



# Attendance Policy 2025/2026

Person Responsible:	Helen Beattie - Headteacher
Date of Issue:	January 2026
Approved By:	Mrs. S Lawson - Chair of Governors
Review Date:	January 2027

## Attendance Key Contacts

**Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.**

Name	Role	Contact details
Helen Beattie	Head Teacher	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Helen Beattie	Senior Attendance Champion	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Leanne Russell	Attendance Lead	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Lisa Crombie	Deputy Head teacher with responsibility for attendance	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Melissa Armstrong	Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for attendance	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Amanda Walker	School Business Manager with responsibility for attendance	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Tamie Summerill	Pastoral Lead with responsibility for attendance	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Victoria Moss	Governor with responsibility for attendance	<a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is:

Miss Leanne Russell, Senior Office Administrator

Mrs Kay Knight, Office Administrator

Mrs Mary Lloyd, Office Administrator

Contact can be made via telephone: **0191 5862765**, email: [o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk](mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk) or via the **Arbor** app.

**If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:**

Name	Role	Contact details
Helen Beattie	Head teacher	Telephone: <b>0191 5862765</b> , email: <a href="mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk">o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk</a>
Lisa Crombie	Deputy Head teacher	
Melissa Armstrong	Assistant Head teacher/ SENDCo	
Tamie Summerill	Pastoral Lead	
Karen Harrison	Parent Support Advisor	

### Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

### Children Missing from Education

If pupil's whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if

details change. A pupil's place in school is at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treated as a safeguarding issue.

## **Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos**

Howlatch Lane Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils. Improving attendance is everyone's business and a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners is required.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. To benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer we expect all pupils to attend every session they are able to attend.

Communication with our parents and pupils is vital to working together to support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date and changes are communicated to school as soon as possible. It is extremely important that school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### The school day

Our school day is as follows:

Class	Start Time	Collection time	Entry/Exit door
Little Pioneers	08:30am or 12:30pm	11:30am or 2:30pm (30hrs) 3:30pm	Nursery door
Explorers 1			
Explorers 2 & 3	08:40am	3:10pm	KS1 main door
Pathfinders 1 & 2	08:40am	3:15pm	KS1 main door
Pathfinders 3	08:40am	3:15pm	KS2 side door
Adventurers 1, 2	08:40am	3:20pm	Classroom doors
Adventurers 3	08:40am	3:20pm	KS2 main hall door
Navigators 1	08:40am	3:20pm	KS2 main hall door
Navigators 2, 3	08:40am	3:20pm	Classroom doors

Registration is at 8:40am. The register will close at 9:10am.

Pupils must be in school for the start of registration to receive a present mark, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended). Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (**Code L**).

The DfE states that pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration.

Pupils who arrive after the registers close will be recorded as a **Code U** unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence. It is still essential to come to school even if you are arriving after the registers close.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact a member of the attendance team if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

### **If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the **reason for their lateness** and this will be recorded initially via the signing in system (Inventory) and added to their attendance record on Arbor (the school MIS).

### **If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

The pastoral lead is present at the main entrance every day and greets all children who are late to school. This provides an immediate opportunity to identify the reasons for lateness as well as being able to identify any concerns.

The school Attendance team meet weekly to review attendance and punctuality. Any children identified as a concern are discussed and next steps identified.

### **If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

Where a child's punctuality is causing concern the school will meet with parents/carers to discuss concerns, expectations and support available.

As a school there are initiatives in place to help children improve their punctuality.

We offer a breakfast club, which is available to all parents/carers from 7:45am, this provides a tasty breakfast as well as the opportunity to engage in social activities with peers before the start of the school day. We also provide 2 early start initiatives at 8:30am; 'Rise and Shine' and 'Mellow Mornings'. Rise and Shine provides an active start to the day, this may be a sports activity, sensory circuit or a team game. Mellow mornings provides a quiet, calm start to the day in 'Basecamp' our nurture space allowing children time to relax and discuss any worries or news with our Nurture lead.

Individualised support may also be provided when needed, eg pupils having specific 'tasks' at the start of each day

Where there is no improvement a possible referral to the local authority may be required for action if the absences continue and are unauthorised (U code)

### **Term dates and planned Inset days**

Term dates can planned Inset days can be found on the school website, these will also be communicated to parents/carers via email and Arbor app.

