



Helpringham Primary School	
Document Name	Whole School Attendance Policy
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MISSION STATEMENT

Helpringham Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all students. The school believes that all students benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body.

AIMS

- That all students achieve excellent attendance.
- All students of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations;
- No student should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development;

- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of students and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law;
- Many students and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities;
- Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these;
- The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from all our students:

- That they attend school daily;
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day;

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually (before 8:55am) Should your child arrive after 8:55am (but before 9:20am), their attendance will be indicated by code “L” on the attendance register. Any child arriving to school after 9:20am will be marked as unauthorised and will be indicated by code “U” on the attendance register. Lateness becomes unauthorised when students arrive to school after registration closes; currently 9.20am. Should your child fail to attend school promptly, you will be contacted by the school Administrator. Failure to improve punctuality will lead to a meeting with the Headteacher/Attendance Champion. We ask that you ensure your child is brought to school no later than 8:55am (via the appropriate door) to enable your child to settle into class ready for them to start their day.
- To contact the school on each morning of any absence before 8.45am, providing a reason for the absence. However, if illnesses continues for longer than five days, medical evidence will be required, e.g. doctor’s appointment card, prescribed medicine packet (with the named label). Failure to contact the school during the absence may result in a safeguarding visit to the home by the Headteacher and a possible referral to the local police. (All evidence must be provided electronically, i.e. via emailing a

photograph or a scan of the documentation). All correspondence must be sent to the school's office email address (enquiries@helpringham.lincs.sch.uk).

- Covid related absences – please view the NHS website for up to date guidance or contact school with any queries.
- Medical appointments for students will be unauthorised unless an appointment card, hospital letter or text from the GP/dentist is forwarded to the School via email. Providing these retrospectively (after the appointment) is acceptable.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared, dressed in school uniform and equipped for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects the student's performance in school.

Parents/carers and students can expect the following from the School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Early contact with parent/carer when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason;
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each school day and after lunch time session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times;
- Holidays during term time are actively discouraged and will be unauthorised. Due to the link between attendance and attainment the government has put a priority on reducing all forms of absence. Therefore, our policy on term time holidays, which is based on legislation and government guidelines is summarised as:
 - The Law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - Any requests for holiday in term time must be made in advance in writing and in line with GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES and will only be agreed in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Taking a

holiday in term time simply to save money does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and may result in a fine. Being unable to take holidays due to the seasonal nature of parents/carers work is also not an exceptional circumstance.

- All parent(s)/carer(s) should apply for leave no less than 7 days prior to the period of absence and failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised. This must be done by putting the request in an email to enquiries@helpringham.lincs.sch.uk
- If the absence is not agreed and the student goes on the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may then be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996.
- Where a student fails to return within 10 school days of a previously notified date schools have the power to remove the child from the school roll and report them to Children Missing Education at Lincolnshire County Council.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a student does not attend, the school will respond effectively

- If a telephone call/email/text message is not received from parents/carers, they will be contacted for a reason for that absence via telephone or text message. If no reason for absence is received either before/on the day of absence then correspondence will be sent to parent/carer requesting this information via /telephone, text message or email. If no response is received explaining the reason, the absence will be unauthorised. Continued unauthorised absence will result in a letter (via email) requesting medical evidence for that period, and all future periods of absence being taken due to illness or injury will be marked as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.
- If considered necessary by the school, the Headteacher may carry out either prearranged or unannounced home visits.
- Attendance will be monitored by the school and if attendance does not improve, the parent/carer will be contacted by the Headteacher for a parent/student support meeting.
- The case will continue to be monitored and if there is no improvement, a penalty warning letter will be issued and further action may be taken through Lincolnshire County Council
- If a child is absent from school and no response is made to the attempts to contact the family, the Headteacher will make a 'Safe and Well' check on the family. If no contact is made within 5 days, the school will contact Children Missing in Education at Lincolnshire County Council. If any student is absent for a period of 10 days (particularly where we have no contact from parents/carers), the absence will be unauthorised and notified to Lincolnshire County Council's Pupils Not Attending Regularly service.

