

Hartshorne C of E



Primary School

Hartshorne CE Primary School & Governor Run Nursery

Attendance Policy

September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Our vision & values are born out of God's love & nurture of all creation.

Together we work as a family to see one another grow and flourish: knowing that we are precious & unique to God.

We aim to live out our values in our school & the world around us as we play our part in God's wonderful creation story.

God's family, growing together; inspiring our world

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence and severely persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To minimise the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all pupils

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Targets

Our target attendance has been set in conjunction with the Governors and with reference to the DfE's aim of reducing unauthorised absence.

Year	2024/25	2025/26
Attendance Target	96%	96%

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [Guidance for Parents on Improving Attendance](#)

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

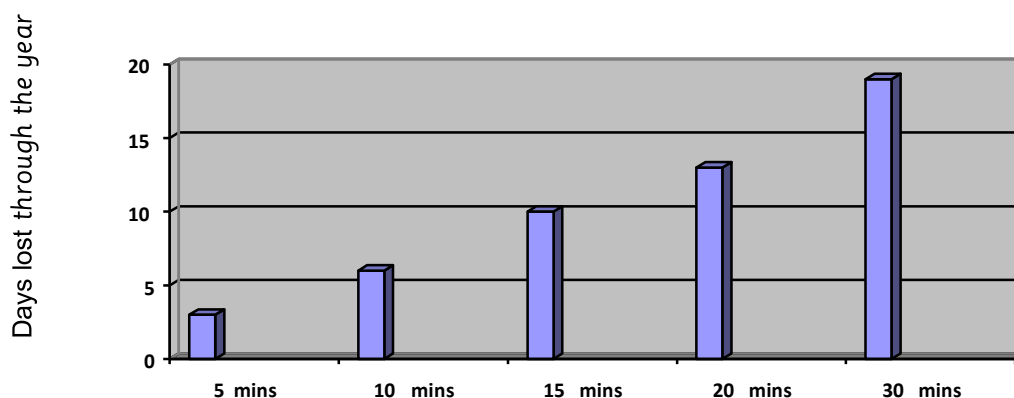
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
 - [The Education Act 2002](#)
 - [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
 - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
 - [The Education Act 2011](#)
 - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
 - [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- 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 a leave of absence request form available from the school office and handed in 4 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.

4. Punctuality

Lessons begin promptly at 8.45am. Arriving after this time can affect your child's progress. It also disrupts the classroom when lessons have already begun. Therefore, not only must children attend school regularly, but they must not be late.

The following graph clearly illustrates how being late can add up to a loss of learning:



As you can see, if your child is late for just 5 minutes every day that can add up to over three days lost each year and arriving 15 minutes late each day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year: for that reason, it is imperative that your child is punctual.

To reduce congestion at the beginning of the school day and help all of our children arrive on time, we do open our school gates (the main gate and car park gates) at 8.30am. The gates close at 8.45am.

5. School procedures

5.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. School follow DfE guidance to ensure compliance.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

5.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible by leaving a message on the school answer phone, text system or send an email to the office, info@hartshorne.derbyshire.sch.uk (see also section 7).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

On day 4 of absence due to illness, school will contact parent/carer to arrange a safe and wellbeing check for that day at a convenient time. If contact cannot be made it may be assumed the family is on holiday and a penalty notice will be issued.

5.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. We may require you to provide a medical appointment card as evidence of the appointment.

Advance notification of appointments should be made to the office only, either by telephone or email.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 6.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am, a "Late" mark will be entered from 8.50am then from 9.00am onwards an "Unauthorised" mark will be made.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make contact with the parents to meet with the Headteacher.

In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a referral to Starting Point or offer support via the family support worker.

5.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We will call parents/carers on the first day for absences not reported. If we do not get a response, we will follow Safeguarding Policy for missing children.

5.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are informed of their child's attendance during parents evening and attendance reports are issued to parents annually as part of pupils end of year reports.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. **This will not include any holidays.**

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 5.2 and 5.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Where attendance is poor Hartshorne CE Primary School & Governor Run Nursery will take the following action with parents/carers:
 - Contact via text system, email and/or phone
 - Contact via letter
 - Meeting with Headteacher
 - Refer to Governors
 - Legal Action

See also 6.2 Legal Sanctions

6.2 Legal sanctions

Requests to the LA for formal commencement of statutory measures/legal action in relation to unsatisfactory school attendance from September 2024

The new Working Together to improve school attendance guidance has resulted in changes to the way that the local authority will process and issue penalty notices or prosecute families in relation to unsatisfactory school attendance.

Support first approach:

As you are aware there is a strong emphasis on partners working together to support pupils and families to remove barriers to attendance prior to any consideration being given to legal intervention.

