Hasland Junior School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed By	**Matthew Winson**
Version	**1.2**
Date Reviewed	**May 2026**
Next Review Date	**July 2027**

Attendance Policy

Introduction

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career and we aspire to the highest standards of attendance for all children. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all children are able to take advantage of the learning experiences available to them to ensure that each child meets his/her full potential.

School expects an attendance of at least 96% in line with Government expectations.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Weekly acknowledgement to the class with the best attendance.
- Half termly award for the year group who has achieved the most attendance points.
- Prize to any child who attends throughout the Juniors without missing a day.

We also rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns or poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher
Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording the attendance of children.
- Monitoring of individual children's attendance.
- The day-to-day engagement of children with the curriculum and their happiness in school.
- Reporting to the headteacher any unusual patterns of attendance

Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall engagement of children in school.
- The overall happiness of children in school.
- Overseeing the policy on a day-to-day basis.
- Monitoring absence.
- Monitoring holidays.
- Reporting to governors.
- Following Government guidelines on attendance.

Governors

- Governors are responsible of ensuring that the headteacher follows the procedures outlined in the policy.

Administration staff
Administration staff are responsible for:

- Recording absences when informed by parents
- Following up on absences when not reported as per safeguarding requirements

Family Support Worker (FSW)
The school's FSW is a role designed to support families who need additional help – including with attendance & punctuality.

In this policy, the FSW is responsible for:

- Helping families achieve better attendance.
- Engaging with and supporting families when it has been identified they need support with attendance.
- Reporting to the headteacher on their findings.

Parents
Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly.
- Ensuring their child attends school punctually.
- Informing school immediately if their child cannot attend school.
- Engaging with the school (eg FSW) if attendance / punctuality appears to be of concern .

Registration

The school doors open at 8:45am and children are expected to be in school by 8:55am – with registers closing at 9:05am. This gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using the school's management information system. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule

Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9:05am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9:05am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect parent/carer child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8:55am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there are concerns about punctuality, Class teachers or office staff may make contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, other members of staff may contact the parents/carers to discuss this.

If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the Family Support Worker may contact the parent/carer to listen, understand and offer support in order to overcome any home or school barriers there are to attendance.

Absences

Absences are recorded in the school's management information system. A report is compiled each week and analysed by the headteacher to investigate if there are any patterns of absence or any absences that have not been explained or where the reasons provided cause concern.

National Framework for penalty notices

To provide consistency, the Government have introduced a new national framework for when schools and Local Authorities believe that they have exhausted all offers of support and the parent/carer is not engaging with the attempt to improve their child's attendance at school.

The threshold for when a school should consider next steps is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period.

Unauthorised leave that does not meet the threshold
In the first instance where there is a period of unauthorised leave in term time for less than 5 days the school will formally notify the parent in writing that whilst a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion, that the absence will be marked with a G code and that any further periods of unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice being requested regardless of the length.

Escalation process
In line with the new Government guidance Derbyshire County Council's new code of conduct states that the Local Authority will not issue more than two penalty notices within a 3-year period, consequently a third request will automatically result in consideration of a straight to court prosecution.

Challenge letters
Where a child is absent with no reason or the reason provided gives the Headteacher grounds to believe that the child is/has been on holiday then the Headteacher will challenge this absence and apply for a penalty notice to be issued.

Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. The new costs and process is outlined below:

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

First Day Contact

Registers are completed by the class teacher between 8:55am – 9:05am. Once the registers have been completed the office staff check for any missing children. If a child is not

attending and no reason is given the 1st contact on the child's records are contacted to find out why that particular child is not in school. If the phone is not answered then a message is left, which may include a Parent Hub message or, if appropriate, the 2nd contact on the child's record is contacted. If we are unable to contact anyone, a home visit may be undertaken.

If school still cannot contact a responsible adult with regards to the child, or still have any concerns, then school may make the decision to contact social care.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Attendance codes are used in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school will request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. Attendance data is held on the school's information system. This is used to conduct checks on individual children and provides comprehensive attendance records. The Headteacher monitors the attendance of children each half term (please see the school attendance flowchart) and parents are contacted and sent a letter informing them of their child's attendance if it falls below 90%. Any child who has an attendance score of 90% - 95% may also be contacted so this can be discussed, even if their absence has been authorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on an Absence Request Form available from the school office and handed in at least two school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Leave of absence for any reason will not be granted for any child if they fall into any of the following categories:

- Any absence requested in the first two weeks of a new academic year.
- Any absence requested for a child whose attendance is already below 90%.
- Any absence during SATs week.

Persistent & Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school (and therefore has an attendance score of less than 90%), and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school (and therefore has an attendance of below 50%).