Reintegration

- The return to school for a student after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish an Attendance Support Programme;
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme;
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible;
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEND Co-ordinator may be required.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parent/carer. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the various internal communication lines.

- Dealing with students not attending school

Helpringham Primary School is committed to providing 'a full and efficient education for all students. However, we do realise that at times, this is not always possible. If a student misses a significant amount of schooling due to injury or ill health, the school will work with students, parents/carers and other professionals to ensure that their education is affected as little as possible and that there is a smooth transition back into full time education.

The procedures for dealing with absences remains as stated earlier in this policy. Parents/carers should call in on the morning of any absences and provide medical evidence for any absences of 5 consecutive days or more. If a student's records indicate that there is likely to be a health issue, the school will contact the family and request that a Medical Consent Form is signed. A letter will be sent to family (via email) requesting that they provide medical evidence from their GP to enable the school to offer provision for students whose health is affecting their education.

Where a student fails to attend due to refusal, the school will work with parents/carers and any other related professionals to reintegrate them back into school as soon as possible. 10 days consecutive unauthorised absence will be reported to Lincolnshire County Council as a Pupil Not Attending Regular Education.

Where a student or parent/carer repeatedly fails to engage with the school and the professionals put in to assist over a period of 8 weeks (covering the period of two Team Around the Child sessions), or there continues to be no improvement in attendance, the school maintains the right to refer the matter to Lincolnshire County Council to instigate legal proceedings. This could result in immediate legal action, for example; an Education Supervision Order or Fixed Penalty.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The severe winter of 2009-10 caused all kinds of problems for schools across the country and led to the Government issuing new guidelines which came into force from September 2010. Schools will not be penalised if they are forced to close nor if they make every effort to stay open and their attendance statistics suffer accordingly.

In order for the Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to students the importance and value of education.

Staff Responsibilities

Mrs R. Leighton – Headteacher/Attendance Champion

Mrs K Coleman - Administrator

Staff	Responsibility
Headteacher	To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole Attendance Policy.
Headteacher	To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, students and parents/carers.
Headteacher	To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set to reduce absence.
Headteacher	To liaise with appropriate staff.
Headteacher	To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
Headteacher	To oversee the work of administrative staff.
Headteacher	To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
Headteacher	To collate and analyse attendance data for year groups.
Administrator	To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time

Headteacher	To organise attendance assemblies.
Headteacher	To initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of prolonged unexplained absence.
Headteacher	To liaise with County Legal team.
Headteacher	To plan for the return of long-term absentees in conjunction with the SEND department.
Class Teachers/ Administrator	To complete registers accurately and on time.
Administrator	To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting parents/carers.
Administrator	To chase any unexplained absences within 2 days of the student returning to school.
Headteacher/ Administrator	To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
Headteacher	To display information on attendance.
Administrator	To record all reasons for absence in the register

Governing Body

- The Governing Body will monitor attendance and ratify the policy;
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governor Meetings.

Headteacher

- To oversee the policy and ensure it is appropriately applied;
- To ensure the policy is updated as required;
- To report to the Governing Body;
- To award excellent attendance prizes, certificates etc.
- Attendance and absence data analysis, comparison and tracking summary reports;
- Liaise with Principal and ensure that they are informed of any communication with parents;
- Organise and/or completing home visits when necessary if a student is absent;

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School Administrator

- To monitor attendance
- To praise good or improved attendance,
- Notify Lincolnshire County Council when a child has missed 10 consecutive days of unauthorised education via the PNAR – Pupil Not Attending Regularly. Also, report a child as CME – Child Missing in Education.
- To inform the Headteacher of any holiday requests or notifications of absence immediately.
- To expect punctuality to registration, pursue lateness and apply appropriate sanctions;
- To look for patterns regarding absences and inform Headteacher of any concerns;
- To follow up student absence where no reason has been provided.
- Ensure that all registers are completed each morning and afternoon session;
- Contact parent/carers via telephone if a student is not in school and no reason has been provided for the absence;
- Issue attendance/late letters to parents/carers.

