



# HOPEBRIGHT

S C H O O L

## Attendance Policy

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## **Contents**

1. Statement and Vision
2. Aims
3. The Interests of Pupils
4. The Legislation and Guidance
5. Responsibilities and Expectations
6. Attendance Register
7. The School Day and Punctuality
8. Lateness
9. Absence
10. Illness
11. Medical Appointments
12. Leave of Absence
13. Promoting Regular Attendance
14. Monitoring Attendance

## Appendices:

- A. Attendance Action Plan
- B. Attendance Letters
- C. DfE attendance codes.



## **Hopebright School Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**School:** Hopebright School

**Address:** Ground Floor Rear of 155 Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AH

**Website:** [www.hopebright.co.uk](http://www.hopebright.co.uk)

**Policy area:** Attendance and punctuality

**Applies to:** All pupils, parents/carers, staff, leaders, directors and the proprietor

**Review date:** 2026

**Next review:** Annually, or earlier if statutory guidance changes

### **1. Statement and Vision**

Hopebright School aims to enable each child to make the maximum progress possible. We recognise the clear and well-established link between regular attendance, punctuality, pupil wellbeing, safeguarding, curriculum access, progress and attainment.

Hopebright School is a specialist day school for pupils aged 7 to 17 with a range of complex needs, including autism spectrum condition, social, emotional and mental health needs, communication needs, associated learning needs and other barriers to accessing education. Many of our pupils have experienced disrupted attendance in the past, including periods of school refusal, emotionally based school avoidance, permanent exclusion, managed moves, multiple previous school placements or extended periods without consistent access to education. Some pupils may also have experienced trauma, anxiety, social communication difficulties, adverse childhood experiences, health-related barriers, transport difficulties or a loss of trust in education.

Our school seeks to provide a nurturing, structured and supportive environment in which pupils are able to find security, stability, belonging and confidence. We want Hopebright School to be a place where pupils feel safe, known, understood and motivated to attend. We understand that for some pupils, attendance may need to be rebuilt carefully through relational practice, predictable routines, individual support, family partnership, multi-agency working and, where appropriate, time-limited reintegration planning.

At Hopebright School, we believe that all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, ability, disability, sexuality, social background, family circumstances or previous educational history, are entitled to a high-quality education that maximises their life chances. The school values each pupil and is committed to providing a high standard of education, appropriate support and meaningful opportunities for learning so that pupils can enjoy the experiences, opportunities and rewards of adult life.

We ensure that the curriculum provided for each pupil is appropriate to their attainment, capability, age, stage, special educational needs and disabilities, education, health and care plan outcomes where applicable, and wider pastoral needs. Attendance is central to this entitlement. Pupils can only fully benefit from the curriculum, therapeutic support, social development opportunities, careers education, preparation for adulthood and wider school life when they attend regularly and arrive on time.

We seek to work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers, placing local authorities, transport providers, health professionals, social care, virtual schools where relevant, and other agencies so that pupils are supported to be punctual and attend school regularly. Where attendance concerns arise, the school will act

early, listen carefully, seek to understand barriers and provide support, while also recognising the legal responsibilities of parents and the statutory duties placed on schools and local authorities.

## **2. Aims**

This policy aims to show Hopebright School's commitment to meeting its obligations in relation to school attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, relevant safeguarding guidance, the Independent School Standards and Ofsted expectations for independent school inspection.

Through our whole-school culture, ethos and daily practice, we aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils, while recognising individual needs and barriers.
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of regular attendance for learning, wellbeing, safeguarding, social development and preparation for adulthood.
- Reduce absence, including persistent absence and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled, unless a lawful, time-limited and properly reviewed part-time timetable is in place.
- Act early to address patterns of absence, lateness or disengagement.
- Build strong, trusting and productive relationships with families so pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Work with placing local authorities and relevant professionals where attendance concerns relate to special educational needs, transport, health, safeguarding, social care or wider family circumstances.
- Ensure accurate and timely registration, coding, monitoring, analysis and reporting of attendance.
- Promote punctuality in attending school, lessons and agreed provision.
- Ensure attendance practice is inclusive, safeguarding-aware and consistent with the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Support pupils returning from absence, suspension, exclusion from previous settings, hospitalisation, emotionally based school avoidance or other interruption to learning.
- Use attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts requiring additional support and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Meet the expectations of independent school inspection by demonstrating effective leadership, safeguarding, behaviour, personal development, curriculum access, inclusion and attendance systems.

