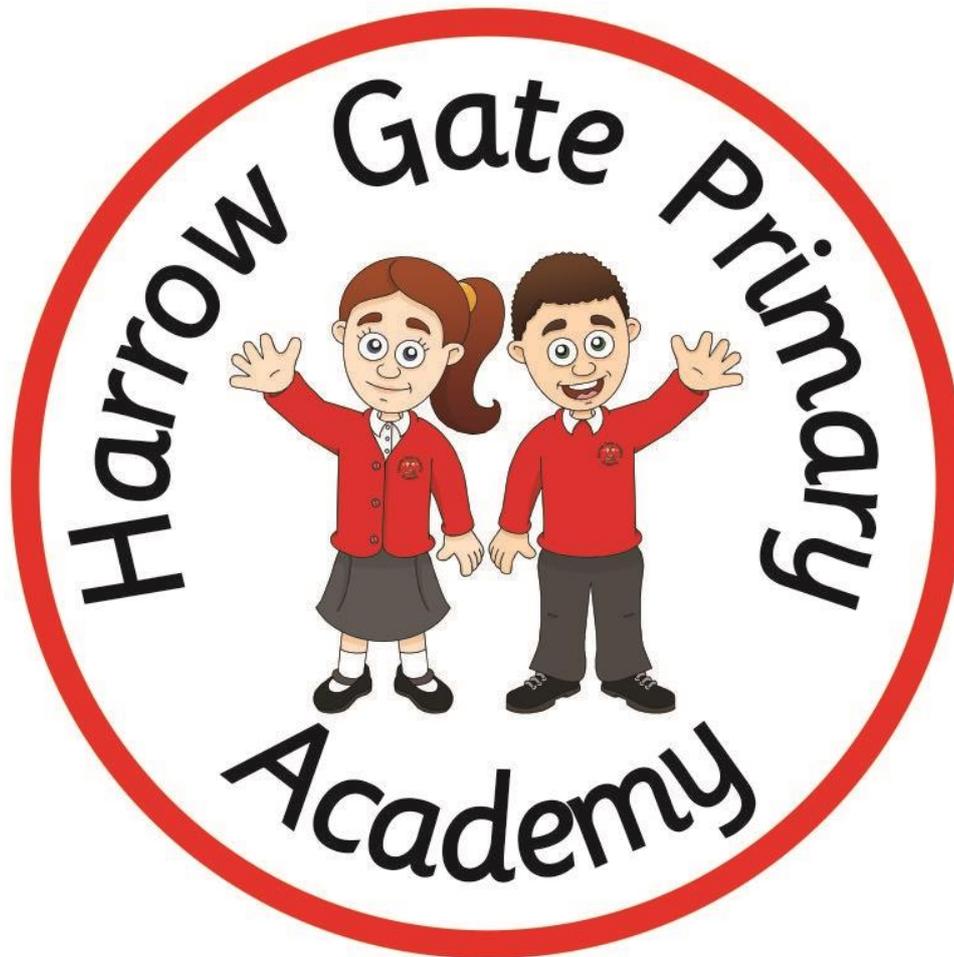


Owner	Mrs S Dobbing
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Audience	Everyone



Attendance Procedure Policy

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1. Statement of intent

At Harrow Gate Primary Academy School, we believe that all children benefit from regular school attendance. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. School, governors, Local Authority, children and parents need to work together as a priority to enable this to happen. Any problems hindering full attendance need to be identified and acted upon as quickly as possible. The aim of the school is to facilitate their children's regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to achieve their full academic potential. Every school day matters. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

It is important to note that it is the legal duty of those with parental responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Parents have a vital role to play and there is a strong emphasis on maintaining home-school links and good communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

2. School Attendance – The Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 – Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Education Act 1996 – Establishes the duty of L.A.'s to enforce school attendance (Section 444). The Act states "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 – Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991.

Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OfSTED) – 2011.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amending Regulation 3 (2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

Pupil Registration Regulations 1995 (Amended) gives schools discretionary powers to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time.

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003)

Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 revokes previous Regulations of 1995 and the subsequent amendments of 1997 and 2001 (England only). It places a requirement on schools to put pupils on the admissions and attendance registers on the first day that they are expected to attend not, as previously, when they first attend.

3. Responsibilities and Expectation

Parents/carers and children can expect the following from school ~

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance,
- Early contact with parent/carer when a child fails to attend school without providing a good reason,
- Prompt and confidential action on any identified problems,
- Measures to be taken to promote good attendance.

