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school, the Local Authority or the Trust.
- 8.4 Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the Attendance Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

9. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- 9.1 There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.
- 9.2 All applications for leave must be made in advance and, at the discretion of the school, only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.
- 9.3 Harrow Lodge Primary School will not authorise any Holidays or Leave of Absence in term time unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- 9.4 Cheap holidays or holidays booked by relatives for you and your family will **NOT** be considered as exceptional and will **NOT** be authorised.
- 9.5 If you take your child/children out of school and your request has NOT been authorised, you will be fined by way of a Penalty Notice which will be issued by the LA.
- 9.6 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

10. TARGETS

- 10.1 Targets for the school and for classes will be displayed in the school to encourage participation by all in reaching these.
- 10.2 The minimum level of attendance for any child at Harrow Lodge Primary School is 96% attendance. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

11. HOME EDUCATION

- 11.1 On receipt of written notification to home educate your child, we will inform the Local Authority who will get in touch with you to ensure that you understand your full responsibilities. It will be necessary for you to meet with the Head Teacher so that they can offer help and advice. There is no requirement for parents to obtain permission or agreement from the school or the Local Authority to home educate your child but it is important to keep the school informed of your decision.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher.
- 12.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 12.4 This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher every year or sooner if legislation or policy changes.

APPENDIX 1

HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S PROCEDURES FOR TRACKING ATTENDANCE

PARENTS AND CARERS

If a child is absent, the parent or carer must contact the school office by **8.50** a.m. on the first day of absence. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call.

A parent or carer can also call into the school office and report the absence at the reception desk.

SCHOOL

If your child is absent, we will telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. Depending on the percentage of attendance, the following actions will be taken:

At 90%	Warning letter to parents
Below 90%	Referral to EWO in process.

The Head Teacher has the responsibility to monitor the work of the office staff to ensure the above procedures are followed.

HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING LATENESS

- The school gates are opened at **8.30am** and doors open at **8.40am** and the children are expected to be seated and ready for work by **8.50am**.
- Doors close promptly at **8.50 am**. Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- If the problem persists you may be issued with a Penalty Notice.
- If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time and we will do what we can to support you.
- If your child is going to be late, parents need to telephone the school office by 8.50 a.m. and inform them if a school dinner needs to be booked. Lunch begins at 11.30 a.m. (EYFS), 12.30pm (Years 1-2) and 12:00 pm (Years 3-6) and the catering staff need the final figures for school lunches by 9.20 a.m.
- Alternatively, parents can send in a packed lunch from home if they have not booked a dinner by 9.20 a.m.
- We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrating good class punctuality.

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

Key to Codes	
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

Appendix 2



Harrow Lodge Primary School

Rainsford Way, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4BP

Mrs L Searle
Head Teacher

Telephone: 01708 448187

office@harrowlodgeprimary.com

[Date]

Dear xx

In accordance with our procedures to improve attendance and achievement, I am writing to you because xx's attendance has fallen to 90%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

We need to make you aware that, when a child's attendance falls below 90%, they are registered as a persistent absentee and come under the jurisdiction of the Academy Trust's Attendance Officer. We realise that there may be good reason for your child's recent absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils at our school attend at least 96% of the time and, therefore, we monitor attendance closely.

Due to xxx's attendance falling to 90%, we are concerned that their education may be affected and their attainment levels may fall which could have an adverse effect, not just on their education, but also on their social and emotional development.

With your support, we would expect your child's attendance to improve. At this point, however, you will be invited to a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss your child's attendance and any support the school can give you.

We would like to remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time and it is at the school's discretion as to whether any absences are authorised.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to seeing an improvement in xxx's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Susan Asser
Chair of Governors
Cc Attendance Officer

Role of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an effective education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents are requested to:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly. Parents will impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct, to complete their homework on time and follow the school rules.
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy.
- Notify the school if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence.
- Try to avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Telephone the school office by 8:50 a.m. if their child is unwell and cannot attend school.

At Harrow Lodge Primary School, we set attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets. Parents are expected to support the school in meeting these targets by honouring the Attendance Policy.



Harrow Lodge Primary School Attendance Leaflet for Parents

The purpose of this leaflet is to share with parents our policy on school attendance and term time holidays based on guidance from the Local Authority and the Academy Trust. We hope you find the leaflet informative and useful.

Our Principles

We expect all children on roll to attend 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. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is 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 make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. To promote good attendance, we work together in partnership with parents, in order to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils. We also work closely together with other divisions of the Education Department, with other departments of Havering Council and with relevant external agencies.

This leaflet highlights the key features of our Attendance policy. A copy of the comprehensive Policy is available from the school office and on our website.

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 authorise an absence. 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 to go on holiday during the school term, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Absence will be authorised by the Head Teacher if:

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as ‘leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the Local Body of Governors).
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong.
- If the pupil is the child of traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent to the Head teacher.
- The Head Teacher is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is seen shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is on a family holiday without permission.
- The pupil has been taken abroad for a wedding or parental medical reasons.

Role of the School

A member of the office staff checks the registers on a daily basis and notes any absences unaccounted for. Families are then contacted to try to ascertain the reason for absence. Parents/carers are asked to phone the school office before 8.50 am. The school may be able to help in certain circumstances e.g. if a child is unable to attend school due to the parent/carers ill health. If we are unable to contact parent/carers and have had no note, phone call or verbal message, a letter will be sent home asking for the reason for absence. Parents/carers will be asked to produce a doctor’s note if a child regularly has time off due to sickness. Depending on the percentage attendance the following actions will be taken:

Below 96%	Initial alert to Y5 & Y6 child
At 90%	Warning from the HT
Below 90%	Referral to Attendance Officer.

The Head Teacher has the responsibility of monitoring the work of the office staff to ensure the above procedures are followed.