From September 2025 each school will be allocated an Inclusion Support Advisory Teacher (ISAT) who will offer schools advice and guidance in relation to attendance. This will include whole school strategy advice but also case management consultation, thereby ensuring that the school and Local Authority are satisfied that all offers of support have been exhausted and it can be evidenced that the parent is failing in their duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school.

New Process:

The new process now requires that, at the point that the school become aware of an emerging attendance concern they should send a parental responsibility letter to the parent, this is the start of the legal period of evidence should there be no subsequent improvement.

This letter should trigger a period of intense support and monitoring where a designated member of the school staff works directly with the pupil and parent/carer who has parental responsibility to try to improve the situation. These cases should be discussed with the ISAT during the targeted support meeting and the work should continue until the situation improves or it is decided that the case needs to be referred to the LA for consideration of legal intervention. The LA envisage a case to be managed for a period of approximately 6 months unless the pupil was not attending at all in which case action could be taken sooner.

Once received the LA will review the evidence submitted and a decision will be made and communicated with the school. Where either a penalty notice or prosecution is being considered the LA will send the parent a formal notice to improve which will give a final 4 week period for the parent to avoid legal action.

New Thresholds:

The Local Authority attendance process team will only accept referrals if the case meets the following criteria:

- The pupil's overall attendance is below 90%
- The pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 10 school weeks
- Support has been offered and it can be evidenced that the parent has not engaged

Escalation process:

In line with the new Government guidance Derbyshire County Council 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.

Derbyshire County Council Advice for parents and Carers

■ What is the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?

The Act gives powers to local authorities, schools and the police to issue penalty notices to parents or carers for their child's unsatisfactory attendance at school.

■ Why have penalty notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is very important. This is because missing school can damage children's achievements, disrupt the school's routines and affect yours and other children's learning. It can also leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing out on the opportunities provided in school can have a long-term effect on children's chances in life.

■ What are my responsibilities as a parent?

You have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives full-time education. Where a child is registered at a school, you must ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. You will be committing an offence, therefore, if your child fails to attend regularly and punctually and the school has not given permission for the absence or late arrival.

1 The law states that education must be *"efficient, full-time and suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)"*

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Remember - only your child's school can authorise absence or late arrival.

■ What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. It provides the parent the option to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's non-attendance and avoids court proceedings. It is intended to secure better attendance without taking legal action through the courts. The decision to offer the option of a penalty notice lies with the local authority and takes into consideration the facts of the case and the threshold guidance as outlined in the Government guidance

■ What are the penalty costs?

In the first instance, the fine is £160 to be paid within 28 days. The 28 days starts two days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £80.

If a second penalty notice is issued within 3 years of the first the amount to be paid is £160 to be paid within 28 days with no reduction for early payment.

PLEASE BE AWARE when two parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice for the same child both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

■ Who is counted as the parent responsible for ensuring attendance?

The law defines a parent as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, even if not married, has responsibility as a parent
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Having care of a child or young person means that if the child or young person lives with you and is cared for by you then you will be regarded as the parent irrespective of what your relationship is with the child.

■ How are they issued?

A penalty notice will normally be sent by first class post to your home address.

■ When are they used?

Penalty notices can be used in a wide range of situations, including but not limited to circumstances:

- Where it is clear that parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- Where parents take their child on holiday during term-time without the written permission of the headteacher.

■ Unsatisfactory school attendance

The threshold for when a school should consider requesting the issue of a penalty notice 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.

At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support or if they should refer the case to the local authority for formal monitoring with a view to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

■ Is a warning given?

A formal written notice to improve will be issued in cases of unsatisfactory school attendance, but there will be certain circumstances where you will not be given a formal written warning. For example, if you have taken your child on holiday in term-time without the authorisation of the headteacher.

■ What happens if I receive a notice to improve?

The letter will tell you how many school sessions your child has missed and give you a minimum number of school days to improve your child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, a penalty notice may be issued.

We never take such action lightly and would prefer to work with parents or carers to improve attendance without having to enforce it. However, we will use these powers to ensure that your child attends school.

■ What does the law say regarding holidays in term-time?

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 makes it clear that the headteacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents are not entitled to take their children on holiday in term-time. Planned absence can only be taken with the prior written approval of the headteacher. Each case will be considered on its own merits and the decision of the headteacher is final.

If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the local authority who will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time but fall below the 5-day threshold.

If a penalty notice is issued the following apply:

- Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child for each period of absence
- A penalty notice will be issued without warning

Taking or allowing your child to take a holiday in term-time without the school's permission is a serious matter. If the LA find that you have done so, they will not hesitate to issue a penalty notice if requested to do so by the school.

■ Can I appeal?

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued.