We expect parents/carers to ensure ~

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.

We expect that children ~

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

To encourage maximum attendance there must be consistent employment of this policy and attached procedures. To aid the collection of data the school uses SIMS Electronic Classroom Register, which provides accurate and reliable data for attendance and absence.

4. Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This is shown on our computer records.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9.00 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. on the schools SIMS system so that the school office can monitor this information.

It is our policy at Harrow Gate Primary Academy School to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place. Registers close at our school at 8.55 am, children arriving at school after this time will be recorded as absent in the register and an unauthorised registration code entered in the child's register. For health and safety purposes, children are signed in at the main office and escorted to their classroom by a member of staff.

5. Absence

Definition of ABSENCE

When a child is not present at school for any reason.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence.

We ask that parents telephone the school office before the close of register on the first day of absence to discuss the reason for the absence. Upon returning to school, the child should present a note to the class teacher and medical evidence (e.g. prescription/ appointment card) where applicable. If parents have not informed school, on the third day, a home visit will be made by the Education Welfare Officer.

Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Only the school and not the parents can authorise absence. Absence may be authorised if ~

- The absence is due to a special occasion (the nature of the event, frequency, overall attendance pattern of the child)
- The child was ill or prevented attending by any unavoidable cause - Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 provides that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body the parents belong
- Medical or dental appointments - We encourage where possible parents to only take children out of school for dental and medical appointments where this is an emergency or essential (i.e. planned hospital appointment). Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent by way of medical card appointment card or NHS letter)

The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, the school Education Welfare Officer will work in partnership with the Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the teacher from the child's parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, School will seek the advice and support of the School Health Service or may wish to seek permission from the child's parent to consult with their GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the Attendance Officer and/or the School Health Service.

If a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences within a 6-12 week period, a referral to the Attendance and Exclusion Service will be made. This could initiate a Penalty Notice fine.

6. Reporting of Absence Procedure

Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol on the computer records.

Reporting reasons for absence by telephone, verbally to the Admin staff or a note are all acceptable. Parents must contact the school and report the reason for absence on the first day of absence before 9.00 am. Harrow Gate Primary School operates a first day calling system. If we have not received a reason for absence by 9.00 am on the first day of absence, the office administrator will contact the main contact number to try to ascertain the reason for absence. If the absence continues to the second day then all contact information will be used to attempt to discuss the absence with the parent. Three days of no contact will result in a home visit.

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly, the school must note the presence of a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

The child is required to report to the main school office so that there is information on the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.

Off-Site activities ~ these fall into two categories, school directed e.g. educational visits and individual activities e.g. music examinations. School activities will be classed as authorised. Where the activity is of a more individual nature the school will normally authorise absence.

Excluded children ~ any child who has been excluded will remain on the school register. The absence will have resulted from specific action from the Principal or the Governing body; thus, the absence is authorised.

7. Leave of Absence.

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays in term time. Therefore, in line with Government policy, no leave of absence will be granted.

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child and the possibility of fixed term penalties may apply.

If parents feel that **exceptional circumstances** apply to their family then they should complete a Leave of Absence form and provide strong evidence to support the request, if they intend to remove their child from school for this purpose. It should be completed and returned to the school office who will send it to the Principal for individual consideration. The parent will be written to by the Principal with the confirmation as to whether the leave of absence is granted.

8. Punctuality

It is Harrow Gate Primary Academy School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the main office and will be escorted to their class by a member of staff.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

In order to support parents and pupils, school have a daily breakfast club from 8.00am

9. Attendance Procedure

Intervention at School Level

Monitoring attendance

- All class teachers mark their own register using the electronic whiteboard and include any comments.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to phone school as soon as possible if they know their child will be absent that day. If parents know in advance then they are encouraged to send a letter.
- The Office Administrator checks all registers and any parents who have not provided a reason for their child's absence is contacted that morning by telephone. The Office Administrator

records all information on the computer. All absences must be explained. School keeps a record of any notes or correspondence relating to a pupils absence.