Class Teachers

To inform the Headteacher of any situation causing concern above and beyond normal expectations;

- To contact other outside agencies where appropriate to work with students experiencing difficulty attending school, this could include Early Help Assessment;
- To arrange and organise programmes for the return to lessons.
- To praise good or improved attendance, rewarding as per school policy;

Parents/Carers

- Contact school on every day of absence;
- Provide medical evidence to support absences for medical appointments;
- Support their child in achieving maximum attendance;
- Attend any Team Around the Child/Early Help/School Attendance Panel meetings as requested.

Lincolnshire County Council

- They will liaise with identified school staff;
- Where necessary they will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court;
They will support schools in the use of penalty notices within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

The School works with the following support services:

- Educational Psychologists
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Early Help Workers
- Social Services
- School Nurse
- Local police

- Lincolnshire County Council Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team
- Lincolnshire County Council Inclusion and Attendance Team

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE FOR CLASS TEACHERS

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

The Importance of Registration

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, students are marked present or absent. Registers should be saved or sent down to the designated area or person responsible. These registers must be completed within 15 minutes of the start of the registration period.
- Manual registers can be used in any instance where the electronic register is not accessible;
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures;
- Electronic copies of attendance registers or bound copies of registration printouts must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

CATEGORISING ABSENCE

Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record student attendance and absence.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LAs and DfE in monitoring not only whether students are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why students are absent from school.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence (Code C) is where the School has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised (Code O).

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness (Code I01 I);
- Absence due to a positive COVID-19 test (Code I02 I)

- Medical and dental appointments where evidence is available (Code M);
- Days of religious observance (Code R);
- Fixed term exclusion (Code E);
- Bereavement; (Code C)

Holidays

Holidays are granted only in exceptional circumstances (Code H). Requests for absence are expected to be prior to booking and made in writing at least 7 days before the absence. Any holiday taken without a written request will automatically be unauthorised. However if a request is not granted and the parent/carer takes the child on holiday, the absence will not be authorised.

If the absence is not agreed and the student goes on the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Code G). This absence may be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996.

Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the LA as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

Approved Educational Activity

Where students are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations students who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category.

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Students receiving approved education off site, e.g. those receiving specialist support or those in receipt of home tuition but remaining on the roll of the school.

Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips;
- Holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given;
- Minding the house or looking after siblings;
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation;
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified or are for another person;
- No reason given;
- Oversleeping/tiredness;
- Translating for parents/carers or family friends;
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid;

This list is not exhaustive and will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the school to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

Lateness

Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging parents/carers of young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

Where a student arrives after the register has been completed (between 8:55am and 9:20am). It will be coded L.

Where a student arrives after 9:20am. It will be coded as a 'U' to indicate an unauthorised late.

Any student who has a pattern of late arrivals without good reason will be discussed with the Headteacher. A letter will be sent home stating the number of late marks and giving notice that the situation needs to improve. If the student continues to be late, parent(s)/carer(s) will be asked to attend a School Attendance Panel Meeting. If the situation continues, a Penalty will be requested.

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a student may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and in the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.

- Where a school has been notified that the student has been registered as a student at another school;
- Where a student has ceased to attend the school and the parent/carer(s) have satisfied the County Council that the student is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school;
- Where the student has been absent without reasonable cause for four school weeks and the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with Children Missing Education to obtain information on the cause of the absence;
- Where the Headteacher has been notified that the student has died;
- If a student has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time and no communication has been received;
- Where the student has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the School Discipline Committee.

Ensuring Student Information is up to date

The school should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on students and parents/carers is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school to keep the information schools hold up to date.

Students who are missing

Where it is believed that a student has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the student, the school will inform the local authority following statutory guidelines potentially removing the student from the school's roll.

Appendix 2

GOOD PRACTICE

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. Attendance Officer being charged with specific responsibility for student attendance;
2. A list of absentees being produced quickly by the Attendance Officer, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff;
3. The school devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters via email to parents or guardians;
4. Attendance Officer ensuring that records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced when students return to school (should one not have been received during absence);
5. Headteacher/Administrator to monitor the attendance records of students;
6. Headteacher to have regular meetings with the Administrator to discuss attendance patterns;
7. Rewards for individual students with an excellent attendance record in the form of letters or certificates or prizes. Attendance is a major part of the school reward culture;
8. School Attendance Panels and penalties being introduced for students who are persistently late;
9. Absentees being quietly welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically;
10. Targeting the parents/carers of individual students through, for example, school attendance panels, can help to raise attainment and attendance across the school.

Appendix 3

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

SUGGESTIONS FOR SECURING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENSURING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

The School

The School is committed to providing a quality education for all students. We believe that students can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all students and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. We will make contact with parents/carers when a student is absent from school without good reason.

How parents/carers can help us

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time;
- Provide up to date contact information. Notifying the school of any changes.
- Provide up to date medical information to enable the school to adequately support students who have health issues affecting their attendance. No absences for medical appointments will be authorised without appointment cards, letters or texts from GPs/Dentists which have been forwarded to the school (this can be provided retrospectively).
- Contact the School whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence;
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead;
- Attend Parents/Carers Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child;
- Contact the School if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.

Appendix 4

Persistent Absence Information for Parents/Carers

If your child is absent for just one day every 2 weeks, they will miss out on a year of education over their school life.

This information will show you some ways in which schools and families can improve student attendance and improve communication between home and school.

An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

A number of issues might affect a student's attendance; these issues are shown in the list below.

Students who:

- have recently moved in the area or have joined the school midway through the school year; - are "Looked After";
- have caring responsibilities at home;
- have recently missed a lot of school time through illness;
- have siblings and/or parents/carers who are/were poor attenders;
- tend to have poor performance/attainment levels;
- have peer issues;
- have difficulty accessing the curriculum;
- are persistently disruptive;
- have previously been excluded;
- have parents/carers who are experiencing severe financial hardship (and may not be able to afford bus fare, uniform, etc);
- have parents/carers who have recently separated;

It does not mean that all students who might be affected by the above issues will be poor attenders but the list is a way of helping school to identify early the students who may be at risk of non-attending. We understand how it is difficult for families to discuss any difficulties they might have but the more the School knows about a situation, the more it will be able to help. Therefore, if there is anything that is preventing your child from attending regularly and punctually, please let us know so we can work together to improve the situation.

It is firmly established that students who attend regularly and on time are more likely to fulfil their potential and achieve their best than those who do not.

If your child does not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with school work. They will also miss out on the social side of school life. This can affect a child's ability to make and keep friends and being able to mix socially is a very important part of growing up.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to effective learning. When children are not in school they are missing the educational opportunities that the school can offer them. They are also at greater risk of being excluded or disadvantaged in other ways. If they are not in school, they might be at risk of being involved in a crime or becoming the victim of a crime themselves.

The ethos of our school will show children, parents/carers and the wider community how much they value good attendance and punctuality and show that they will respond promptly to all non-attendance and lateness.

Appendix 5

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DfE Publications

www.dfes.gov.uk

Information collected from various publications which are regularly updated.

New Exclusion Regulations

New arrangements for school exclusion came into force in September 2012. These will apply to any student excluded on or after 1 September 2012 from a maintained school, academy school or free school, alternative provision academy/free school or student referral unit in England.

Revised regulations and guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion are also available now:

The School Discipline (Student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.

Guidance from the DfE at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/latest?departments%5B%5D=department-foreducation>

LEA Plans and Guidance

Children and Young People's Plan

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service - Fixed Penalty Notices

(Unauthorised Absences and Truancy) Code Of Conduct to be read in conjunction with :

Guidance on The Use Of The Education Related Provisions Within The Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003

Schools Administration Handbook

Raising Standards Through the Improvement of School Attendance

Legislation

Education Act 1996 Data

Protection Act 1998

Human Rights Act 1998

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Medical Policy