



# Attendance Policy

**Autumn 2022**  
**Review: Summer 2024**

Agreed by Staff and Chair of Governors

The staff and governors of Hemington Primary School believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full time education through regular and structured attendance.

### **Expectations**

#### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school regularly
- arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

#### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- sign the Home School Agreement to recognise their responsibility
- ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the school dress code
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually well prepared for the school day with homework completed
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school on the first day of the child's absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school (message can be left on the absence part of the answerphone or by direct phone call to the office).

#### **We expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to enable the absence to be coded correctly
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere, a safe learning environment and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At Hemington Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

#### **The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:**

Eimear Davis (Headteacher)  
office@hemington.leics.sch.uk

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- discuss the importance of regular attendance, punctuality and prompt collection at the end of the day during the Pre-School Induction Meeting and Parents Evening.
- give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- provide a caring and welcoming learning environment
- respond promptly to a child's or parent's/carer's concerns about the school or other pupils
- marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration
- regularly monitor attendance and punctuality
- celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- monitor pupils' attendance and informing parents/carers in writing if attendance becomes a concern – a meeting may be arranged with parents/carers if necessary
- refer the family to the Education Welfare Officer to address, if irregular attendance continues.

### **Punctuality and Lateness**

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

It is also essential that children are collected promptly at the end of the school day at **3:15pm**, unless they are attending the onsite after school club.

- The school day starts at **8.45 a.m.** The school registers are closed at **9.00 a.m.** each morning. Children who arrive after the register has closed will be marked as absent for the morning session.
- If the door is closed after 8.45 a.m., late comers must 'buzz' the office. A member of staff will let them into school. Children should go into class quickly and the parent/carer **must** sign the late book and provide a reason for their lateness - this register is checked regularly by the Headteacher
- In the case of persistent lateness the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and may address the matter.
- If the school has been informed that the child will arrive late due to a medical /dental appointment (the appointment card/letter must be provided) then an attendance mark will be given on arrival. If the child misses more than half of the morning or afternoon session it will be recorded as an authorised absence in the register.
- The school day ends at **3:15pm**.

### **Absence Procedures**

When a pupil does not attend school regularly we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no message or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by **9.30 a.m.** the school will endeavour to contact them by phoning the parent contacts.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer by telephone. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer

- Failure to comply with the expectations set out by the Education Welfare Officer may result in further action such as a Fixed Penalty (fine), an application for an Education Supervision Order or Prosecution

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be “missing from education.”

**If absence continues we will:**

- Write to you if your child’s attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer / Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given for absence thoroughly.

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a ‘**persistent absentee**’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil’s education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

**Understanding barriers to attendance**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

**Parental Requests for leave of absence during term-time**

The parent(s)/carer(s) of any child who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday may each be fined £60 which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120 which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents/carers may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents/carers will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

**There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will request the Leicestershire County Council issue a Penalty Notice.

**At Hemington Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:**

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the Headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

**We will not consider applications for leave during term time:**

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

**Changing Schools**

It is important if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address and telephone number of the new school
- the new home address and telephone number if it is known or is applicable

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Travelling Families**

Several different groups are covered by the generic term "Traveller Families" however many prefer to be known by their ethnic group - Roma, English or Welsh Gypsies, Irish or Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground or Circus), Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

There is a Showman's site in our catchment areas. Some families remain on site all year round, but some families move around the country at certain times of the year. There is also a Travellers' site in the catchment area of the school. Some pupils remain on site for most of the year, but others travel out of area for longer periods of time.

Latest Government Guidelines require that any pupils who travel and do not attend school all year round need to be in school for a total of 100 days or 200 sessions to obtain the "T" code in the register. Appendix A shows a copy of the letter that is sent to families at the start of each academic year. Whilst they are away, pupils should also complete home/school packs (created by school staff), which should be returned to school. These packs should be collected and returned to school in person and the parent should also fill in a calendar to show how long they will be away.

Parents will be required to sign a form to say they have collected or returned packs to school (see Appendix B). This form also allows parents to indicate when children have attended another school or setting, with contact details so school can discuss pupil's learning. This would then count towards the 100 days attendance. If a pupil does not complete 100 days in an academic year, then they will be given the unauthorised absence code and families may be liable to prosecution.

