



Attendance Policy

September 2025-2026

Date for Review: September 2026

Statement of intent

Herringthorpe Infant School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled by law. We actively promote 100% attendance and will use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are on time every day unless the absence is unavoidable. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, future aspirations and future careers depend on good attendance. The routines that children develop around attendance and punctuality are the same as the expectations of any future employer, therefore setting good patterns of attendance/punctuality in education prepares children for the world of work.

Good Attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95% .
- Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success.
- Good attendance and punctuality minimise the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse.
- Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills.
- Children's social skills are similarly enhanced by regular attendance (linking into the personal development of pupils).
- Non-attenders will not only miss out on essential learning but also other social events taking place (linking into the personal development of pupils).
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education, employment and training.

School Attendance/Early Help Officer: Mrs G Roadhouse

Head Teacher: Mrs N Kitchen

Named Safeguarding Governor: Mrs T Cartlidge

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (2024) Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2025) Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE (2024) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Herringthorpe Infant School. They have the overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion and gender.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the (pupil) Attendance Policy and procedures of the school and only the Head Teacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. **The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and a letter or telephone message from a parent. This does not in itself authorise an absence.**

Responsibilities of the School Attendance/Early Help Officer

The Attendance/Early Help Officer lead will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The attendance team will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If a child is absent and no reason has been provided, parents should be contacted on the first day of absence by phone call. If a parent cannot be contacted, first day calling procedures are initiated and it is expected that school is aware of the reason for absence before 10.30am. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly

unwell, the attendance lead will make sure that contact is made with parent(s) to discuss reasons for their child's absence.

Responsibilities of Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers

All staff (teaching and support) in school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. **Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. This is part of the National Standards for Teachers.**

School staff will:

- Ensure all pupils are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance/Early Help Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence of law.

Regular attendance is essential for the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational progress and can sometimes affect their emotional health, well-being and social development.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent due to:

- Sickness or any other unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent).
- Religious observance (authorised by the school).
- Exceptional leave being granted by school.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the morning of the first day if their child is absent by 8.50am.
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details and update the school if their details change.
- Discuss with class teacher/school staff any planned absences well in advance.
- Support school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Head Teacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

The Head Teacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In line with government statutory guidance, Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time. This means holiday requests will not be authorised during term time.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Religious Observances

Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for religious observance. This absence must be a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent/carer belong to. If the parent applies for more than one day, the absence will not be authorised.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a license from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a license from the pupil's home LA.

Children with Medical Needs

Pupils should not be penalised if their absence from school is related to their medical condition, such as attending hospital appointments. In order to avoid being fined for non-attendance, parents must obtain permission from the school in advance of the appointment, so that the absence can be treated as authorised. An absence can also be authorised if the child is too ill to attend school and the school is notified of that as soon as possible.

Although school staff should use their discretion and judge each case on its merits with reference to the child's individual healthcare plan, it is not generally acceptable to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, e.g. hospital appointments'. (Supporting Children with medical conditions 2015, Statutory Guidance, Department for Education)

Scenarios where remote education should be provided

Attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. School should consider providing remote education to pupils in circumstances when in-person attendance is either not possible or contrary to government guidance. For example:

- If it's not possible for school to open safely, or if opening would contradict government or local guidance.
- Occasions when individual pupils, for a limited duration, are unable to physically attend school but are able to continue learning, for example pupils with an infectious illness.
- If a pupil with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is not able to be in school and requires remote education, school should work collaboratively with the family and put in place reasonable adjustments so that the pupil with SEND can successfully access remote education. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including the support families will require and types of services that the pupil can access remotely.

In these circumstances' pupils should have access to remote education as soon as reasonably practicable, though in proportion to the length of absence and disruption to their learning.

Other exceptional absence request;

Any exceptional requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Request for leave **will not** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, absence will be marked as unauthorised and they may be subject to sanctions such as a fixed penalty notice (fine).

The following reasons are also examples of when absence will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell.
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Oversleeping.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without good reasons.
- Child's/family birthday.
- Shopping trip.
- Family holidays.

Lateness

Herringthorpe Infant School understands that punctuality is of the upmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. It is vital that all lessons start on time. Doors open at 8.45am and will close at 8.50am for full time children. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main reception entrance where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded.

Register is at 8.50am. Any arrival after 9.00am is classed as (L) late. The register will close 30 minutes after the register has been taken (DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') **this will count as an unauthorised absence**. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (Code 'U') will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Part time morning nursery times are 8.45am-11.45am and part time afternoon nursery times are 12.15noon – 3.15pm. Doors close at 8.50am and 12.20 noon retrospectively. If children arrive after this time they will need to go to main reception. Any arrival after 9.00am or 12.25noon is marked as Late (L), arrival after 9:30am/12:55pm will be marked late after the register closed (Code 'U').

