



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

November 2023

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ADVANTAGE

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Revisions

Date	Summary of changes
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addition of the definition of compulsory school age. ● Updates and corrections to references to legislation and federation policies. ● For authorised absence, use of the wording in the Department for Education’s document: School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities 2020. ● That when attendance is below 94% it will be referred to Hackney Education’s attendance service. ● The addition of soft start times for several schools and the new end of day time for St John & St James.
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● severely absent pupils have been added alongside persistently absent pupils ● information regarding penalty notices updated and aligned to The Key model ● Updated links to legislation and guidance ● Appendix including the senior staff responsible for attendance in each school ● Addition of a section outlining the expectations for monitoring attendance ● Roles and responsibilities aligned to The Key model ● Addition of the expectations on the LA and a link to their guidance

1. Background and guidance to pupil attendance and absence

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parents or guardians of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have.

Non-attendance of school can be damaging to a child's education. Parents¹ may not authorise absence; only schools can do this. Schools will not authorise absences unless under special circumstances. All absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until schools and parents agree on a satisfactory explanation, and it is important that schools have procedures, consistently applied, for determining the nature of any absence from school.

This policy aims to outline the federation's absence procedures and provide information on what to do if a child is absent from school.

Compulsory school age starts on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following a child's fifth birthday, whichever comes first. If a child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates, then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

1.1 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

2. Links to other policies

This policy has links to a number of other policies/guidance:

- Charging & remissions policy
- Child protection & safeguarding policy
- Data protection & retention policy
- Special educational needs policy
- Medical needs policy

¹ References to parent or parents are to mothers, fathers, legal guardians and carers

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system. Pass on any relevant information to the designated member of staff

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

3.8 The Local Authority

To ensure attendance is an issue shared across all relevant organisations, the 'working together' guidance sets out the expectations on local authorities. In summary, these are:



Hackney has developed a strategic approach to [supporting schools to improve attendance](#).

4. Attendance

4.1 Attendance and Admissions Registers

The federation governing board is legally responsible for ensuring attendance registers are maintained under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Headteachers are required to ensure that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, attending an approved educational activity (and if the pupil is of compulsory school age, the nature of this activity), unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances and the nature of those circumstances, not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19), or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Schools input all attendance on the federation's management information system, Arbor, and may keep registers manually or on the computer.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Please see Appendix 3 for the Attendance Codes

4.3 Approved educational activities off-site

The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity.'

The following activities are examples of when the approved educational activity category can include:

- field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- franchised pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school (i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration). This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll.

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, teacher industrial action, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, the register is marked as school closed. This does not affect pupils' attendance figures.

5. Deleting pupils from the admissions register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register and where a school has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll, they should notify the local authority.

If a pupil is to be taken off the admissions register because he or she is moving to another area or school, the school should find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned about a pupil's welfare:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school; or
- if a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation; or
- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

More information can be found in the data protection & retention policy.

If schools are concerned about a child's safety and/or wellbeing, they will refer to the guidelines laid out in the child protection & safeguarding policy.

6. Children Missing in Education

School aged children residing in Hackney have the right to receive an appropriate education and the vast majority of children are doing so. However, there are a number of ways a child fails to access the school system and hence becomes missing from education. It is vital our schools are proactive in ensuring that as far as possible, children and young people are not lost to education and that when families inform schools of relocation, all relevant information in regard to destination, forwarding addresses, new schools etc. is sought. It is not acceptable to de-register a child with only minimal information on where the family are moving to. In order to successfully ensure that no child is missing in Education, our schools liaise with the local authority's Children Missing Education team.

The Children Missing Education team will:

- co-ordinate, through multi-agency work, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing or at risk of missing education;
- manage the co-ordination of the referral process;

- work in partnership with key stakeholders in Hackney to develop the already existing inter agency network so that all members are aware of the referral process for pupils who are missing or at risk of missing education;
- manage a central database of all children missing or at risk of missing education in the borough and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and placements;
- identify and allocate a lead professional in relation to Children Missing Education;
- follow robust tracking and monitoring systems to confirm residency of children moving out of the borough;
- raise awareness of the service and provide guidance/advice to all schools and lead professionals in the borough regarding children missing education.

The school will:

- follow the procedures for investigating pupil absence. If the school is unable to establish the reason or locate the pupil(s) following all reasonable enquiries, then they must inform their allocated attendance officer/advisor within five days;
- refer a pupil to their allocated attendance officer if they have been unable to confirm that the pupil has started at another school should the parent inform the school of a new address outside of Hackney;
- keep the child on roll for a further 10 days whilst the Education Attendance Service (EAS) makes further enquiries about the child following any referral made about the pupil not attending school. The outcome of this investigation may be:
 - the child is located and remains on the school roll;
 - the child has started at a new school;
 - the child is not located and is deemed to be a missing child.
 - The EAS will advise the school whether to remove a child's name from the admission register.
- prescribe the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a pupil is deleted from the admission register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for the removal from roll.
- only remove the pupil's name from the register if the EAS has been unable to locate a child and the Attendance Officer has informed the school to remove the child's name from the register. The discharging school MUST ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is coded XXXXXXX (destination unknown) and uploaded to S2S.
- ensure that when a child is removed from roll without an identified receiving school, a Children Missing Education referral is completed immediately.
- immediately notify Children's Social Care on 0208 356 5500 if a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan and disappears without any warning.

7. Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical appointments (appointments should be made outside school times where possible)
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious observance
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment

More information about authorised absence can be found in the Department for Education's document: [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities 2020](#)

Should this document be amended during the life of this policy, please refer to the most up-to-date guidance from the DfE.

8. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence includes "holidays" taken by parents with their children during term time. It also includes truancy. Headteachers will report data on attendance each term to their LAB and the Executive Principal will provide data from all federation schools to the Central Governing Board. Each school is required to publish attendance and absence figures to the DfE.

8.1 Family Holidays

Under education law, parents may request absence for pupils from school due to a family holiday. It is for schools to determine whether or not they agree to a family holiday during term time. In the majority of cases schools will not authorise holidays. However, in exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may authorise a holiday during term time.

In considering any request for holiday absence, schools will look at individual circumstances and take account of:

- the age of the pupil;
- the time of year proposed for the trip;
- its nature and parents' wishes;
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; and
- the pupil's stage of education and progress.

9. Persistent and Severe absenteeism

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. The parents of any child whose absence approaches the 10% mark, will be asked to meet with key staff to review the circumstances that have led to the child being absent from school and consider strategies to improve attendance. Any child whose attendance is below 94% will be considered for in school interventions which will include discussions between the family and the school based attendance lead. Fines will be considered by Headteachers as a way of tackling absence.

Children who have missed more than 50% of school sessions are referred to as severely absent. Schools will always consider any safeguarding issues involved and will work with relevant partners to make these pupils a top priority for support.

10. Monitoring Attendance

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to relevant staff and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

10.4 Record Keeping

The school will:

- keep records of all meetings with parents and any actions or interventions

11. Keeping the school informed of contact details

Schools will contact a parent if their child is absent from school. Parents of children enrolling in the school are asked to provide details of emergency contacts for the child. This information is kept on Arbor This information includes:

- home address and telephone number of parents;
- place of work, and telephone number (if applicable);
- mobile telephone number;
- names and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the school i.e. childminder, relative, neighbour;
- information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child;
- information about who has primary responsibility for the child.

Parents are asked to renew their contact details at least once annually. If there are any changes to any of the above, parents should notify the school office. When there is a change to the end of the day arrangements, parents should inform either the school office or the class teacher.

12. Legal action to enforce school attendance

Local Authorities and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason.

They can issue parents with:

- **A Parenting Order** This means parents have to go to parenting classes and have to do what the court says to improve school attendance.
- **An Education Supervision Order** If the council thinks a parent needs support in getting a child to go to school but the parent isn't co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help get the child into education.

- **School Attendance Order** A school Attendance Order is issued if the local authority thinks a child isn't getting an education. A parent is given 15 days to provide evidence that they've registered their child with a school or that they're giving them [home education](#). The order may require parents to send their child to a specific school and can result in prosecution or a fine.
- **A fine** (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice'). The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

13. Federation approach to unauthorised absence

There are many reasons why pupils are absent from school without permission. Headteachers, staff, parents and pupils will work together to consider the best strategies for helping a child to attend school through:

- making sure children understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- take an interest in a child's education by asking about school work and encouraging them;
- discussing any problems a child may have and inform the school about anything serious;
- not letting children take time off school for minor ailments;
- arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays;
- setting reward schemes, such as certificates, school trips and activities;
- establishing home and school routine plans to help with organisation.

Our schools will also:

- implement a first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge;
- encourage attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled;
- have a member of staff responsible for attendance and ensure all staff work together to encourage good attendance.

There are a number benefits of a whole school approach to tackling absenteeism. These include:

- a shared responsibility for promoting school attendance rather than being left to particular individuals or groups;
- opportunities arise for cost-effective networking and joint training involving groups of schools or different professional groups;
- rigorous collection and analysis of data about attendance enables schools to check their progress against measurable outcomes.

14. Punctuality

It is important that pupils are encouraged to arrive at school on time and are prepared for the school day. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning as the beginning of the day is often

when the children are prepared for their lessons. Children who arrive late disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child. Poor punctuality can also encourage poor attendance.

All children arriving late must be recorded and the register updated as necessary.

15. Children collected late from school

Children collected late from school can often experience distress, as they are keen to see their parents at the end of the school day.

Parents must make every attempt to collect their children on time and inform the school of any situation that may prevent them from doing so. Schools must monitor all cases where children have not been collected on time and take action as necessary.

