

Attendance Policy



TOGETHER WE LEARN, TOGETHER WE SUCCEED
IN HARMONY

NAME:		ROLE:	
Mrs E Johnston		Principal	
Mr J McVicar		Chair of Board of Governors	
		Date Ratified:	October 2025
		Date of Review:	October 2028

Harmony Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Harmony Primary School, we recognise that every child is unique, with their own strengths, challenges, and circumstances. We are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Regular school attendance is essential for raising educational standards and ensuring every child can access the full curriculum and reach their potential.

We understand that there may be times when children face barriers to attendance, and we are dedicated to working in partnership with families to provide the understanding, encouragement, and support needed for every child to succeed.

Rights Respecting Schools

As a Rights Respecting School, Harmony upholds Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

“All children have the right to an education.”

Poor attendance denies children this fundamental right.

Aims

We aim to create a caring, supportive environment that encourages good attendance. Our goals are to:

1. Improve and maintain overall pupil attendance.
2. Encourage and reward good attendance.
3. Support parents of children reluctant to attend.
4. Achieve a minimum of 93% attendance for all pupils (excluding chronic health cases).
5. Define clear roles and responsibilities regarding attendance.
6. Provide advice, support, and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
7. Foster strong relationships with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) & other external agencies.
8. Raise awareness of the importance of consistent attendance and punctuality.
9. Monitor attendance patterns and ensure consistent recognition and intervention.
10. Establish procedures for addressing unauthorised absences.

The Importance of Attendance

- **Legal Requirement:** School attendance is required by law.
- **Academic Progress:** Regular attendance supports learning and social development.
- **Future Opportunities:** Good attendance opens doors to future success.
- **Life Skills:** Builds habits essential for adulthood.
- **Employment Prospects:** Employers value attendance and punctuality.
- **Safety:** Unexplained absences can increase vulnerability to risks.

Collaborative Support for Pupils and Families

Improving attendance is a shared responsibility. Before any formal letters or referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), we activate a collaborative support system involving:

1. Class Teacher

- Maintains daily attendance records and monitors pupil wellbeing.
- Initiates early conversations with pupils and parents.
- Shares insights with the safeguarding lead and Family Support Officer to inform support strategies.

2. Safeguarding Lead

- Monitors attendance patterns and identifies concerns early.
- Coordinates with the class teacher and Family Support Officer.
- Ensures safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly.

3. Family Support Officer (Harmony Hub)

- Provides practical and emotional support to families.
- Offers one-to-one sessions, referrals to external services, and help with routines and wellbeing.
- Acts as a bridge between home and school.

Joint Actions May Include:

- Informal meetings with parents/carers to discuss concerns.
- Development of a personalised attendance support plan.
- Emotional check-ins with the pupil.
- Adjustments to the school day or learning environment.
- Referrals to external agencies if needed.

This team-based approach ensures families feel supported, not judged, and that children receive the help they need to attend school regularly and thrive.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers

- Record attendance daily.
- Monitor class and individual attendance for poor attendance, unusual patterns, or inconsistent explanations.
- Contact parents/carers if no reason is given for a child's absence via Seesaw. If this continues, notify the safeguarding lead.
- Provide background information to support referrals.
- Follow up on actions taken to address attendance concerns.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss attendance concerns during consultation afternoons as needed.

Principal & Safeguarding Lead

- Oversee overall school attendance.
- Identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Contact families when concerns arise and arrange meetings.
- Monitor individual pupil attendance when concerns are raised.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Provide reports and background information for discussions with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Liaise with external professionals to explore underlying causes of absence.

Parents/Carers

- Ensure regular school attendance for children of compulsory school age.
- Inform the school of the reason for absence on the first day, via Seesaw or by calling the school office.
- Provide updates if the absence is prolonged.
- Notify the school in advance of medical appointments during school hours.
- Request authorised absence only when absolutely necessary.
- Communicate promptly if a child is reluctant to attend.
- Ensure children arrive between on time. Late arrivals result in lost learning time and disrupt the class.
- Avoid early pick-ups unless essential, as this also affects learning time.