Dealing with poor attendance and lateness

School staff will monitor a child's lateness and attendance and may use a range of actions as follows:

- Classroom staff to monitor lateness and minutes lost along with absences.
- Minutes lost letter/Absence letter sent to parents.
- Meeting with parents to discuss reasons for lateness/absence to enable school to support improved timekeeping/attendance.
- Opening an Early Help Assessment.
- Formal Attendance Contract between school and parent/carers.
- Notice to improve.
- Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine).

When may a fixed penalty notice for absence be appropriate?

Herringthorpe Infant School supports the local authority's Code of Conduct for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN).

In law, an offence occurs if a parent fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Fixed Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 or Section 36 of The Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate, subject to statutory defences. The Early Help and Family Engagement Service, within the Local Authorities' Children's Services deliver this responsibility.

When a school becomes aware that the national threshold has been met, we must consider whether a penalty notice can and should be issued or not.

The national threshold has been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks*, with one of, or a combination of the following codes:

Code G – Term time holiday

Code N – Reason for the pupil's absence have not yet been provided by the parent/established by school enquiries.

Code O – No reason for absence provided or school are not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.

Code U - the pupil arrived after 9:30am

* A school week means any week (Monday to Sunday) in which there is at least one school session. The 10 school-week period when the national threshold applies may span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)

Children Missing Education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. If a child does not present at school by the close of the morning register, staff will initiate first day calling procedures and make every effort to contact parents/carers on the contact list.

Children Missing Education (CME) are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education elsewhere: for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision. (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Children referred as Missing from Education should only be removed from the school roll on the advice of and following consultation with the Children Missing Education Officer and authorisation from the service.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral form for the following circumstances:

- The child fails to attend without explanation.
- The child is expected to start at school but does not arrive.
- The child does not return from a planned holiday.
- The child leaves the authority without a destination. (Rotherham MBC CME policy February 2018) – (Appendix 3)

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Herringthorpe Infant School apply the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

- Attendance is discussed by classroom staff and attendance officer on a regular basis. Monthly attendance reports are provided to class teachers and any concerning punctuality/attendance trends noticed by staff will be recorded on CPOMS.
- Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. (School should ensure that they have at least 2 contact numbers for pupils).
- If contact cannot be made to ascertain why the pupil is not in school, then a Safe and Well home visit should be considered, especially if there are already safeguarding concerns. If no reason is provided by parents, an unauthorised absence is recorded.
- School should arrange meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues once their child's attendance falls below 95% or shows 3 or more absences and has not improved following the issue of a school letter asking for parental support. A formal Attendance Contract may be put in place.
- School monitor attendance and where necessary refer to and work with parents/carers to tackle persistent absence in line with Rotherham Early Help School Attendance Matters Pathway.

Intervening with attendance concerns:

Where there are concerns around a pupil's attendance school may intervene in one or more of the following ways:

- Attendance will be reviewed every four weeks by the Attendance/Early Help Officer, any pupils identified as a cause for concern will have less than 95% attendance or 3 or more absences and may be reviewed on a more frequent basis.
- An attendance phone call and/or letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending or arriving to school on time.
- Where patterns are identified a phone call or meeting between the parent and the attendance team may take place to discuss the pattern and resolve any issues preventing attendance. Parents will be encouraged to engage with a school led Early Help Assessment to ensure barriers are understood and support is put in place to improve attendance.
- Referral to outside organisations and support to remove barriers.
- For parents/carers who will not engage with an Early Help Assessment where attendance does not improve, school may use a Attendance Contract to support parents to work with school to improve their child's attendance.
- No improvement in attendance or engagement from parent/carers; may result in a referral to the Local Authority for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

A fixed penalty notice (FPN) is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A request for a second fixed penalty notice charged at £160 (if issued within 3 years from a first FPN.)

Other enforcement action, as outlined in Rotherham's Code of Conduct.

Rotherham Early Help School Attendance Matters Pathway.

Herringthorpe Infant School follows the Rotherham Early Help School Attendance Matters Pathway for Schools(SAMP) (See Appendix 1). The SAMP process is triggered if a child has 10 unauthorised absences within a rolling 10 week period, in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/school-admissions-3/school-attendance-fixed-penalty-notice-code-coduct>

(See Appendix 2) and DfE (2024) statutory guidance; Working together to improve school attendance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

The Code of Conduct states that a Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. Herringthorpe Infant School use the letter provided by the local authority when using the Rotherham Early Help Local Authority Pathway for Schools (See Appendices 3)

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

Any changes made to this policy by the above will be communicated to all members of staff and parents/carers.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2026**.

