

HILL TOP C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



Our vision

'Learning to LOVE, loving to LEARN and aspiring to SERVE'

We firmly believe love comes first. It is the foundation of who we are and all we do. We teach children to love first; 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12:31 and to show love in their words and in their actions, treating everyone with dignity and respect.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by: Chair of Governors

Date: Updated September 2022

Next review date: September 2025

In line with DFE updated guidance published May 2022, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, which applies from September 2022.

This policy links to: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Data Protection Policy, including GDPR Freedom of Information.

Statement of intent

Hill Top CE Primary School is committed to continually raising the achievement of all our children. We firmly believe that regular school attendance cannot be overestimated and is critical if our children are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

To benefit from lessons, children need to attend school regularly and be on time. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and also impacts on friendship circles and self-esteem. Absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching and learning for themselves and others. The aim of the school is to facilitate our children's regular and sustained attendance by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all children. 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.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance and punctuality is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our children and we use a variety of weekly, half-termly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Hill Top CE Primary School.

The purpose of this Policy and Legislation

To ensure that parents/carers are aware of the legislation relating to attendance and that processes/measures are in place which encourage and support children's attendance at school when they are fit and healthy. The policy is designed to promote regular attendance and punctuality and as such offer all pupils equal access to learning.

Hill Top will always consider the individual needs of children and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

Legal requirements

The law requires that children of compulsory school age attend school every day on which it is open. Poor attendance is defined as anything below 90%. The Department for Education expects a minimum attendance rate of 96% for primary aged pupils.

The School Attendance Policy adheres to the Acts and Regulations below:

- The Education Act 1996 and amendments 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments 2013
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Other departmental advice and guidance that may be of interest:
 - Parental responsibility measures for the school attendance and behaviour
 - Child Missing in Education 2018
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

More comprehensive information and updates can be located on the Department for Education's Website: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) and Bradford Local Authority website [Attendance | Bradford Council](#).

Responsibilities

School:

- Will provide a safe learning environment
- Has an Attendance Policy in place which is widely communicated and understood
- Will build strong relationships with families and children, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Maintains attendance data and report to School Governors, the Local Authority and the Department for Education
- Ensures registers are taken twice daily; at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Shares and discusses attendance data at parents/carers evenings
- Follows up with parents/carers concerns relating to attendance and/or punctuality at appropriate time, particularly when attendance is below 90%
- Initiates contact if absence/lateness has not been communicated with the school, with a first day absence call, and follows up with appropriate action where required
- Promotes and encourages good attendance and punctuality
- The Headteacher will be responsible for attendance and will liaise with the Local Authority on measures to be taken if a child appears to be missing from education.

Parents/Carers:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time
- Notify school by 9 am on every day of absence
- Work in partnership with the school to improve lateness and attendance
- Secure prior authority for authorised absences (absences cannot be approved retrospectively)
- Where possible obtain medical/dental appointments outside of the school day
- Refrain from taking holidays in term time
- Raise any concerns they may have in relation to their child's attendance
- Refrain from bringing a child into school for 48 hours following the last bout of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, as recommended by HPA guidelines
- Make sure that their child has had a good night's sleep – children need to be wide awake to learn effectively

Governors:

It is the governors' responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the governing body on a termly basis.

Absence Reporting Procedures

Parents/Carers should contact the school on the first day of any absence. This should be done by ringing the school office (01274 678386) or by sending an email to office@hilltop.bradford.sch.uk . It is important to leave full details of the absence, particularly if a child is unwell. Hill Top will contact parents via a phone call after registers have closed if a child is absent and the reason for absence has not been advised. On occasions when parents/carers are asked for further clarification for the reason of absence, they should do so by providing the information direct to the office and **not** via teachers or Class Dojo.

If we have not received a reason for absence, the office will send out a reminder to the parent/carer either via phone or email. If there is no response, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

What we will do:

If you do not report your child absent on the first day, and we are still unable to speak to the parent/carer or have received confirmation of why your child is absent, this becomes a safeguarding concern as your child is deemed to be missing. Therefore, to confirm your child's whereabouts, a home visit will be made. If we are still unable to get a response, we will contact the police. This may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Registration

At Hill Top we believe it is important for children to learn from an early age that punctuality is both important and polite. Being late not only has an effect on a child's own learning, self-esteem and confidence, but is also disruptive to the class teacher and other children.

In accordance with current legislation, each Class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9.05 am and 1.05 pm and the information will then be saved to the school office. It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after Class registration has taken place, but before the close of the registers at 9.30am and 1.30pm.

In recognition of local circumstances such as: bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties, we may keep registers open for a reasonable period of time. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office where their attendance will be recorded, as his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation.

The Parental Support Worker and Headteacher will monitor and review persistent lateness is monitored in depth each half term and parents are informed when their child's lateness is a cause for concern and will initiate appropriate action.