16. Charges for late / non-collection of children

Schools have the power to impose a charge on parents/carers who fail to collect their child from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity.

Parents must telephone the school office if they are running late and advise on the time of their arrival at the school. On arrival, the school office will ask parents to fill in a brief form detailing the reason for late collection.

Charges will be set out in each school's charging schedule to the federation's charging and remissions policy.

Appendix 1: School attendance & punctuality procedures

Absence procedures

If a child is absent a parent must;

- Contact the school as soon as possible on every day of absence for a short period of absence or inform the school of the expected length of a longer period of absence, e.g. five plus days.
- Or, report to the school office/reception, who will make a note of the absence and arrange for the Pastoral Manager to speak to the parent if necessary
- If a child is due to have a planned medical procedure/operation, the school must be notified in advance and provide documentary evidence.

If your child is absent the school will;

- Telephone the parent on the first day of absence if they have not received notification of the absence from the parent,
- Invite the parent in to discuss the situation with the Pastoral Manager/Headteacher (or other relevant staff member) if absences persist;
- Ask for medical evidence, e.g. a doctor's letter or prescription medication if attendance falls below 95%
- Refer the matter to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer if a child's attendance falls below 90%.

Punctuality procedures

Lateness

Those children who arrive late are coded as 'L' (Late) in the school register. Children who are significantly late, see table below, are coded 'O' which is an unauthorised absence. Ten sessions of unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued. A session is equal to a half-day absence.

If your child has a persistent late record, the parent will be asked to meet with a senior member of staff and/or Pastoral Manager to resolve the problem. Parents can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Children picked up late from school

In the event that the parent is running late or has made alternative collection with a friend/relative they should ring the school to advise them of those changes so that both the teacher and child are aware.

If it appears that there have been no alternative arrangements made for the collection of a child by the parent, the school staff should take the following steps:

- Messages are checked to see if there are any changes to the end of day arrangements
- Parents are contacted at home or work
- If this is unsuccessful other authorised adults are contacted

In the meantime, the child will wait near the office under adult supervision. All late collected children will be recorded in the "late book" and this information may be passed on to the Pastoral Manager for further investigation.

If a child is collected two hours later than the expected collection time, the school must contact the Emergency Duty Team at Social Services to inform them of the situation. The Emergency Duty Team will advise the school on any action to take which may include contacting the police.

Morningside Primary Schools' procedure for Emergency Duty Care slightly differs due to operating a play centre until 6pm. The school office will call parents at 3:30pm if their child was not collected on time. If the school does not receive an answer they will keep the child in play centre until 6pm. After 6pm the school will continuously make calls to parents and by 6:30 if the parent still has not answered or contacted the school the emergency duty team will then be called.

After school clubs, trips and visits

It is essential children are collected from school clubs, trips and visits at the time specified. Whilst every effort is made to ensure children return from trips on time, in the event that children will be returning later than expected, the school will inform parents.

The procedures outlined above will apply to children collected late however the school may decide to remove the child from the activity if late collection continues to be an issue.

School start and end times

School	Start & Late times	End of day times
De Beauvoir	Start 8:45am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Gainsborough	Soft start from 8:45am Start 9:00am Late register mark 9:10am. Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Holy Trinity	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Morningside	Soft start from 8:45am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
Springfield	Soft start from 8:45am Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St John & St James	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St John the Baptist	Soft start from 8:45am Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm
St Matthias	Start 8:55am Late register mark 9:10am Unauthorised absence mark 9:30am	Whole school 3:30pm

Appendix 2: Senior staff responsible for attendance

School	Senior staff member with responsibility for Attendance	Contact details
De Beauvoir	Headteacher	admin@debeauvoir.hackney.sch.uk 020 7254 2517
Gainsborough	Executive Headteacher	admin@gainsborough.hackney.sch.uk 020 8985 4622
Holy Trinity	Pastoral Lead	attendance@holyltrinity.hackney.sch.uk 020 7254 1010
Morningside	Executive Headteacher	head@morningside.hackney.sch.uk 0208 985 5382
Springfield	Headteacher	admin@springfield.hackney.sch.uk 020 8800 9007
St John & St James	Head of School	admin@johnjames.hackney.sch.uk 0208 985 2045
St John the Baptist	Headteacher	office@st-john.hackney.sch.uk 020 7739 4902
St Matthias	Headteacher	admin@st-matthias.hackney.sch.uk 020 7254 1148

Appendix 3: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Policy written:	November 2012
Amended/Updated:	November 2023
Adopted by Outcomes & Provisions Committee:	November 2023
Review date:	November 2026

The Outcomes & Provisions Committee have reviewed this policy with careful consideration of our approach to equalities as outlined in the Equalities Policy, January 2020.

We would like to acknowledge the work of other colleagues in drafting this policy. We have drawn on a range of sources including policies from other schools, good practice guides, published schemes and LA and Statutory guidelines where appropriate.