Attendance Flow Chart

Graduated Response

100-95% attendance	Termly attendance competition for KS1 and EYFS – Classes compete for the highest attendance on a weekly basis – Class reward given once achieved. Any class with 100% attendance for the week is given a ‘star in the jar’, required number each term results in half termly prize determined by each class. Praise phone calls home will be completed on an individual basis. Promotion/raising the profile of attendance through sharing attendance results on the website; weekly newsletter, playground noticeboard. Classroom star jars – celebrating and rewarding classes achieving 95% or above each week. Attendance Celebration Assembly at the end of each term – certificates shared.
94.9% or 5 unauthorised absences.	The Attendance/Early Help lead meets and greets any families arriving after the doors have been closed to the Main Reception entrance at 8.50am. Children are escorted to class promptly and discussions with parents held after the child has gone into class were necessary to explain support available. Any child with an attendance of below 95% or 3 or more absences will trigger for close monitoring by the school’s Attendance and Early Help lead. An Individual analysis will be completed for each individual child. This will be shared with the Head Teacher. Initial wellbeing call will be made to parents/carers to discuss current attendance; any potential barriers linked to the child’s attendance and to ask if any support is required. Offer of further support via a family assessment of needs will be made if appropriate or referral to outside organisations for further support such as school nurse or family support worker. <i>(Any children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) working on personalised targets will have an attendance target set as a priority. Attendance will be reviewed at each SEND review meeting).</i>

Continued attendance below 95% or 6 unauthorised absences.



HEI Letter sent to Parents/Carers

Phone call with parents/carers to unpick barriers linked to attendance. Signposting to support where appropriate. Early Help support offered where needed.	Regular analysis of attendance data & feedback to Head Teacher and parents/carers. Regular follow up telephone calls to parents/carers from the Attendance/Early Help Officer linked to initial letter and to discuss any possible next steps to support the family via a family assessment of needs.
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Further reduction in attendance following the issue of a HEI 1 letter.



No further authorised absence without medical evidence letter sent to Parent/Carer.

Parent/Carer issued with No Further Authorised Absence letter, explaining medical evidence required in order to authorise any further leave. Parent/Carer invited to attendance meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss barriers and open a family assessment of needs (FAN). Signposting to support where appropriate. Attendance target added to FAN which will be reviewed at 6 to 8 week intervals.	Regular analysis of attendance data & feedback to Head Teacher and parents/carers. Regular follow up meetings to parents/carers from the Attendance and Early Help lead, linked to initial letter and to discuss any possible next steps to support the family. Parent/Carer invited to meet with Local Authority attendance lead to discuss support and sanctions.
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**10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 school weeks
Threshold set by DfE in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)**

10 Sessions missed - Unauthorised Term Time Holiday

FPN warning letter sent to both parents on receipt of Leave of Absence form or once apparent that family have taken a term time holiday upon child's return to school.	FPN referral to the LA upon return to school with request to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for unauthorised term time holiday.
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**10 Sessions missed due to other Unauthorised absence or late after the register closed.
Extra support Appropriate (sessions missed not relating to term time holiday)**

School to engage parents, carers and the child(ren) with a school led EHA to ensure barriers to attendance are	Attendance Meeting – Attendance Agreement Plan developed between home & school. Individual Attendance trackers (reward systems).
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understood and support is in place to address family needs. External Agency support linked to need e.g. 0-19 service (support regarding medical needs) Educational Psychologist Parenting Support e.g. morning routines, bedtime routines. Support from Schools e.g. targeted breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs etc. School to continue to monitor attendance for a further 3-6 week period.	Reviewed on a weekly basis with a formal meeting every 4 weeks.
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No improvement in attendance following above support provided.

Notice to improve letter (appendix b)	
School to continue to monitor attendance for further 3-6 week period. External agency support continued. Review of need for the family. Home Visits – regular welfare checks.	Formal parenting contract agreed by parent, pupil school and/or Local Authority Regular review & amendments in line with discussions with the family and attendance outcomes. Multi-Disciplinary meetings with appropriate services involved. Social Care Involvement if appropriate.



No/little improvement in attendance following above support provided.

Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority	
Irregular Attendance At School: Notice to Parent/Carer sent. (appendix c) Multi-Disciplinary meetings ongoing with appropriate services involved. Home Visits – regular welfare checks.	A fixed penalty notice (FPN) charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A request for a second fixed penalty notice charged at £160 (if issued within 3 years from a first FPN.)

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