

Attendance & Punctuality Policy



September 2023

To be reviewed 2024 or as required

Rationale

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve their best. 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 and every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why regular attendance is so important

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- Bullying
- Child Protection

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

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - 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 regular newsletter / Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Provide 'first day' calling to ensure we record reasons for absence
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Celebrate attendance successes through our weekly assemblies
- Reward 100% attendance with certificates and annual prizes
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school
- Work alongside School Attendance Officers in an attempt to minimise absence

The Law relating to attendance

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 to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he or she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to understand guidance issued by the secretary of state with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under 18.

Understanding types of absence

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as serious illness, **emergency** medical / dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time or other unavoidable cause.

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 Hackney Education using sanctions and / or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- 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

Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session. The school will undertake follow up telephone calls to establish unexplained absence reasons.

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 in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence 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 the parent / carer will be informed of this immediately.**

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parent / carer will be a priority and intervention reviewed at half termly attendance panel meetings and discussions may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, an attendance chart, individual incentive programmes, referral to other external services such as the nurse or social care and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Actions will be tracked and reviewed. If no notable improvement is seen, a referral may be made to Children's Social Care.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to Hackney Education School Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence (you must do this even if you have already telephoned us)
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Call the second available number for your child to establish your child's whereabouts and/or undertake a home visit if we have not heard from you by the second day of absence
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and / or Senior Leaders if attendance drops below acceptable levels for any reason.
- Refer the matter to Hackney Education Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

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. It is also important that we hold a second emergency contact number for your child in the event that we are unable to reach you using the first given number. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have up to date numbers – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular

checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Leads

	EYFS and KS1	KS2	Administration
Orchard School	Felicity Headen	Maxine Cutforth	Amy Nguyen & Fabiha Sultana
Hoxton Garden School	Jessie De Veer	Charlotte Houchin	Salma Begum
Southwold S	Ruth Grover	Erin Gillham	Maymuna Lunat

The School Attendance Officer

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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Hackney Education.

The School Attendance Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the School Attendance Officer 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 Hackney Education. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the School 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 or by contacting the Hackney Education

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your 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. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. All pupils need to be at school on time.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:55 am** and we expect your child to be ready to line up in the playground at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:05 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

From **9:05 am – 9.15 am** an identified member of staff tracks pupil arrival noting their name and class. Patterns are analysed and repeated lateness will result in the parent / carer invited to a meeting to discuss this and what support can be put in place to stop late arrival occurring.

At **9.15 am** 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**. We record the number of minutes absent each day and when the total of minutes late reaches a certain point then further action is taken. This may mean that you could face 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 School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time

Absence in Term Time (including holidays)

A special leave request form should be completed in advance to request leave of absence during term time and provide evidence to the school so the whereabouts of the pupil is known.

All applications for leave must be made in advance, at the discretion of the school and will only be considered if there are **exceptional circumstances**. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Parents are expected to ensure personal holidays are taken within the 13 weeks allocated to this across the year.

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us when:

- The reason is stated as a holiday or travelling abroad
- A pupil is just starting the school - this is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or end of term assessments
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

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 our school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. 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 and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

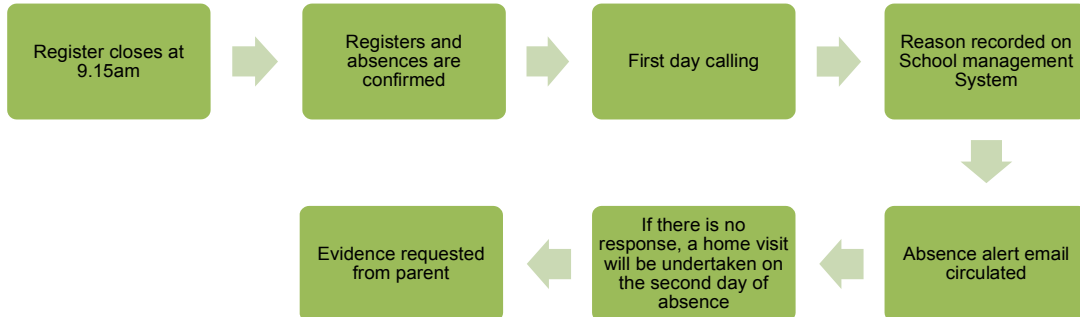
Links to Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Parent Partnership Policy
- Behaviour & Bullying Policy