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, children 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 child of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and children 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.

Bradford Local Authority requires all schools to use the standard symbols for marking registers.

Hill Top CE Primary School, like many others uses an electronic register system where the Class register is saved to, stored on and accessed from the central administration computer system (SIMS).

Leave of absence during term time

Authorised Absences (not exhaustive):

Illness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments (which should be made outside of school time, wherever possible), family bereavement and religious observance. The school requires documentation to support appointments during the school day. In addition, the school is entitled to ask for documentation to support other absences.

Unauthorised Absences (not exhaustive):

Holidays during term time, shopping trips, illness of a parent, day trips or long weekends, unexplained absence from school, birthdays, arrival after registration has closed.

If parents take their children out of school without first seeking the school's permission or take their children out after permission has been denied, could receive a penalty notice fine of £60 per parent per child. A family of two parents and two children would receive a fine of £240. From 1 September 2013 parents have 21 days to pay the fine. If the fine is not paid within this period the fine doubles to £120 per parent per child and has to be paid within 7 days. Failure to pay the fine at all will result in Bradford Children's Services taking the matter before the Magistrates Court where they could be fined up to £1,000.

Holidays in Term Time:

Hill Top does not authorise holidays within term time due to the negative impact on children's learning. When an absence is not authorised it appears as such in the statistics the school reports to the Local Authority and the DfE. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval for leave of absence. If parents do not apply in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress in their learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during term-time to go on holiday.

Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days leave of absence if they believe that the circumstances warrant it.

School's Term Dates are published at least one year in advance direct to families and on the school website.

Special circumstance may include:

- for service personnel or other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Requesting Leave of Absence:

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Should you need to request leave of absence under exceptional circumstances, the process is:

- Submit a request form (available from the school office) before firm plans are made
- The Headteacher (or Deputy in their absence) will consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of time your child can be away from school
- A response will be sent to parent/carer explaining the decision, including any concerns (if applicable) about the absence.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will not be agreed by us:

- When a child is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or end of term assessments.
- When a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a child's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Role of Parental Involvement Worker:

Hill Top's Parental Involvement Worker will monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and lateness, providing regular updates to the Headteacher. The Family Liaison Officer and the Headteacher will initiate and put in place appropriate rewards for good attendance and will also introduce processes to support poor attendance. They will liaise with parents/carers to implement these policies and work with the Education Welfare Services to encourage an improvement.

Response to Regular or Prolonged Absence:

If a child continues to be absent, details will be passed to the Headteacher/Parental Involvement Worker, who will invite the parent/carer into school for a meeting to discuss the issues and find a solution. This may involve including outside agencies to support the family. If there is still no improvement the school will make a referral to Bradford Council as persistent attendance problems with unauthorised absences have a detrimental impact a child's education.

Encouraging Attendance:

Good school attendance is promoted and celebrated throughout school by:

- By providing a welcoming and safe environment
- By building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them
- By providing an interesting and ambitious curriculum
- Involving children in attendance
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other children

- Awarding weekly raffle tickets to children who have been in school all week, which are entered into a prize draw at the end of the half-term.
- Awarding a trophy to the Class with the best attendance all week
- Awarding a 'Dazzle Box' of books to the class with the best attendance each half term.

Monitoring Attendance:

The National Attendance target is 96%. The School attendance target is 96%+. Attendance figures will be monitored and reviewed regularly by our Parental Involvement Worker and Headteacher. Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality, or patterns of absence e.g. regular broken weeks of at least one day's absence, or regular absences on Mondays/Fridays, regular absence immediately prior to or following school holidays or unauthorised holidays in term time, various actions will take place.

Attendance Reports/Analysis:

Throughout the year each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents/carers, with their child's school report at the end of the year. Additionally, attendance is discussed at parents/carers' meetings. The Headteacher reports all attendance figures to the Governing Body.

At Hill Top CE Primary and Nursery School we are working hard to improve attendance, please help us by ensuring your child attends regularly and is always here on time.

What does good attendance really mean?

It can be difficult to understand but this table illustrates how poor attendance impacts on your child's learning.

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Gives your child the best start in life
95% Attendance	9 days' absence or 1 week and 4 days of missed learning	
90% Attendance	19 days' absence or 3 weeks and 4 days of missed learning	Makes it harder to learn and progress to your child's full ability
85% Attendance	29 days' absence or 5 weeks and 4 days of missed learning Almost one half term missed	Will impact on your child's progress
80% Attendance	38 days' absence or 7 weeks and 3 days of missed learning	Seriously affects your child's learning and development
75% Attendance	48 days' absence or 9 weeks and 6 days of missed learning.	

If your child has 90% attendance they will miss the equivalent of:

- ½ day per week
- 19 days a year
- 247 days over the 13 statutory years of education or 1 year and 10 weeks