We can take back a penalty notice but **only if**:

- It should not have been issued in the first place (for example, if your child was actually at school); or
- It has been issued to the wrong person; or
- It appears to Derbyshire County Council that the notice contains material errors.

If you believe that any of the above circumstances apply, you should contact Derbyshire County Council immediately with evidence to support your view. The contact details will be included in the penalty notice.

■ How do I pay?

Details of how to pay will be included in the penalty notice. Please remember that there will be no reminder to pay and no opportunity to pay in instalments. Failure to pay within the timescales as specified in the penalty notice will result in prosecution.

■ What happens if I do not pay?

If you do not pay, the consequences can be very serious. You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the penalty notice in full. After this time, if it has not been paid, Derbyshire County Council is required by law to begin proceedings in the magistrates' court for the original offence of failing to secure the satisfactory attendance of your child at school.

Cases will usually be dealt with by using a process called the single justice procedure (SJP), which allows the case to be heard without the need for you to attend the Magistrates Court, however you still have the right to request that your case be heard in open court even you wish to plead guilty. If you wish to plead not guilty to the offence the Court will schedule a trial and you will be required to attend.

If proven, this can attract a range of fines of up to £2500, and may include other remedies such as parenting orders, community sentences, or imprisonment, depending on the circumstances. A guilty verdict will also mean that you will have a criminal record.

■ Can I be prosecuted if I pay but my child still fails to attend school?

If your child's attendance at school does not improve a second penalty notice or escalation to prosecution may occur. You cannot be prosecuted for the period included in the existing penalty notice, however, you can be prosecuted for any further periods of non-attendance, depending on the circumstances

7. Attendance monitoring

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5.2).

The headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils regularly and at least every 10 weeks, with a heightened focus on persistently absent children.

Wave 1: If a child's attendance drops below 96% a monitoring meeting between headteacher and parents may be held.

Wave 2: For children whose attendance continues to drop a letter from the Headteacher will be sent. If a child's attendance does not improve and drops below 90%, the Headteacher will invite the parents in for a further meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support to improve the overall attendance.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to fall, we will use the Local authority support to meet with parents. Further legal action may be taken.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Persistent Absence

The definition of persistently absence (PA) pupil as set out by the DfE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 3	20 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 4 (autumn and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half term 1 - 5	31 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

It is important to remember that there are two sessions each day.

As a school, we collect attendance data on our management information system, RM Integris. As per legal requirements, this data is shared with the local authority and nationally. Internally, we check this data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence across the school and at an individual level with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as PA. The office and Headteacher will then monitor these pupils and try to work with families to improve attendance. This data is then monitored by our Safeguarding Governor on their half termly visits and data is shared termly with the Governors in an anonymous way. Attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of free school meals or are vulnerable are a focus of this monitoring.

These identified children become a daily or weekly focus to ensure improvement. The school are committed to working with parents to help solve attendance issues and ensure regular attendance. As parents/carers have accepted a place at our school, it is an expectation that parents/carers will be committed to ensure attendance is as high as possible and pupils are always punctual.

8 Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports by:

- 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;
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
- Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence;
- Carrying out safe and well-being checks via telephone.

8.3 The school office staff

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Follows policy to ensure implementation
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Manages and maintains correspondences
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Office staff are expected to check absence lines, emails and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Office staff are expected to contact parents when absence has not been reported as per the policy guidelines.

8.4 Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis.
- Teachers record absence as an N code and attendance and correct codes are added by the school office.
- Class teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about patterns of absence to the Headteacher, office staff and on My Concern when it is considered a Safeguarding issue.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Codes for Present or Approved Educational Activity

- / – Present (AM)
- \ – Present (PM)
- L – Late (before register closes)
- B – Approved educational activity (e.g. college taster days, unregistered alternative provision)
- P – Participating in a school-approved sporting activity
- V – Educational visit or trip
- W – Work experience
- K – Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority

Codes for Authorised Absence

- I – Illness (with stricter reporting protocols for long absences)
- C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
 - C1 – Regulated performance or employment
 - C2 – Part-time timetable for compulsory school-age pupils
- J1 – Authorised absence (replacing the old J code)
- M – Medical or dental appointment
- R – Religious observance
- S – Study leave
- T – Traveller absence

Codes for Unauthorised Absence

- N – No reason yet provided for absence
- O – Unauthorised absence
- U – Late (after register closes)

Codes for Not Required to Attend

- X – Not required to attend (e.g. non-compulsory school-age children)
- Y1 – Transport normally provided not available
- Y2 – Widespread travel disruption
- Y3 – Part of school premises closed
- Y4 – Whole school closed
- Y5 – Pupil in criminal justice detention
- Y6 – Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 – Other unavoidable cause (e.g. emergencies affecting the pupil)