- We also monitor lateness. Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable. A late mark is given if arrival is between 8.55 a.m. and 9.15 a.m. An absence mark is awarded if arrival is after 9.15 a.m.
- Latecomers are signed into school using the signing in system. If children leave school before the end of the school day, they are signed out using the same signing in system.
- Once teachers have entered their class's attendance on the SIMs system, The Office Administrator produces a session absence register for each class each day in case of an emergency evacuation of the building.
- The class teachers, Principal and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) liaise regarding any concerns that they have over a child's attendance record.
- The EWO makes note of all regular absentees, patterns or trends and any children where the staff have concerns. The Principal is kept fully informed by EWO and if an absence were considered urgent she would make the decision to inform the Attendance Officer
- A tracking system is used to monitor attendance on a monthly basis. This operates using a 'Traffic light' procedure,
 - **Green** ~ if a child's attendance falls below 95%, a letter will be sent home.
 - **Amber** ~ If a child's attendance does not improve over a 2 week period and falls below 90%. A letter will be generated with an attendance record attached. Below 90% is deemed a **Persistent Absentee** and may be referred to the Attendance and Exclusion Team. Medical evidence is always expected for below 90% attendance and if a child has a full weeks' absence.
 - **Red** ~ A letter is sent home if attendance continues to be a concern. An action plan is completed with targets and clear success criteria for the child and the family.
- Where attendance concerns still continue, parent/carer should be invited into school to discuss the issues with an appropriate member of staff. This meeting is an opportunity to initiate EHA so that a full picture of family needs can be identified and acted upon. If parents/carers do not attend, an action plan is sent with a review date.
- If a child's attendance continues to be a concern the intervention and support from SBC Attendance Officer will be initiated
- Where school has attendance concerns, home visits will be made to discuss these concerns with parents and/or carers. Referrals can be made to the Attendance Officer if attendance falls below 80%
- On a termly basis, the Principal will monitor and analyse the attendance of groups of pupils by Gender, SEN, FSM, Ethnicity and Looked After Children and compare with national trends.

Role of the Attendance Officer

The role of our designated Attendance Officer (AO) is to:

- Meetings with the school's Attendance Officer will be held on an annual basis.
- The AO has full access to the computer to scrutinise the absence patterns on their termly visit. Regular register checks of absentees below a predetermined attendance rate should be carried out. A referral form is to be completed for each student referred, a copy of which is given to the AO. The purpose of the meetings will be to
 - liaise, where appropriate, between home and school;
 - investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
 - complete a regular register check and provide school with advice on strategies to improve attendance;
 - provide advice and support to parents through the initiation of attendance procedures
 - work with children who are experiencing problems with Attendance and/or punctuality and/or are preparing to transfer to secondary school
 - assist school in setting attendance targets;

Referral to the Attendance Officer includes the following ~

- A pupil's unauthorised absence has not been resolved through school level intervention
- The pupil's absence is persistent and has fallen below 80%
- There has been continuous unauthorised absence for two weeks or more and school are not aware of any valid reason for absence.
- Where there are concerns or information that the family and/or pupil has moved out of the area and no forwarding address has been confirmed.
- Within 10 school days of receipt of a referral form, the parent/carer will be written to and informed of a home visit by the A O. Should the parent/carer fail to keep the appointment a card will be left requesting contact. A second appointment for a visit will be sent and if this is unsuccessful, an Inclusion Officer will request contact within 10 days. If no response from parent/carer is made and continues to be a concern a Parenting Contract meeting will be held.
- During the first home visit from the A.O concerns and reasons for absence will be discussed and a plan will be put in place. This will be reviewed at the end of a 6-week period. If targets have been met the pupil returns to the monitoring stage.
- Where school level intervention has proved unsuccessful a referral to the AO can be made for prosecution. An Attendance Case Conference will be arranged and the parent/carer will be issued with a PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) caution. The parent will be offered a Parenting Contract. The will last for 6 weeks with 100% attendance expected.

11. Consulting with parents and keeping them informed

- All parents/carers are given an Attendance contract when their child starts school, which explains the importance of regular attendance and the school's approach to promoting good attendance. If a child has frequent absences then this leaflet may be sent home as a reminder.
- Parents are invited to discuss concerns around attendance through the EWO
- The school operates a varied attendance reward system.
- At the end of each term, school sends out a registration certificate to all parents to show their child's attendance. This acts as a reminder.
- Each child also has their individual attendance figures on their yearly report given to parents.

12. Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at Harrow Gate Primary School.

13. School Targets

To enable school to achieve target of 96% attendance from all pupils, systems have been set in place to;

- Provide and interpret detailed and robust data on school attendance.
- Develop a strategic target setting culture.
- Develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure targets on both a school and individual pupil's level are being met.
- Publish targets and achievement around school

Harrow Gate Primary Academy School work in partnership with the children, parents and the LA to ensure regular attendance of all children enabling them to maximise the full potential of the learning opportunities available to them.