



HILLINGDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Document Control

Date	Revised amendment details	By whom
October 2022	Approved by TEFAT	Trustees
June 2023	Adopted and implemented by the school	Principal
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Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Values

1. Put children first

- a. We trust and value your professionalism
- b. We share the responsibility for the learning and welfare of all of our children
- c. Our purpose is to improve the lives of children

2. Be safe

- a. Don't assume that someone else will do it
- b. Look after yourself, your colleagues and all children
- c. We are all responsible for each other's safety and well being
- d. Discuss any concerns with an appropriate member of staff

3. Be kind & respect all

- a. People are allowed to be different as are you
- b. Kindness creates the positive environment we all need to flourish
- c. This kindness should extend to ourselves as well as to others

4. Be open

- a. If you can see a better way, suggest it
- b. If someone else suggests a better way to you, consider it
- c. We exist to nurture innovators and support those who take informed risks in the interests of children

5. Forgive

- a. We all make mistakes
- b. Admit them, learn from them and move on

6. Make a difference

- a. Making the world a better place starts with you
- b. Model the behaviour that you would like to see from others

Related Policies and Documents

[TEFAT Attendance Policy](#)

[TEFAT Safeguarding Policy](#) and [Local Safeguarding Arrangements](#)

[TEFAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy](#)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

[DfE Working together to improve school attendance Sept 2022](#)

[DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance Sept 2022](#)

1. Introduction

Promoting good school attendance and reducing absence is vital to: ensure children's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding; ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education; ensure that pupils make good progress academically and personally and to ensure that pupils leave us with the best possible opportunities for their future.

This policy aims to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly; consequently they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

The policy outlines the **responsibilities for the school and parents*** in ensuring that pupils' attendance at Hillingdon Primary School is the best it can be. It also describes the strategies used by the school, alongside The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust and London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH) to support and improve attendance.

* Where the term 'parent' has been used it applies to all of those with parental responsibility, including carers.

2. The importance of culture and curriculum

Learning and achievement drives everything that we do at Hillingdon Primary School. Our job, in partnership with parents, is to build the foundations for a successful education, to enable each child to discover the joy of learning, to help them to fulfil every aspect of their potential and to encourage their growth into effective citizens, ready to play their part in the world and their community.

We strongly believe that a key component to children achieving success is regular attendance. If children are not attending school then they cannot benefit from our broad and balanced curriculum and the extra-curricular opportunities we offer. To put this in context, 90% attendance equates to 19.5 days (almost 4 weeks) absence from school in one year. If continued throughout a child's primary school education, he / she will miss nearly two and a half terms (7 months) of school in a seven year period. An absence of this magnitude will have a significant impact on the child's education. We further believe that by setting high expectations for pupils' attendance at primary school we are helping to instil a mind-set that will benefit children throughout their academic career and later life.

At Hillingdon Primary School we also recognise that school must be a place where children feel valued, safe, welcome, accepted and supported in order for them to want to attend. This culture is established and maintained through the inclusive ethos of our school, our Personal Development curriculum, high expectations regarding pupil and staff conduct, and a staffing structure that supports dedicated and effective pastoral care. It is further supported by effective

and regular communication between staff teams, teachers and parents. Pupil voice is used to measure our success in maintaining such an ethos.

3. Attendance systems and procedures

3.1. Attendance Registers

Accurate and timely registers enable the school to safeguard children as well as to recognise and act upon any concerning attendance patterns. Staff follow the school Register Protocol which is reviewed and shared at least annually. Registers are taken at the start of every morning and afternoon session.

We expect pupils to arrive at school on time and be collected on time. School starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm for all pupils. Pupils are required to be in their class, ready to learn, from 8.45am. Pupils who are not in their classrooms by 8.45am are recorded as 'Late.' This will be recorded in the register as 'L.'

Our registers close at 9.15am. Those arriving after registers close will receive an unauthorised late absence mark for that session. This will be recorded in the register as 'U' and will negatively impact the pupil's overall attendance percentage.

If a child is being educated off-site for any reason, the school will make daily contact with the provider to ensure attendance is recorded accurately.