Pupils

- Attend school punctually and regularly.
- Remind parents/carers to notify the school if they are absent.
- Understand that good attendance supports their learning and social development.

Board of Governors

- Ensure the school maintains accurate attendance records and takes appropriate action.
- Review attendance figures and targets regularly.
- Include attendance as a standing item on each meeting agenda.

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

- Ensure parents/carers meet their responsibilities regarding their child's education.
- May initiate legal proceedings if responsibilities are not met.

Promoting Regular Attendance

- The safeguarding lead will monitor attendance regularly.
- Pupils and classes with high attendance will receive rewards.
- At the end of each term, pupils with 100% attendance will receive a special reward.

Acceptable Reasons for Absence

Children may legally miss school only for:

- Illness.
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments.
- Participation in religious observances.
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. weddings, funerals).

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

Absences for the following reasons are not valid:

- Birthdays.
- Visiting relatives.
- Shopping trips.
- Hair appointments.

Term-Time Holidays

- Term-time holidays are strongly discouraged due to the disruption to learning and social development.
- Term-time holidays are considered unauthorised absences.
- Parents must discuss any exceptional circumstances with the principal.
- Pupils may miss important assessments or learning opportunities during this time.

Appendix #1: Procedures for Non-Attendance

To ensure consistent and effective follow-up on pupil absences, Harmony Primary School follows these steps:

1. Initial Parent Communication

Parents/carers must inform the school of their child's absence on the first day via Seesaw or by calling the school office.

2. No Contact After Three Days

If no communication has been received after three consecutive days, the class teacher will attempt to contact the parent/carer.

3. Escalation to Safeguarding Lead

If the class teacher is unable to make contact, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the safeguarding lead will be informed and will contact the parent directly. The child's attendance will then be monitored closely.

4. Attendance Below 90% with Unauthorised Absence

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90% due to unauthorised absences, the safeguarding lead will contact the parents/carers by phone to discuss concerns and expectations.

5. Continued Poor Attendance

If unauthorised absence continues and attendance does not improve, the safeguarding lead will:

- Send a letter (see Appendix #2) outlining concerns, expectations, and requesting a meeting with the parents/carers and class teacher.
- Work collaboratively to identify strategies to support improved attendance.

6. Attendance Falls Below 85%

If attendance drops below 85% due to unauthorised absences, the safeguarding lead will:

- Make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
1. Inform parents/carers via Letter 3 (see Appendix #3).

Appendix #2: Attendance Letter

Date: _____ Re: (pupil name)

Attendance Letter

Dear _____,

We are concerned that your child's attendance is below 90% due to unauthorised absences, and that they are missing valuable classroom time.

Our school records show that your child's attendance at school this year is currently _____%

A day-to-day summary of attendance is detailed below:

Monday: _____%

Tuesday: _____%

Wednesday: _____%

Thursday: _____%

Friday: _____%

Please be aware that any pupil with attendance below 85% due to unauthorised absences will be discussed with the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

We would like to invite you to a meeting with the class teacher and safeguarding lead to discuss ways we can work together to support and improve your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

C Davidson
(Safeguarding Lead)

Appendix #3: Attendance Letter 3 (Referral to EWO)

Date: _____ Re: (pupil name)

Attendance Letter 3

Dear _____,

We are writing to inform you that your child's attendance has continued to fall and is now below 85% due to unauthorised absences. As a result, we are making a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for further support and intervention.

Our school records show that your child's attendance at school this year is currently _____%

A day-to-day summary of attendance is detailed below:

Monday: _____%
Tuesday: _____%
Wednesday: _____%
Thursday: _____%
Friday: _____%

The EWO will be in contact with you to discuss the situation and explore ways to support your child's regular attendance.

If you have any questions or require further support, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

C Davidson
(Safeguarding Lead)