

Highfield Primary School
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Our Senior Attendance Champion
with lead responsibility for
attendance is:

Miss Helme

***What should I do if my child is absent
from school?***

By law, schools must record absences
and the reasons given.

You are therefore required to contact
the school to report your child's
absence before 9:30am on the day of
the absence and each subsequent day
of absence.

The school office should be informed
in writing of absences known in
advance, such as medical
appointments.



ATTENDANCE

An information leaflet for parents and carers

Highfield Primary School recognises
that positive behaviour and good
attendance are central to raising
standards of pupil attainment.
Regular attendance is essential for
pupils to get the most out of their
school experience, including their
attainment, wellbeing and wider life
chances."

September 2025

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Our Attendance Policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively, in line with Government and Local Authority requirements, and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers so that they are aware of their own child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

The school's Attendance Policy is published on the school website, or is available from the office. We are always pleased to support pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance at school.

Understanding different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required and is a legal requirement.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, as well as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the governors, following Government regulations, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and fines.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to be registered (30 minutes after the register opens);
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- day trips;
- holidays in term time, including any arranged by other family members or friends.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

The law specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that "the need or desire for a holiday" is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

It is important for parents/carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

The Department for Education has introduced a new statutory national Framework, that all schools in England must follow.

- There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued for an offence of unauthorised absence, the first will attract a fine of up to £160 per pupil, per parent (£80 if paid within 21 days);
- A second offence in three years will attract a fine of £160 per pupil, per parent.
- Schools cannot issue a third penalty notice in 3 years, and must consider other sanctions, which may include prosecution.