3.2. Recording and responding to absence

- Parents **MUST** contact school on the first day of their child's absence to explain the reason.
- Contact must be made via the school absence line (01895 590087 option 2) or via email at attendance@hillingdonprimaryschool.org.uk.
- Contact must be made by 9.30am at the latest. If further information is required by the school, a phone call is made to parents.
- Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (September 2022). This decision is based on the information provided by parents when a child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or not. Only the Principal can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.3. Home visits - Pupil Wellbeing

Home visits are carried out by a member of the Welfare / Pastoral Care Team, and this may include a member of the Senior Leadership Team if there are particular concerns about a pupil's absence. Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry their school ID and will expect to see the pupil in question, if only briefly, in order to ascertain how they are.

3.4. Monitoring and improving irregular attendance

The Welfare and Attendance Officer monitors pupils arriving late to school and cases where attendance is below 95%. A monthly report is produced for the LBH Attendance Support Team.

Class teachers are expected to share concerns regarding a child's attendance and / or punctuality with the Welfare and Attendance Officer. They share responsibility for encouraging punctuality and high attendance among their class and are notified of any action taken to address attendance concerns in their class.

For pupils who are regularly late, where their absence has increased or there is a pattern of absence (e.g. regular absence on a Monday), actions are taken which aim to prevent children missing more school and becoming or remaining a 'Persistent Absentee' (a persistent absentee is defined as a child whose attendance is below 90%).

Actions taken where punctuality is a concern include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. If a pupil is regularly late to school, unless there are exceptional circumstances*, a letter is sent to parents to advise that their child's punctuality is being monitored. (*Exceptions can only be approved by the Principal.)
- b. If a pupil's punctuality does not improve, parents are required to attend a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for lateness and agree actions to address them. The child's punctuality will continue to be monitored.
- c. Parents may be encouraged to make use of the school's breakfast club to improve punctuality. There is a charge for this club.

Actions taken to address attendance concerns include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Letters are sent to parents to inform them that their child's attendance is causing a concern, these may include a request for medical evidence for any further absences due to illness.
- b. Parents may be required to attend a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for absence and agree actions to address them. If parents are unable to make the first appointment, one further appointment time will be offered before moving to a panel meeting.
- c. A panel meeting may be held at school to formally explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to parents; provide an opportunity to further discuss the barriers to attendance; and explore the help that is available to avoid those consequences. The school will be supported at the panel meeting by the LBH Attendance Support Team.
- d. Paragraph 5, Formal and Legal Interventions, details the further action that may be taken if the school based actions detailed above have not been effective and/or have not been engaged with by parents.

Pupils who are temporarily excluded or who are absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate support to return to school, build confidence and bridge gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil (providing they are able to understand the process).

3.5. Attendance and safeguarding

Concerns about any extended or persistent absence are referred to the appropriate team or staff member. It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires support (this includes but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, FGM, CCE, CSE or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

3.6. Children Missing from Education (CMfE) Referrals

Academies have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. If a child is absent and contact cannot be made with parents directly (by phone or home visit), and their whereabouts cannot be confirmed by any of the additional named contacts held by school, then the LBH's Attendance Support Team team is notified immediately and police may be asked to carry out a safe and well check at the home address.

The Attendance Support Team is also notified if a child is known to have moved out of the area so is no longer attending the school, or if a parent enquiring about a school place states that their child is not currently attending a school.

Pupils who are continually absent for 20 school days or more without prior authorisation from the Principal may be removed from the school roll (paragraph 174 of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)). Parents / carers will be notified by letter and a deadline provided for the child to return to school. The Welfare and Attendance Officer will consult the LBH Attendance Support Team for advice and guidance prior to removing a child from the school roll.

3.7. Recognising and rewarding good attendance

To help pupils and their parents understand the importance of regular attendance and monitor their own and their class's attendance, it is discussed and celebrated in the following ways:

- a. Teachers discuss attendance and punctuality with parents at parent consultation meetings.
- b. A copy of each pupils' attendance and punctuality record is given to parents alongside their annual school report. Comments are made when appropriate.
- c. Weekly attendance certificates are presented to the class with the highest attendance in each key stage assembly.

4. Term-time leave of absence requests

4.1. Exceptional Leave Requests

A leave of absence request form **MUST** be completed in all circumstances, as far in advance as possible, and a minimum of 10 school days before the requested absence starts unless there are extenuating circumstances. Forms must be requested from and returned to the school office and incomplete forms will not be considered. Any absences taken without the prior approval of the Principal will be unauthorised.

