

Compassion – Courage – Hope – Integrity – Justice
Respect – Responsibility – Wisdom



Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School

Herne Bay Junior School

Attendance Policy

Policy Agreed: March 2026

Review Date: March 2027

Statement of Intent

At Herne Bay Infant School and Herne Bay Junior School we aim to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [on working together to improve school attendance](#) (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school and be punctual.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School/Herne Bay Junior School.

Role and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Recommending fixed penalty notices to the KPAS officer
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School, it is Ms Nicky Brown who can be contacted via office@herne-bay.kent.sch.uk or by telephoning the school office on 01227 372245. At Herne Bay Junior School, it is Mrs Rowena Evett-Collins and can be contacted via office@hernebay-jun.kent.sch.uk or by telephoning the school office on 01227 374608.

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by telephone call or text.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with KCC KPAS Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Providing the Head of School/Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance with regular attendance reports and reporting concerns about attendance
- Submitting fixed-penalty notices when requested by Head of School/Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The attendance officer at Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School is Mrs Sally Spence and can be contacted via 01227 372245 or office@herne-bay.kent.sch.uk and at Herne Bay Junior School is Mrs Jenny Botzet and can be contacted via 01227 374608 or office@hernebay-jun.kent.sch.uk

Class Teacher

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning/afternoon sessions on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office no later than 15 minutes after registration. Class teachers are also responsible for making initial conversations to help families improve attendance.

Parental Responsibility

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am, or as practically possible, on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Be aware of their child's attendance via the Arbor App
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Officer, Attendance Champion/Headteacher or FLO who can be contacted via the office at Herne Bay Infant School on 01227 372245 and at Herne Bay Juniors School by contacting the Attendance Officer or Attendance Champion/Head of School – 01227 374608

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.

Contact Details for Absences

- Herne Bay Infant School – 01227 372245 – office@herne-bay.kent.sch.uk
- Herne Bay Junior School – 01227 374608 – absence@hernebay-jun.kent.sch.uk

Unplanned Absence

At Herne Bay Infant School/Herne Bay Junior School the pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the relevant school, contact details above.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and has written to you to confirm that absence will be unauthorised without medical evidence. Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

Lateness

- Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School gate opens at 8.40am and closes at 8.55am, however school does not start until 8.50am and parents are responsible until that time.
- At Herne Bay Infant and Nursery School the register is taken at 9.00am & 1.00pm. The register will close at 9.20 am and 1.15pm.
- Herne Bay Junior School gate opens at 8.35am and closes at 8.45am.
- At Herne Bay Junior School, the register is taken at 8.50 am and 1.15 pm. The register will close at 9.10am and 1.30pm.

Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

If a child is absent for 5 or more consecutive school days a parent/carers is expected to produce medical evidence (this can be in the form of evidence of appointment or evidence of prescription). Failure to do so could result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment by contacting the relevant school. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

We will authorise half a day for a local appointment and one full day for appointments in London.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text or telephone the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Call the parent/carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider making a home visit after 3 days or before depending on individual circumstances.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance. Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider agencies and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, we will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

The Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via regular telephone calls or letters and may request a meeting.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from school for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings. Other circumstances that meet the 2024 school attendance regulations are:

- A temporary, time limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We define exceptional as:

- Service personnel/Armed forces etc returning from a tour abroad where it is evidenced the parent/carer will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a funeral of a person close to the family
- Where the school has evidence that there are other pressing personal issues for a family that would warrant a short break from school.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Other valid reason for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- If the pupil is suspended.
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit/trip arranged by school.
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met. This is 10 sessions (there are 2 sessions per day) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public

place on that day). Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
- If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far, opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period and the grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for promoting attendance

Our intent is to take whatever action is necessary to give every one of our children access to being the most successful version of themselves, therefore attendance is crucial in achieving this.

Belonging is at the core of what we do. We build a sense of belonging through our enrichment events and activities and by inviting our families into school regularly in an authentic capacity. We work in partnership with parents and carers, they are our extended community and our pupils first educators.

Through our partnership with families, we are able to develop an authentic and non-judgmental understanding of our children's barriers on an individual basis, allowing us to support families equitably. We offer support in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, food packages and clothing.

Additionally, we pride ourselves on providing a motivational, equitable curriculum which is accessible to all pupils. We provoke curiosity and create an exciting and rewarding environment

where children want to come and learn. Our curriculum extends to all areas of the school day, from the classroom to the playground.

Children are able to pursue their interest and experience meaningful success in all areas of school life.

School leaders communicate the importance of punctuality and attendance with parents in relation to educational success and work in partnership to increase attendance of those at risk.

Attendance monitoring

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance:

90-95% attendance by term and cumulative

- A conversation with the class teacher
- If no improvement a conversation with the Attendance Team to identify barriers and offer solutions and support
- If still no further improvement the following term a letter sent and a meeting with Headteacher and Attendance Officer may be held.
- All information is recorded and monitored by Attendance Officer, including meeting notes

Below 90% attendance

- This is considered persistent absenteeism. If persistent absentee's attendance does not improve after support given, the local authority KPAS Attendance Officer may be asked to contact the family to pursue further support
- Persistent absentees will be contacted by telephone the first day of absence for any absence including authorised
- Medical evidence for all authorised absence may be required
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority KPAS Officer for advice
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification
- Implement sanctions as appropriate

Below 50% attendance

- This is considered severe absenteeism.
- Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school).
- These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.
- A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them.
- All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes:

Important Changes to Attendance Codes

This is a list of attendance codes that come into effect in the next academic year for all schools:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend non-compulsory school age pupil	Not required to attend non-compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission requester
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg)	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Alternative provision provided by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

Retired Codes no longer in use after 19th August 2024

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance