

Attendance Policy

Policy Approved	September 2023
Review Date	September 2024
Responsible Staff	R. Flanders
Governor	A. Avery

School Vision & Values

Vision Statement

Let your light shine.

Access and ambition for all to enjoy life in all its fullness.

Foundational Scripture

Matthew 5: 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Our school values of friendship, thankfulness, hope, unity, compassion, forgiveness, justice, endurance and trust are rooted in the Sermon on the Mount and are the basis of all relationships, decisions and direction of our school.

School Values

Our school values are at the heart of our planned curriculum. We aim to provide high quality learning opportunities which help foster these values within children.

Our values are:

Friendship

Thankfulness

Hope

Unity

Compassion

Forgiveness

Justice

Endurance

Trust

At Hoole Church of England Primary School, we aim to help children become:

- **Enthusiastic, curious, independent thinkers – motivated, reflective and resilient learners** who persevere when faced with challenges and who celebrate their achievements and those of their friends;
- **Respectful, compassionate and kind friends** who are able to work with others, forgive, trust, support and communicate with others;
- **Confident, thankful individuals** who understand their own worth; how to stay safe and healthy and how to manage feelings and relationships;
- **Tolerant and responsible citizens** who show respect for others, and a commitment to appreciate and contribute positively to the world around them.

Policy Formulation

This policy has been formulated with reference to guidance issued by the Cheshire West and Chester Council Attendance & Punctuality Policy including Emotional Non-School Attendance.

Introduction and Aim

In line with our school vision and values, Hoole Church of England Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact it has on children's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school. Good attendance helps a child to realise their potential and ensure they are motivated, confident and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences to enable children's lights to shine brightly.

Our school policy and prospectus promote good attendance, which is recognised and rewarded as an achievement.

The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

We recognise that whole school preventative and proactive approaches are key to promoting children wellbeing and attendance. A child must attend school every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance applies. The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Key Staff

All staff at Hoole Church of England promote positive attendance and punctuality.

Key staff involved in supporting families and managing systems for promoting positive attendance and punctuality are as follows:

Staff Name	Position	Email Contact
Colette Williamson	Attendance, Engagement & Safeguarding Officer	colettewilliamson@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Rosalind Flanders	Headteacher	head@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Elaine Robertson	Learning Mentor	elainerobertson@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Christine Darwen	Attendance Governor	christinedarwen@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk

1. Legislation

- 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 either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”.

Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Additionally, regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.

- Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of “parent”

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a ‘parent’ and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carers.

2. Procedure

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the first day of absence, and each following day of absence, stating the reason.

This may be done before 9am on the day of absence, by telephoning the school office, emailing admin@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk or by leaving a telephone message on the school’s answerphone service.

The school office will make contact with home when a child is absent, and the parent/carer has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

3. Our School Day

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Gates open	8:35am	8:35am	8:35am	8:35am	8:35am	8:35am	8:35am
Gates close	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am
Register taken	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am	8:50am
Register closes	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am
School closes	3:10pm	3:10pm	3:10pm	3:20pm	3:20pm	3:20pm	3:20pm

4. Absence Monitoring

Hoole Church of England Primary School robustly monitors and analyses attendance data to promptly identify and address possible concerns and allow for early interventions to support the child/family's underlying needs. This includes:

- Daily attendance monitoring;
- Weekly attendance analysis;
- Specific individual, cohort and group monitoring – particularly for vulnerable groups i.e. children with a social worker or where there are concerns relating to attendance and/or punctuality;
- Half termly and termly attendance analysis for individuals, registration groups, cohorts and vulnerable groups.

5. Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

For any child / child person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place.

All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including class teachers, the school Attendance officer, Learning Mentor, Safeguarding Team and Inclusion Manager work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child/young person and to overcome barriers to attendance.

In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as an Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, SEND related assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as a Team Around the Family (TAF) assessment. Assessments will include the views of the child/young person as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).

Assessments undertaken focus on identifying the underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance.

The Cheshire West and Chester Council guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools is used to support a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children/young people who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.

Information from assessments informs a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help and Prevention and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. SMART plans are personalised to effectively meet a child / young person's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services including the Safeguarding Children in Education (SCiE) Team.

6. Working in partnership with Parents/ Carers

As a school we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for children / young people. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. The school is committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

It is pertinent that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child / young person's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

7. Lateness and Punctuality

School begins 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at that time. Registers are taken at 8.50am in classrooms

Any child who arrives after the gates are closed must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in. If pupils are not in class when the register is taken, they will be coded as 'L'. This code applies up until 9am. Any late arrivals after 9.20am will be coded as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no

improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

Parents/carers may approach the school at any time for support and advice if experiencing difficulty getting child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

8. Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.

'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6)
Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).

On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
- Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.

The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities). (See *appendix 3*.)

9. Medical Absence

Absence due to sickness is reported to the school by phone, school answerphone service or by emailing admin@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk by 9am on the first day of absence. The school should be kept informed during longer periods of absence. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then we will offer support in accordance with the school's policies and statutory guidance relating to Children with health needs. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

In the event of longer-term absence, school will collaborate with parents/carers to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the school will also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet child's Educational Needs.

For children who have a medical conditions who cannot attend school, the school will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team.

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf>

Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the child's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:

- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist;
- consultant child psychiatrist;
- hospital consultant.

Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.

10. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.20am

Parents/carers should be aware that Hoole Church of England Primary School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court (see *appendix 1*).

11. Application for Exceptional Circumstances

In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday

- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

12. Religious Observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.

Where a day of religious observance.

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify Hoole Church of England Primary School in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

13. Enforced School Closure

If Hoole Church of England Primary School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school.

The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set.

Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

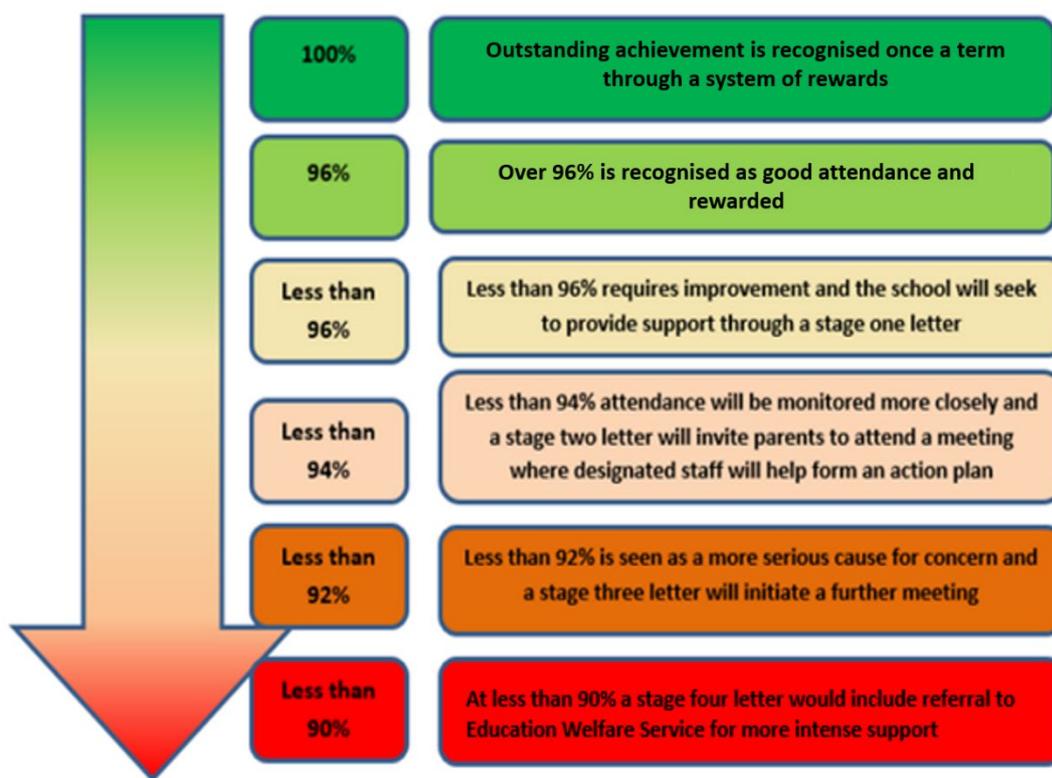
14. What can parents/carers do to help?