The Principal will **only** authorise leave in **exceptional circumstances, when absence during term time is absolutely unavoidable**. This decision is at the Principal's discretion, based on the information provided by parents in writing, at the time the request is made.

Where a period of absence is authorised in exceptional circumstances, the number of days will be determined by the Principal. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that permission for leave is obtained *before* travel or accommodation are booked.

This is in line with DfE guidance which states that:

215. Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

216. An application for leave of absence should (and from certain schools must) not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, September 2022)

After submitting a request for term time leave to be authorised, parents will be informed of the Principal's decision in writing within ten school days.

Periods of unauthorised leave may be referred to the Attendance Support Team. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice (see 5.2 below).

4.2. Religious Observance

Pupils may request leave of absence for one day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body. Parents must complete a Religious Observance Form in advance of the date of observance

5. Formal and legal interventions

Hillingdon Primary School will always seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or when those with parental responsibility for the child do not engage with this support, then the academy will work with the LBH's Attendance Support Team to address poor attendance.

The first step would be to set up a formal parenting contract between parents and the school.

5.1. Parenting contracts

- A formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Are not legally binding but allow a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.
- Are not a punitive tool, they are intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- Aim for the parent(s), and the pupil where they are old enough, the school and the Local Authority to work in partnership.
- Parenting contracts contain:
 - Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
 - A statement from the school and/or Local Authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
 - A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.
 - The period it will be in place for (most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed).

If a parenting contract is not effective at improving a child's attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress as far as needed through the following, hierarchical legal interventions;

- **Education Supervision Orders (ESO)** - non compliance can lead to prosecution and a fine of up to £1000
- **Attendance prosecutions** - if found guilty, depending on the circumstances parents can be sentenced to a community order, a parenting order, a fine of up to £2500 or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- **Parenting orders** - breaches can lead to a fine of up to £1000

Where safeguarding concerns exist, the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services may decide that either a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan is a more appropriate form of support.

5.2. Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Penalty

notices are used when parenting contracts are not appropriate, such as when a parent(s) takes a child out of school for term time leave that has not been authorised.

- fines of £60 (if paid within 21 days) / £120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days) imposed on parents
- can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a Local Authority officer or the police
- can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences
- can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school
- there is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice
- For further information please see the London Borough of Hillingdon's fact-file for parents and carers: 'Penalty notices for non school attendance,' on their [website](#).
- The London Borough of Hillingdon's Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found here: <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/school-attendance>

For full details of the school attendance parental responsibility measures available to schools and Local Authorities see [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (DfE, January 2015) or Section 6 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE September 2022)

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Informing the school on the first day of non-attendance by telephoning the school office.
- Ensuring that medical appointments are booked outside school time wherever possible.
- Speaking to the Pastoral Care Manager, Welfare and Attendance Officer, class teacher or relevant senior leader to seek support for any issues that may be preventing their child from wanting to attend school.
- Understanding and accepting that absences for family holidays or visits and special occasions will not normally be permitted. Approval will only be granted in truly exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal.
- Working alongside the school to address and improve any patterns of poor attendance.
- Complying with the DfE statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (January 2015).

6.2. Pupils, when developmentally ready to take some responsibility for their learning, are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive on time, ready to learn.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might lead to absence.

6.3. All staff are responsible for promoting good attendance. Those with specific responsibilities include:

- The member of SLT appointed as **Attendance Lead** is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance taken by the school.
- The Welfare and Attendance Officer checks absence after each register period, carries out first day calling and supports parents with improving their child's attendance. The Welfare and Attendance Officer also monitors attendance data for

individuals and groups and works with the attendance lead to decide on and implement actions in response to patterns shown in data.

- **Class teachers and LSAs** discuss attendance daily and refer concerns to the Welfare and Attendance Officer. They also discuss attendance with parents at parent consultation meetings.
- The **Principal** decides whether term time leave applications are approved or not (see 'Term time leave of absence requests', above).
- The **Pastoral Care Manager, Assistant Principal for Inclusion and Welfare and Attendance Officer** work with children who face attendance barriers and families who need support.

Our school is supported to improving pupil attendance by the following partners:

- The London Borough of Hillingdon Attendance Support Team
- **The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust** Regional Director, DSL for the Trust and Legal, SEND and Governance Director