Hopebright School will maintain a "support first" approach wherever appropriate. This means that concerns about attendance will be addressed through early discussion, barrier identification, pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, individual planning and multi-agency working. Where support is not engaged with, is ineffective, or where absence is unauthorised and meets legal thresholds, the school may work with the relevant local authority in relation to formal action.

## **3. The Interests of Pupils**

### **Attendance**

Lessons, interventions and wider learning opportunities at Hopebright School are planned to ensure progression in learning over time. Progression means that pupils build new knowledge, skills, confidence and independence on the basis of previous learning. When a pupil is absent for a period of time, or has repeated individual absences, learning routines, relationships, habits and confidence can be disrupted.

For pupils with complex needs, absence can have a particularly significant impact. Pupils may need additional time to re-establish trust, routines, social expectations, sensory regulation, emotional readiness and engagement with learning. They may miss important curriculum content, therapeutic input, personalised support, preparation for adulthood, careers work, social learning and opportunities to practise independence.

Absence may also have an adverse effect on behaviour and emotional regulation. A pupil returning after absence may need to re-familiarise themselves with expectations, relationships, classroom routines, school policies and the structure of the day. They may experience frustration, anxiety, uncertainty or reduced confidence, which may be expressed through withdrawal, avoidance, dysregulation or behaviour that requires additional support.

Regular attendance supports:

- Curriculum continuity and academic progress.
- Social communication and relationship building.
- Emotional security through predictable routines.
- Development of independence and resilience.
- Access to specialist support and interventions.
- Safeguarding, because regular attendance helps staff know pupils well and identify concerns early.
- Preparation for further education, training, employment and adult life.

### **Punctuality**

Arriving part way through a school session is disruptive to the late pupil, their class and members of staff. The pupil's learning is compromised when they do not access all the opportunities for learning available to them. Other pupils' learning and concentration may also be affected.

For some pupils at Hopebright School, lateness may reflect anxiety, transport difficulties, sleep routines, family circumstances, health needs or difficulties with transitions. The school will seek to understand these factors and provide support where possible. However, parents and carers remain expected to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time and are ready to learn.

Good standards of behaviour and emotional regulation may also be affected by lateness. A pupil who arrives late may find it difficult to settle when learning has already begun, and other pupils may find the disruption challenging. Persistent lateness can therefore have a serious adverse effect on learning, confidence and relationships.

### **Future Focus**

Regular attendance and punctuality help pupils develop habits that are valued in adult life, further education, training and employment. Prospective employers, colleges or other settings may request references or information about attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and punctuality can demonstrate that pupils are reliable, mature, resilient, responsible and proud of their achievements.

#### **4. Legislation, Guidance and Inspection Expectations**

This policy is based on current legislation and guidance relating to school attendance, safeguarding and independent school inspection. It will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where significant statutory changes occur.

This policy has regard to:

- Department for Education statutory guidance: **Working together to improve school attendance.**
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The Education Act 1996, including sections relating to parental responsibility for ensuring suitable full-time education.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the national framework introduced from 19 August 2024.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, including the current statutory guidance in force and any subsequent updates.
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.
- Children missing education guidance.
- School census guidance and attendance data requirements.
- Local authority attendance procedures, where applicable.
- Ofsted's education inspection framework and independent school inspection toolkit, including expectations relating to leadership, safeguarding, inclusion, behaviour, attendance, curriculum access and pupils' wider development.

The school recognises that attendance is not only an administrative matter. It is closely linked to safeguarding, welfare, leadership and management, curriculum quality, behaviour, attitudes, personal development, equality, SEND provision and preparation for adulthood. Attendance systems must therefore be accurate, timely, inclusive, monitored by leaders and capable of identifying pupils who may be at risk.

#### **5. Responsibilities and Expectations**

##### **Directors and Proprietor**

The proprietor and directors are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil statutory duties and expectations relating to attendance.
- Ensuring the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares required information with the Department for Education and relevant local authorities.

