



Attendance and Punctuality

Policy Statement 2020-2023

Every child has the right to an education (Article 28).

1. Aims

1.1 As a school we aim to:

- ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality of all our pupils;
- maximise all children's attainment and progress;
- maximise opportunities both in school and in later life;
- maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

1.2 Good attendance and punctuality is important because:

- there is a direct link between poor attendance and underachievement;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines and schoolwork easier to cope with;
- pupils arriving late may cause disruption to the learning of others.

1.3 Parents/carers can help by:

- ensuring regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- contacting school on the first morning of all absences before 9.00am explaining the reason and saying when their child will return;
- contacting school to inform us that their child will be arriving late and providing a reason;
- only allowing days at home for genuine illness (there are a number of very experienced first-aiders in school and we will contact you immediately if we have any concerns about your child's health);
- arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours;
- bringing your child to school before and returning them after a hospital or other medical appointment;
- keeping us updated if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness;
- talking to school as soon as possible about your child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with;
- talking regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it – children are more likely to attend if they feel supported and parents speak positively about their school and their class teachers;

- notifying school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details or change in home address;
- ensuring that your child is appropriately prepared and organised for each school day by bringing homework, reading books, swimming kits, packed lunches etc to school on the correct days;
- encouraging good habits as soon as your child joins our school in Nursery or Reception, so that they quickly become familiar with school routines.

1.4 To ensure high levels of attendance, our school will:

- establish a full, well-rounded and engaging curriculum;
- develop strong supportive relationships between adults and children;
- follow up on unexplained absences by phone calls, texts or by a home visit on the first day of a child's absence;
- remind parents/carers and children of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus, assemblies;
- let you know if we have any concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality;
- publish your child's attendance on his/her annual report;
- acknowledge and reward good attendance;
- inform parents/carers via series of letters or meetings regarding their child's punctuality and/or poor school attendance.

2. Absence

2.1 In the first instance, the Headteacher has the right to authorise or unauthorise any child's absence in school.

2.2 *Authorised absence*

- Some absences are unavoidable and are known by 'authorised absences'. For example, if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.
- We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a specific problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we will endeavour to resolve this.

2.3 *Unauthorised absence*

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known by 'unauthorised absence'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in
- Going shopping
- A child's or family birthday

- Unapproved holidays
- Parents are unwell
- No money for bus fare
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason is considered unsatisfactory.

3. Parental request for Absence from School for Holiday

- 3.1 With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.
- 3.2 As a result of the revised regulations, the school does not authorise any family holidays in term time. If parents/carers, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school for a holiday then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This can lead to the involvement of the Local Authority Legal Intervention Team and the possible issue of a 'fixed penalty notice' amounting to £60 per child per parent/carer which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. These have been introduced as part of the government's drive to improve attendance.

4. The start of the school day

- All pupil, across Rec to Y6, should be in the building by 9.00am.
- To support this, there is a 'soft drop' to the day which means children can enter the building from 8.45am until 9.00am.
- At 9am, the register is taken.
- At 9.05am, the process of collecting registers is undertaken by the office staff.
- Any children arriving between 9am and 9:30am, should enter school via the main school reception and parents / carers should sign the children in giving a reason as to why they are late. An 'L' symbol is entered into the register indicating they are late after registration.
- If pupils are brought to school after 9:30am, they are marked in the register with a 'U' code indicating they have arrived to school after the register has closed.

5. What is good attendance?

5.1 *Every School Day Counts*

At Harlow Green we expect that every child's attendance is **at least** 96.1% each academic year.

365 days in a year	190 school days	Absence
100% attendance	190 days attendance	0
95% attendance	180 days attendance	2 weeks absence
90% attendance	171 days attendance	4 weeks absence
85% attendance	161 days attendance	6 weeks absence
80% attendance	152 days attendance	More than half a term
75% attendance	143 days attendance	9+ weeks absence

90% attendance is the equivalent to missing 100 hour-long lessons.

If you take your child on a 2-week holiday in term time, attendance for the year immediately drops to 95%.

90% attendance means half a day's absence each week; 4 weeks over the year and half a year's absence over 5 years!

90% attendance is equivalent to a full month off school in an academic year!

5.2 **Every Minute Counts**

Lateness = Lost Learning

At Harlow Green we expect that every child comes into school at 9:00am, so that they access all planned learning time.

5 minutes late each day	3 days lost learning
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost learning
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost learning
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost learning
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost learning

6. Absence Procedures

6.1 When a child is absent, parents/carers are required to:

- telephone school by 9:30 a.m. on the first day of absence otherwise the pupil will be marked absent without permission;
- predict when they think their child will return to school if absent because of illness;
- provide medical evidence to explain the absence, where absences are persistent – if this is not provided, absences will be unauthorised by the school;
- complete leave of absence form at least two weeks in advance for any planned absence (*Leave of Absence* forms are available from the school office and website).

6.2 School will:

- make every effort to identify the reason for the absence and operates a staged response procedure;
- ensure a member of the office staff phones a parent/carer to try and find the reason, if no reason is received by 10:00 am;
- send a text to the parents/carers stating that they must contact school, if there has been no contact via the phone call;
- make a welfare check to the home via a senior member of staff, if no contact is made by the following day;
- consider contacting children's services, the police and other agencies, if there is no contact made at the home address.

7. Continued Absences

7.1 Where absence is recurring, the following procedure will be implemented:

- School will request medical evidence for persistent absenteeism, in order to consider the potential of authorising absence.
- A conversation between the parents/carers and Head Teacher (or DHT/AHT) will be initiated by school to raise the concern and identify any potential ways of supporting.
- If there appears to be no significant reason for the absence identified within the meeting, any continued absence will be 'unauthorised', and a monitoring period of 4-weeks will be implemented.
- Within the four-week period, school would expect the child to attend for at least 95% of the time (1 day of absence).
- A letter summarising the discussion and the monitoring period will be sent to the parents/carers.
- If reasonable improvement has been made, the parents/carers will be informed that the school will simply continue to monitor.
- If there has been no reasonable improvement in this period, a referral will be made to the Legal Intervention Team.
- A letter will be sent to the parents/carers informing them of the referral.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly in light of changing legislation and impact of implementation.
- 8.2 Governors will monitor attendance as part of their role and may respond to queries by parents/carers in relation to the implementation of the policy.
- 8.3 In all cases, this policy is to be used to ensure children access their right to a quality education which will support their future life-chances.

Approved by the Curriculum & Standards Committee on: 22/10/2020

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