Parents/carers can collaborate with the school in the following ways to promote positive attendance and punctuality at school:

- Let the school know straight away why your child is absent by contacting the school before 9am on the first day of absence;
- Maintaining positive home/school relationships;
- Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time;
- Engage with school as early as possible if issues occur relating to school attendance and/or punctuality, including where children demonstrate signs of emotionally based school non-attendance.

School will provide parents / carers with information about Emotionally Based School Non-attendance to discuss needs and strategies to support their child, as appropriate (see EBSN Parent Leaflet).

The table below sets out the attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child's attendance.



See appendix 2 for further breakdown of missed sessions.

15. Use of Data to Target Attendance Improvement

Data is used in a variety of ways to enable us to support positive attendance for individual or groups of pupils.

We track the following data to monitor trends and ensure that all children and groups of pupils within our school family maintain positive records of attendance and punctuality:

- Daily absence reports;
- Weekly absence trends for individual pupils and classes;
- Class attendance figures in conjunction with reward systems;
- Attendance of vulnerable and specific groups;
- Attendance of cohorts or classes with lower records of attendance in the previous academic year, half term or term;
- Termly review of weekly attendance tracker;
- Monitoring of whole school attendance trends in comparison to national averages via use of external data sources including the Department for Education and FFT summaries.

Data is used to plan and evaluate actions taken to improve attendance and/or punctuality.

16. Impact

All pupils will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all pupils, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils will leave Hoole Church of England Primary School ready for a successful transition to the next phase of their education.

17. Rewards & Incentives

Positive attendance and punctuality is rewarded in a variety of ways at Hoole Church of England Primary School.

Incentives include:

- Weekly attendance cups;
- Weekly golden tickets;
- Headteacher awards;
- Letters home to celebrate positive attendance and punctuality;
- Letters home to celebrate improvements to attendance and punctuality;
- Certificates;
- Invitation to special tea parties.

Rewards and incentives are reviewed on a regular basis. Consultation with stakeholders, pupil voice and the Punctuality & Attendance Crew supports the school in shaping development of systems to promote positive attendance and punctuality.

18. Policy monitoring & review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

The next schedule review is September 2024.

Appendix 1

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. A maximum of two FPNs may be issued in an academic year and these FPNs may be issued against each parent/carer of a child. Once two FPNs have been issued, should there be further unauthorised absences, the Local Authority are able to move to prosecution immediately.
3. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.
4. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:
 - Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
 - Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
 - For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during a school term. These do not need to be consecutive.
 - For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrive at school in a term. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
 - The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion.
6. The school must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.
7. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account any exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

Appendix 2

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' pupils (P.A.). RSA will be specifically targeting this cohort of pupils, in an effort to improve their attendance in the future. The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

Appendix 3

Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register.

Code I	Illness	Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.
Code M	Medical or dental appointments	Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
Code C	Other circumstances	This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.
Code D	Dual Registered	This code will be used if a pupil is registered at two schools.
Code J	Interview	This code will be used when it has been agreed that the pupil can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam
Code P	Approved sporting activity	This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.
Code R	Religious Observation	This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day absence for religious events.
Code V	Educational visits and trips	
Code W	Work Experience	
Code G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	
Code U	Arrived late to school after 9.20am	
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided	
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation	
Code X	Not required to be in school (not compulsory school age)	