- Ensuring 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 attendance across the school's policies, ethos, safeguarding culture and improvement planning.
- Ensuring the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively.
- Ensuring consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff time, resources and leadership attention.
- Ensuring the school has high aspirations for all pupils while adapting processes and support to individual needs, including SEND, mental health and previous educational disruption.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data, including whole-school attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, punctuality, attendance by pupil group and patterns of absence.
- Helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils, groups or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals, priorities or areas of focus for attendance.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and evaluating the effectiveness of attendance processes, interventions and improvement efforts.
- Ensuring attendance concerns are considered in relation to safeguarding, inclusion, behaviour, curriculum access and pupil wellbeing.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive attendance action plan.
- Making sure all staff receive appropriate training on attendance as part of continuing professional development.
- Ensuring staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance.
  - That absence is often a symptom of wider issues.
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping attendance and admission registers.
  - The correct use of attendance codes.
  - The school's first-day response procedures.
  - The school's staged approach to attendance concerns.
  - The importance of accurate recording, timely follow-up and safeguarding vigilance.
  - The school's strategies for tracking, following up on and improving attendance.
  - How and when to work with parents, local authorities and other partners.
- Ensuring dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function, including analysis and interpretation of attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the school and, where relevant, across the wider organisation.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation and impact of this policy.

If the school appoints a link director, link governor or committee with specific responsibility for attendance, that person or committee will monitor attendance trends, review the implementation of this policy, challenge leaders on persistent and severe absence, and report to the proprietor or board as appropriate.

### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher, is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at Hopebright School.
- Creating a whole-school culture where attendance and punctuality are understood as central to learning, safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to directors, the proprietor and relevant governance structures.
- Supporting staff to monitor the attendance of individual pupils.
- Ensuring the attendance register is completed accurately and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Monitoring the impact of implemented attendance strategies.
- Ensuring staff respond promptly to absence and lateness.
- Ensuring attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, mental health and family circumstances.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly missed or where pupils face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the relevant local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan has falling attendance or where barriers to attendance relate to the pupil's needs or provision.
- Liaising with local authority attendance, inclusion, SEND, transport, social care, virtual school or education welfare services where appropriate.
- Ensuring that pupils on part-time or transitional timetables have clear plans, review dates and routes back to full-time education.
- Ensuring attendance is included within safeguarding oversight, including pupils who are absent without explanation, missing from education or at risk of harm.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through available channels.
- Ensuring that statutory guidance, independent school standards and inspection expectations are reflected in attendance practice.

### **Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance**

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance, is also known as the senior attendance champion.

The senior 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 attendance expectations and processes.

- Having a strong grasp of attendance and absence data.
- Maintaining oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and ensuring 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 address attendance issues.
- Creating intervention, support or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils, parents and carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data at pupil, group and whole-school level.
- Benchmarking and reviewing attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to the headteacher and relevant staff.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and, where relevant, safeguarding leaders.
- Working with education welfare officers or local authority attendance teams to tackle persistent absence and severe absence.
- Advising the headteacher when attendance concerns may need escalation to local authority processes, including fixed penalty notice consideration where appropriate.
- Ensuring attendance concerns are addressed in a way that is proportionate, inclusive and sensitive to pupils' SEND and mental health needs.
- Ensuring records are maintained of contact with parents, actions taken, support offered, outcomes and review points.

### **School Office Manager**

School Office Manager, is responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis using the correct codes on the school's management information system, Arbor.
- Ensuring registers are completed promptly and accurately.
- Taking calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording the reason for absence on Arbor.
- Recording expected dates of return where provided.
- Alerting the attendance lead or safeguarding lead where absence is unexplained, concerning or repeated.
- Supporting first-day absence calling and follow-up where the school has not received an explanation.
- Transferring calls from parents and carers to attendance support is required.
- Supporting attendance officer with relevant communications to parents and carers, including attendance letters, registration certificates, meeting invitations and information requests.
- Supporting the maintenance of accurate attendance records, including amendments to the register where authorised.



### **All Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality through their relationships, routines and expectations.
- Taking registers accurately and promptly where this forms part of their role.
- Notifying the office or attendance lead of any attendance or punctuality concern.
- Welcoming pupils back after absence and helping them re-engage with learning.
- Avoiding punitive or shaming responses to absence or lateness.
- Identifying potential barriers to attendance, including anxiety, bullying, unmet SEND needs, safeguarding concerns, transport concerns or family pressures.
- Recording and reporting concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.
- Supporting agreed attendance plans, reintegration plans and reasonable adjustments.