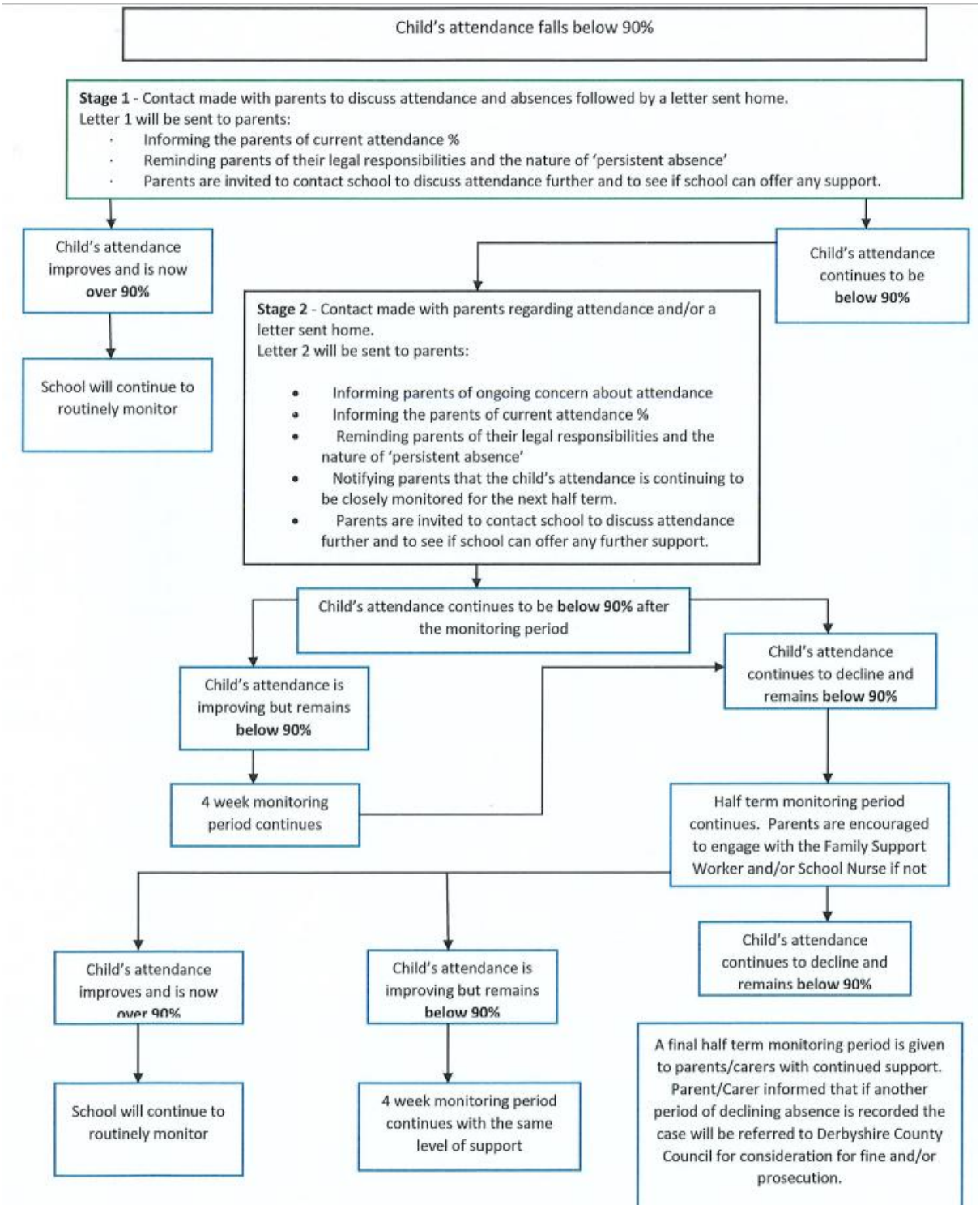
The school will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. School will follow the flow chart found as an appendix to this policy for those children at risk of persistent or severe absence. In extreme cases, this may result in Local Authority involvement and may result in a fine or even prosecution.

We will monitor & track very carefully those children who fall into persistent or severe absence and will send out letters each half term to parents of children who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent. Dependent on the severity or longevity of absence, the letters will explain the next steps the school will take towards addressing the absence, whether this is engagement with the Family Support Worker or Inclusion Advisory Support Teacher to discuss any barriers to attendance, a referral to the School Nursing Service, or an escalation to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of a fine or prosecution.

Monitoring will continue at the end of each year and from the Infant School to the Junior School.

Safeguarding our children is our priority and this will always be considered when looking at children's attendance.

At Hasland Junior School attendance is closely monitored. At the end of each half term each child's attendance is looked at and appropriate action is taken. If your child has attendance of 90% or below they are classed as 'persistently absent from school'. Please refer to the flowchart below for how school will address this.


Child's attendance falls below 90%
Stage 1 - Contact made with parents to discuss attendance and absences followed by a letter sent home.
Letter 1 will be sent to parents:
· Informing the parents of current attendance %
· Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'
· Parents are invited to contact school to discuss attendance further and to see if school can offer any support.
Child's attendance improves and is now over 90%
School will continue to routinely monitor
Child's attendance continues to be below 90%
Stage 2 - Contact made with parents regarding attendance and/or a letter sent home.
Letter 2 will be sent to parents:
• Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance
• Informing the parents of current attendance %
• Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'
• Notifying parents that the child's attendance is continuing to be closely monitored for the next half term.
• Parents are invited to contact school to discuss attendance further and to see if school can offer any further support.
Child's attendance continues to be below 90% after the monitoring period
Child's attendance is improving but remains below 90%
4 week monitoring period continues
Child's attendance continues to decline and remains below 90%
Half term monitoring period continues. Parents are encouraged to engage with the Family Support Worker and/or School Nurse if not
Child's attendance improves and is now over 90%
School will continue to routinely monitor
Child's attendance is improving but remains below 90%
4 week monitoring period continues with the same level of support
Child's attendance continues to decline and remains below 90%
A final half term monitoring period is given to parents/carers with continued support. Parent/Carer informed that if another period of declining absence is recorded the case will be referred to Derbyshire County Council for consideration for fine and/or prosecution.