### **Absence data**

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

*All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.*

## Appendix 1



Main Street, Hemington, Derby DE74 2RB

☎ 📠 01332 810447

[office@hemington.leics.sch.uk](mailto:office@hemington.leics.sch.uk)

[www.hemington.leics.sch.uk/](http://www.hemington.leics.sch.uk/)

Dear

I write to inform you that we will follow the good practice below for Travelling families as outlined below. In order to use the code “T” on the register, all pupils from Travelling backgrounds will need to attend school for 100 days each the academic year.

### **GOOD PRACTICE FOR TRAVELLING FAMILIES\***

In order for the school to code absences for children from the traveller community\* as “Travelling” (T), the follow criteria should be met:

- A child should have 100 days attendance (200 sessions) in an academic year
- Parents should provide the school with notification of travel, (dates, destination, length of time and evidence of parents work commitment)
- School to provide work packs for children to complete when travelling, (schoolwork packs may sometimes contain work children have already done as well as a diary). Parents must collect and return completed packs to the class teacher. Packs must be signed for on collection and return.
- School will provide parents with printed calendar of the academic year for them to log periods of travel. Parents must give the school notice of travel for the absence to be coded with a “T” Notice must include dates for departure, destination and return dates.
- Parents must where possible provide school with evidence (work/employment/rent papers) with regards to travel for the absence to be coded as “T”
- Parents must update the school of any changes to contact details such as phone numbers and addresses.
- Parents must inform the school if their children are unable to attend school because of illness or appointments, (doctors, hospital, dentist, opticians).
- Parents must inform the school if their children will be late to school or if they have any concerns regarding their children when at school.

I very much look forward to working with your child in school next term.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

\* Several different groups are covered by the generic term "Traveller Families" however many prefer to be known by their ethnic group - Roma, English or Welsh Gypsies, Irish or Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground or Circus), Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.



Appendix B

<b>Showman or Traveller Home/School Pack Check</b>						
Name:		Year Group:		Year: 2022-2023		Attendance in another school
Date	Time out of school confirmed	Pack signed out	Parent Signature & Date	Pack signed back	Parent Signature & Date	Name of school, phone number/email and time there

## Appendix D

### **GOOD PRACTICE FOR TRAVELLING FAMILIES**

Several different groups are covered by the generic term “Traveller Families” however many prefer to be known by their ethnic group - Roma, English or Welsh Gypsies, Irish or Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground or Circus), Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

The “T” code should be used when Traveller Families are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

Children who attend another school whilst travelling should be coded as “D”.

The “T” code should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

In order for the school to code absences for children from the traveller community as “**Travelling**” (T), the follow criteria should be met:

- ✓ A child should have 100 days attendance (200 sessions) in an academic year.
- ✓ Parents should provide the school with notification of travel, (dates, destination, length of time and evidence of parents work commitment).
- ✓ School should provide parents with schoolwork packs with parents collecting and returning the completed packs to school when child returns from travelling.

### **CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE**

1. School should arrange an initial meeting with parents before children start school.
2. Parents should ascribe, to being either Traveller, Gypsy, or Other on the school’s data sheet (parents **must** put something in this box). In the case of showmen, I suggest ascribing to “other” and writing showman in the space provided.
3. Parents **must** update the school of any changes to contact details such as phone numbers and addresses.
4. Parents are encouraged to show the school their children’s birth certificates before their children start school.
5. Where possible school should nominate a dedicated member of staff to provide support and address concerns parents may have.
6. School may provide parents with a sticker with the contact number and name of the dedicated staff member.
7. School may provide parents with a printed month of the calendar for them to log periods of travel.
8. Parents **must** give the school notice of travel for the absence to be coded with a “T” Notice **must** include dates for departure, destination and return dates.
9. Parents **must** where possible provide school with evidence (work/employment/rent papers) with regards to travel for the absence to be coded as “T”
10. School to provide work packs for children to complete when travelling, (schoolwork packs may sometimes contain work children have already done as well as a diary). Parents **must** collect and return completed packs to the class teacher. Packs **must** be signed for on collection and return.
11. Parents **must** inform the school if their children are unable to attend school because of illness or appointments, (doctors, hospital, dentist, opticians).
12. Parents **must** inform the school if their children will be late to school or if they have any concerns regarding their children when at school.

**The Education Welfare Officer is – Paula René, she addresses any attendance concerns the school may have. She can be contacted on:**

**T: 0116 277 6721      E: paula@childrensattendance.co.uk**