### **Parents and Carers**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority considers most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, including those with whom the child lives and who look after the child.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time, unless there is an authorised reason for absence.
- Contact the school before 9.00am on each day of absence, using the process set out in this policy.
- Provide a clear reason for absence and an expected date of return.
- Contact the school each subsequent day of absence unless an agreed arrangement has been made.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, medical, dental and other appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Ensure their child attends school before and after appointments where it is reasonable to do so.
- Work in partnership with the school to remove barriers to attendance.
- Attend attendance meetings when invited.
- Keep to any attendance contracts, action plans or support plans agreed with the school and/or local authority.
- Inform the school of changes in address, contact details, family circumstances, transport arrangements or health needs that may affect attendance.
- Seek support where necessary by contacting the school

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected, with appropriate support according to age, stage and need, to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend every timetabled session on time where a transitional or part-time timetable is in place.
- Engage with staff support where attendance or punctuality is difficult.
- Tell a trusted adult if they are worried about coming to school.
- Follow arrival routines, including handing in devices and preparing for the school day.
- Work with staff to rebuild routines after absence.

## **6. Attendance Register**

Hopebright School will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register using Arbor, the school's management information system.

The school will take the attendance register at the start of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session. The register will be marked using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Each session will record whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

The school will also record:

- Whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- The nature of the activity where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.
- Evidence or notes supporting decisions where appropriate.

Registers are legal documents. Staff must not amend registers unless authorised to do so. The school will preserve every entry on the attendance register for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

See Appendix C for DfE attendance codes.

## **7. The School Day and Punctuality**

The school day starts at **8.30am** and finishes at **2.30pm**.

Morning registers close at **9.00am**. Pupils will be marked with attendance code **L** if they arrive after the register has been taken but before the register has closed.

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed, and where no approved reason has been supplied to the school, will be marked with code **U**, meaning they arrived after registration closed. Code U is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the session.

Pupils who arrive late can miss important information, emotional regulation opportunities, breakfast routines, learning preparation, tutor time, curriculum content and social transition time. They may be confused, distressed or embarrassed by late arrival and may also disturb the learning of others.

There may be unavoidable reasons for lateness. The school will consider individual circumstances, including transport issues, SEND, anxiety, health needs and family context. However, parents and pupils are expected to be on time for school and ready for learning when the school day begins.

Parents who transport their children are encouraged to ensure that pupils are on the school premises by **8.30am** so they are ready for learning when the school day begins. Parents whose children use transport arranged by a local authority or other provider should ensure that their child is ready to leave when transport arrives.

On arrival, pupils are required to hand in all hand-held devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, consoles and similar items, to the member of staff responsible. These will be locked away securely and returned to pupils at the end of each school day. Pupils are also required to leave bags and coats in the cloakroom unless an individual arrangement has been agreed. All pupils will be offered breakfast on arrival.

### **8. Lateness**

If a pupil arrives at school after the school day has begun or leaves before the end of the school day, they must be signed in or out by the responsible adult or by a member of staff in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Where there are transport delays causing lateness, staff will determine the reason for lateness and take appropriate action with the relevant transport provider, parent, carer or local authority with a view to improving punctuality.

Once in school, pupils are supervised between lessons. Staff will address punctuality issues during tutor time, transition support and individual planning where appropriate. Patterns of punctuality will be monitored across the school. Where punctuality is a concern for individual pupils, it may be addressed through the pupil's individual behaviour support plan, pastoral plan, attendance plan or reintegration plan.

Where a child's lateness is a cause for concern, the school may notify parents in writing, summarising attendance and minutes late over a specified period. The school may invite parents to a meeting to understand the factors contributing to lateness, explore support and agree a punctuality target for a fixed period.

Support may include:

- Reviewing morning routines.
- Liaising with transport providers.
- Adjusting arrival support.
- Providing a named adult to meet the pupil.
- Using visual schedules or transition plans.
- Agreeing a short-term punctuality target.



- Considering whether anxiety, sleep, health, family circumstances or SEND needs are contributing factors.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may be treated as unauthorised absence and may contribute to attendance escalation where thresholds are met.

## **9. Absence**

### **Reporting an Absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, the parent or carer should inform the school before **9.00am** on each day of absence via the school office

Parents must provide:

- The pupil's name.
- The reason for absence.
- The expected date of return.
- Any relevant information about illness, appointment, transport, family circumstances or safeguarding concerns.