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission, however Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form. Leave of

absence forms are available via the school office or via the school website. These are to be completed and returned to the school office.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.**

### **On the first day of absence**

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are expected to contact the school and provide a reason for absence. Contact is to be made to the school office either by telephone (0191 5862765), email [o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk](mailto:o.howletch200@howletchlane.co.uk) or via the Arbor app.

If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school. In the first instance contact will be made via telephone and email.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. Attending school before an appointment is advised. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

### **Periods of extended absence**

Parents must contact the school office each day that their child is absent unless school have advised that this is not necessary. If a phone call is not received after three consecutive days, a member of the Attendance team and a DSL will make a home visit to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to ensuring all needs are being met whilst the pupil is absent and any intervention has taken place (such as doctors appointments.)

### **No reason for absence provided**

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences will result in more formal action and intervention being carried out by Durham County Council. A Notice to Improve will be issued to any parents with parental responsibility in the first instance. Parents will then have six weeks to improve their child's punctuality/attendance. If this does not improve then legal proceedings will commence.

If there is no contact from home and primary contacts for the child can not be reached school will endeavour to attempt to make contact with the emergency contact information on the school system. We will also attempt to contact the parent/carer via Inapp message, email or phone call. If no reason can be obtained then a DSL will make a decision on next steps and this may be escalated if there are welfare/safeguarding concerns.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 rolling school week period the school will consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate for irregular attendance and, if so, the matter will be referred to the local authority.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will count as that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern.

Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. This will be requested when there is a need for clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school.

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

As a school we value each child's attendance and promote good attendance from children starting school in our Nursery. Examples include:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance via letters home, social media and school website.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance to pupils by a weekly reward in whole school assembly, class attendance awards in each phase and termly attendance certificates.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences

Reward good or improving attendance

The Dfe collect our daily attendance via Wonde Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools

## **Attendance data**

The attendance team meet weekly to review pupils at risk of persistent absence as well as persistent and severely absent pupils. The team rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

The team also review pupils who are accessing a reduced timetable.

Pupils are discussed on an individual basis and next steps identified and actioned.

We will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils and cohorts that require support with their attendance. This will be at a whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level. We will look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

We will also consider pupil cohorts such as those who have free school meals; special educational needs or disabilities; pupil premium; children with a social worker; children in care etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as social workers, early help, TAF.

## **Absence concerns**

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in their child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so that everyone can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

## **Persistent absence**

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent.

The school try to prevent and reduce persistent absence by meeting with parents/carers, establishing barriers to school attendance, working with SENDCo, Pastoral lead and other relevant professionals where needed.

If required school can provide access to wider support services via the local authority SEND team, Family Hubs, Piece of Mind team and Emotional resilience nurses.

## **Severe absence**

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent

The attendance team will endeavour to support families and the pupil to attend increase attendance. Meetings with parents/carers and wider professionals will take place when necessary. This will provide additional support through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the local authority to prevent severe absence (persistently absent pupils 70% or below).

Strategies to support the child coming into school will also be offered including: soft landing, access to key staff member for emotional support, attendance improvement incentive.

## **National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention**

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 rolling school week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, it should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to, a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Fixed Penalty Notice or Offence Investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid, then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

## **Pupils with specific needs**

At Howletch Lane Primary School, we recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to regular attendance. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with SEND, have equal access to a full-time education and that high attendance expectations are maintained for every child.

To support pupils with SEND in attending school regularly, we:

- Engage in sensitive and ongoing conversations with pupils and their families to understand specific barriers to attendance and collaboratively develop tailored support plans.
- Make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010, including adaptations to school routines, transport arrangements, uniform policies, and access to support during the school day.
- Work closely with parents, carers, and external partners such as health services and the local authority to provide timely and coordinated support, including referrals where necessary.
- Ensure that the special educational provision outlined in each pupil's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is fully accessed and reviewed as part of attendance support.
- Provide joined-up pastoral care and consider phased or flexible returns to school for pupils experiencing anxiety or other challenges affecting attendance.
- Regularly monitor attendance data for pupils with SEND and use this information to inform targeted interventions and support strategies.
- Avoid stigmatising pupils or families and maintain a supportive, inclusive school environment where every pupil feels safe and valued.

Through these measures, Howletch Lane Primary aims to maximise attendance and engagement for pupils with SEND, recognising their right to education and supporting their individual needs with care and respect.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Special educational needs and disability policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Anti Bullying policy
- Behaviour policy

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high aspirations of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole school family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.