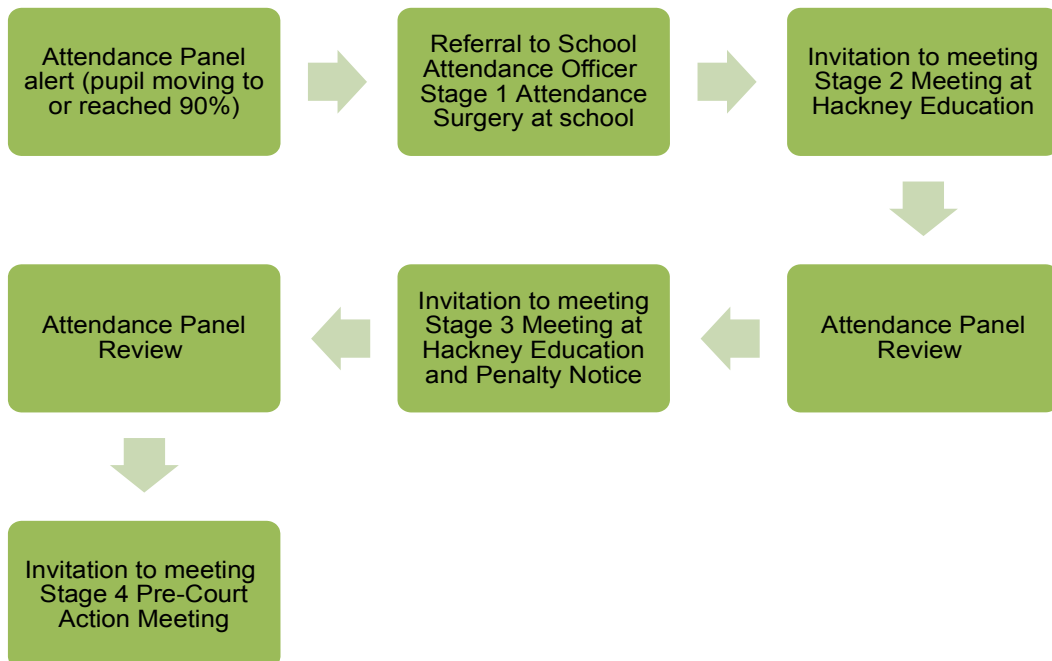


APPENDIX 1

Daily absence process

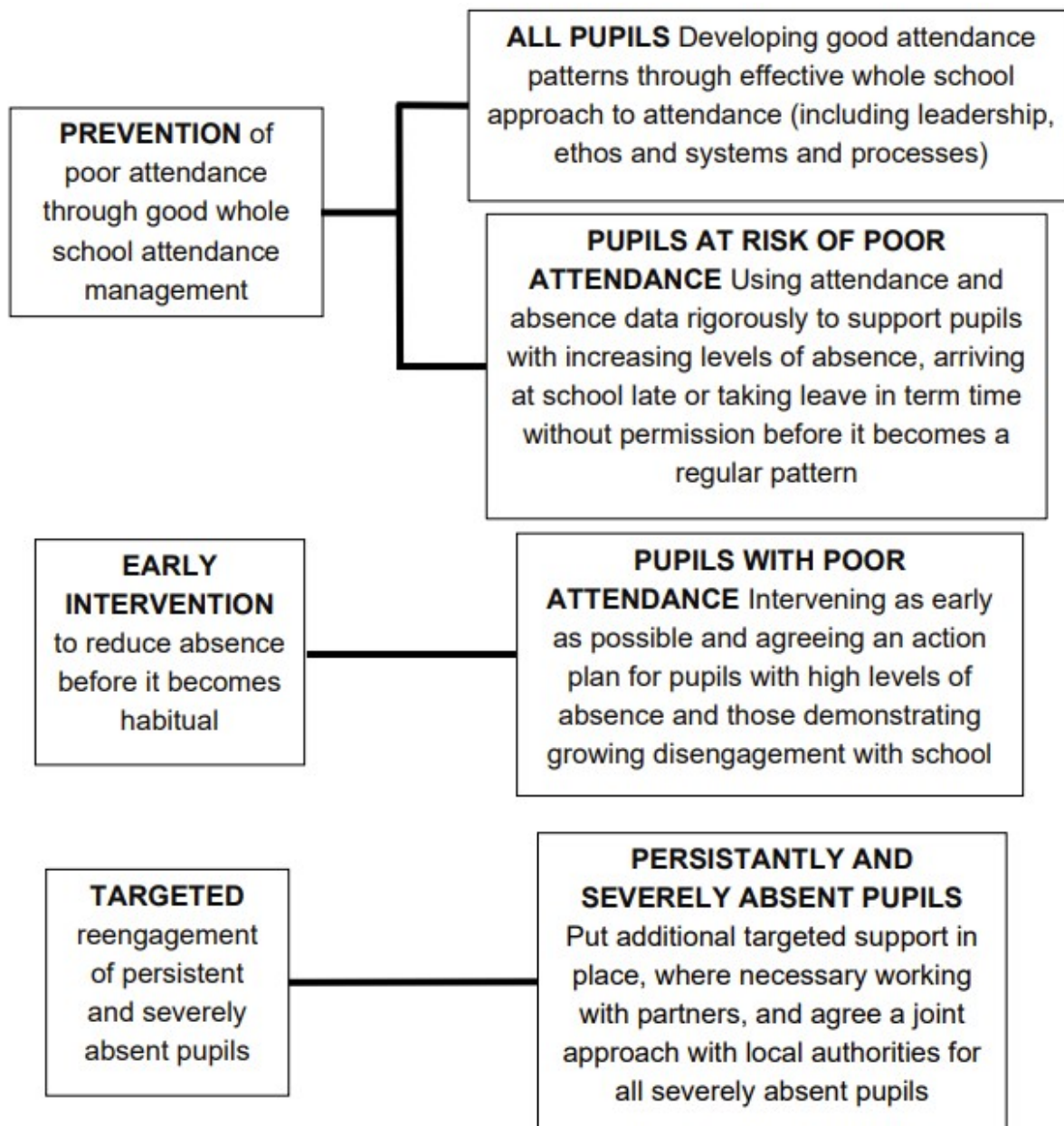


Attendance Referral Process



APPENDIX 2

Process of prevention, early intervention and target support.



APPENDIX 3

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