Parents should contact the school on each subsequent day of absence unless a different arrangement has been agreed with the school.

Should parents wish to discuss their child's absence in more detail, contact the school.

### **Categories of Absence**

There are two broad categories of absence:

1. **Authorised absence** – approved by the school.
2. **Unauthorised absence** – not approved by the school.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absences can only be authorised by the headteacher or another person authorised by the headteacher. An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a reason accepted by the school and the school has received sufficient information or evidence where required.

Examples may include illness, medical appointments, religious observance, specific exceptional circumstances, approved educational activity or other reasons permitted by regulation.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school.

An absence can be unauthorised even if the pupil is absent with the knowledge or support of a parent.

Absences may be unauthorised where:

- No explanation has been received.
- The explanation is not accepted by the school.
- The school has reason to doubt the explanation.
- Requested evidence has not been provided.
- Leave of absence has not been granted.
- A pupil arrives after the register has closed without an approved reason.

- Absence is for a holiday that has not been authorised.

Where the reason for absence has not yet been established, the school will use the appropriate temporary code and will update the register once the reason is known and a decision has been made.

### **10. Illness**

If a child is too unwell to attend school, parents should inform the school as soon as possible and before 9.00am on the first day of absence. A child should return to school as soon as possible following recovery, even if this is towards the end of the week.

If a child has a recognised contagious illness, the school office may advise parents to consult NHS guidance or relevant public health advice about how long the child should remain away from school.

If a child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, this should be discussed with the headteacher or attendance lead so the school can consider how best to support attendance, learning and wellbeing. Support may include reasonable adjustments, a healthcare plan, risk assessment, liaison with medical professionals, reduced anxiety around return, adapted routines or consideration of education provision during longer absences in liaison with the local authority.

If health-related absences mean that a pupil's attendance is causing concern, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence. This could include:

- An appointment card or appointment letter.
- A prescription.
- Prescribed medication showing the pupil's name and date.
- A doctor's note where available.
- Hospital correspondence.
- Other appropriate evidence.

Where absence is longer than five school days, or where there are doubts about the authenticity of illness, the school may ask for medical evidence. This will help the school understand the nature of the illness, consider authorisation of absence and provide appropriate support. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness or does not receive requested evidence, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be notified where this decision is made.

The school will take particular care where illness may relate to mental health, anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance or unmet SEND needs. In such cases, the school will seek to work supportively with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals while maintaining the expectation that pupils should attend school whenever they are able to do so.

Additional guidance can be found on the NHS website: **Is my child too ill for school?**

### **11. Medical Appointments**

Parents should seek to minimise absence for medical appointments by:

- Making appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Ensuring the pupil is only absent for the time necessary to attend the appointment.
- Ensuring the pupil attends school before and after the appointment where possible.

- Giving the school as much notice as possible.
- Providing appointment evidence where requested.

When a pupil has an unavoidable appointment during school hours, the school should be notified at the earliest opportunity. The school may request evidence of the appointment. Pupils absent for part of the school day due to essential appointments must be signed in or out at reception by the responsible adult, unless an alternative safeguarding arrangement has been agreed.

Where a pupil has regular medical appointments during the school day, the school and parent may discuss whether any appointments can be arranged on school premises or at times that minimise disruption to education. Where a pattern of appointments affects attendance, the school may seek further information to understand the impact and plan support.

## 12. Leave of Absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools, placements or settings, where this is permitted and properly recorded.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence during term time where the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances include:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited, part-time timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances.

Leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent. Hopebright School defines **exceptional circumstances** as situations that are extraordinary, unavoidable and beyond the control of the pupil or their family. These circumstances must be significant enough to justify time away from school despite the importance of regular attendance.

Examples may include serious family crisis, bereavement, emergency circumstances or other significant events. Each request will be considered individually.

Leave of absence will not normally be granted for a family holiday during term time. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include, but are not limited to:

- Illness, including mental-health related illness, where the pupil is unable to attend.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. If necessary, the school may seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes, where the pupil is a mobile child and the conditions for this code are met.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion where no alternative provision has been made.

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be away from the school site, which are not necessarily classified as absences, include:

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity, sporting activity, visit or trip arranged or approved by the school.
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered.
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience.
- Attending an interview.
- Being unable to attend because of an unavoidable cause, such as emergency travel disruption, lack of access arrangements, or closure of part or all of the school premises.

Parents should request leave of absence in advance wherever possible. The school may ask for supporting evidence and will confirm whether the absence is authorised.

### **13. Promoting Regular Attendance**

Hopebright School promotes regular attendance and punctuality through all aspects of daily school life, including:

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Warm, predictable arrival routines.
- Breakfast on arrival.
- Tutor time and check-ins.
- Lessons and curriculum planning.
- Assemblies and whole-school messages.
- PSHE and personal development.
- Careers education and preparation for adulthood.
- External courses, interviews and visits.
- Parent consultations and progress reports.
- Half-termly rewards and end-of-year recognition.
- School events and celebrations.
- Modelling by staff.
- Individual support plans.
- Reintegration planning after absence.

The school will avoid approaches that shame pupils for absence. Instead, we will welcome pupils back, help them reconnect, support them to catch up where appropriate, and reinforce the importance of attendance.

Where appropriate, and in accordance with the needs of the pupil, a time-limited part-time timetable may be used to support reintegration to full-time education. A part-time timetable will only be used where it is in the pupil's best interests, is not used as a behaviour sanction, is agreed with parents and relevant professionals, and is regularly reviewed.

A part-time timetable will:

- Identify the reasons for the part-time timetable.
- Set out the precise timetable and expected attendance.
- Confirm that the arrangement is temporary and time-limited.
- Include an action plan with review points to enable progression towards full-time attendance.
- Be compiled with parental involvement.
- Involve the placing local authority where appropriate, particularly where the pupil has an EHC plan.
- Be signed by the parent or carer where possible.
- Include safeguarding considerations for the time the pupil is not in school.
- Be reviewed regularly and ended as soon as full-time attendance is appropriate.

#### **14. Monitoring Attendance**

Hopebright School operates a policy of first-day absence calling. This means that if a pupil does not attend school and the school has not heard from a parent by **9.15am**, staff will contact the parent by phone, text or email.

If the school has not heard from a parent regarding the reason for absence by the end of the day, the school will continue to try to establish contact until a justification has been provided. Where no contact can be made, the school will consider safeguarding action in line with its safeguarding policy.

If a pupil has not attended for five consecutive school days and no contact has been established, a home visit will be arranged where appropriate. Depending on the circumstances, the school may contact the relevant local authority, social care, police, children missing education team, placing authority or other safeguarding partners.

Parents may contact the school to discuss their child's attendance by telephone or request a meeting. The school is committed to the wellbeing and development of pupils and will consider family needs and offer support where possible to enable regular attendance.

The attendance lead will review whole-school attendance data at least half-termly and more frequently where needed. This review will include:

- Whole-school attendance.
- Attendance against the school target.
- Attendance compared with previous performance.
- Attendance of individual pupils.
- Persistent absence.
- Severe absence.
- Lateness and minutes late.
- Use of attendance codes.
- Attendance by pupil group or cohort.
- Attendance of pupils with EHC plans.
- Attendance of pupils on part-time timetables.
- Attendance following interventions.

- Patterns linked to days of the week, transport, curriculum, transitions or family circumstances.

To contextualise and understand attendance, the school may also consider:

- Attendance at previous educational placements.
- Number of previous placements.
- Duration of the current placement.
- Distance and travel time to school.
- Whether school transport is provided and whether transport is reliable.
- Whether the pupil has a part-time timetable.
- Percentage attendance on days when attendance is required.
- Known health, SEND, anxiety, safeguarding or family factors.
- Pupil voice and parent/carer views.

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and address these in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding policy.
- Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who are vulnerable, at risk of persistent or severe absence, or already persistently or severely absent.
- Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Listen to and understand barriers to attendance.
- Explain the support available.
- Explain possible consequences and sanctions for persistent or severe unauthorised absence.
- Review existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove barriers, in conjunction with local authorities where relevant.
- Consider alternative support to remove barriers and re-engage pupils.
- Sensitively consider reasons for absence, including SEND and mental health.
- Implement formal action where necessary and proportionate.

Attendance information will be shared with relevant local authorities and safeguarding partners where required or appropriate, especially where a pupil has an EHC plan, is looked after, has a social worker, is subject to safeguarding concerns, is missing education or has attendance that is falling significantly.

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## **15. Support for Pupils with SEND, Mental Health Needs and Emotionally Based School Avoidance**

Hopebright School recognises that many pupils have complex SEND and may experience anxiety, emotional distress, sensory needs, social communication difficulties, trauma responses or other barriers that affect attendance. The school will work to identify and address these barriers early.

Support may include:

- Pupil voice work to understand worries and barriers.
- Parent/carer meetings.
- Review of the pupil's EHC plan outcomes and provision.
- Review of curriculum access and reasonable adjustments.
- Transition support and predictable routines.
- A named trusted adult.
- Safe spaces or regulation support.
- Adapted arrival routines.
- Reduced sensory demands where appropriate.
- Therapeutic or pastoral intervention.
- Reintegration plans after extended absence.
- Collaboration with CAMHS, health professionals, social care, virtual schools, local authority SEND teams or transport teams.
- Short-term, time-limited part-time timetables where lawful and appropriate.
- Risk assessment and safeguarding planning.

The school will not assume that absence is simply a choice where there may be underlying SEND, mental health or safeguarding factors. Equally, the school will maintain high expectations and work towards the highest level of attendance possible for each pupil.

Where a pupil with an EHC plan has falling attendance, the school will communicate with the placing local authority, especially where barriers relate to the pupil's needs, provision, transport or placement suitability.

#### **16. Children Missing Education and Safeguarding**

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. A pupil's absence may indicate that they are at risk of harm, exploitation, neglect, mental health crisis, family difficulty, unsafe travel arrangements or becoming missing from education.

The school will follow its safeguarding policy where:

- A pupil is absent without explanation.
- A parent or carer cannot be contacted.
- Absence is repeated or unexplained.
- There are concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- A pupil's attendance suddenly deteriorates.
- A pupil is missing from education.
- A pupil is known to social care, youth justice, the virtual school or other services.
- A pupil has an EHC plan and attendance is falling.

The school will ensure that safeguarding leaders and the attendance lead share relevant information promptly. Attendance concerns will be recorded and reviewed alongside safeguarding concerns where appropriate.

### **17. Legal Intervention and Penalty Notices**

Hopebright School will seek to work supportively with pupils and families to improve attendance. Legal intervention is not the preferred first response where barriers can be addressed through support. However, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where absence is unauthorised, persistent, severe, not improving despite support, or where support is not engaged with, the school may discuss the matter with the relevant local authority attendance or education welfare service.

Possible formal routes may include:

- Attendance support meetings.
- Attendance contracts.
- Notices to improve.
- Penalty notices.
- Education supervision orders.
- Parenting orders.
- Prosecution.

The national framework for penalty notices applies in England. The school does not itself issue penalty notices but may request that the relevant local authority considers doing so where the legal threshold is met and it is appropriate under the local code of conduct.

The national threshold is generally met when a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. The 10 sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may include unauthorised holiday absence, unauthorised lateness after the register has closed, or other unauthorised absence.

Penalty notice arrangements include a national limit and escalation where repeat offences occur within a three-year period. The relevant local authority will determine whether a penalty notice or other legal intervention is appropriate.

The school will ensure that decisions to escalate are informed by the pupil's individual circumstances, including SEND, mental health, safeguarding, family circumstances and support already offered.

### 18. Staged Approach to the Management of Attendance

Whole-school attendance is monitored at least every half term and more frequently where appropriate to the needs of the school. Attendance is more closely evaluated for pupils whose attendance is below the whole-school target or whose attendance pattern is causing concern.

The school's target attendance is **90% or above**, recognising the specialist nature of the school, the needs of the pupil cohort and the importance of maintaining ambitious expectations.

Stage	Trigger	Outcome
Stage 1	Attendance falls below the whole-school target and the pupil's attendance is of concern.	Letter 1 will be sent to parents. The letter will express concern about attendance, inform parents of current attendance, enclose a registration certificate, explain the nature of persistent absence and welcome parents to contact the school to discuss attendance further. Attendance will be monitored for a fixed period. A copy of the letter may be sent to the relevant local authority and stakeholders where appropriate.
Stage 2	Parents have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.	Letter 2 will be sent to parents. The letter will confirm ongoing concern, provide current attendance, enclose a registration certificate, remind parents of legal responsibilities and persistent absence, notify parents of the monitoring period and invite contact with the school. Attendance will be monitored for a fixed period. A copy of the letter may be sent to the relevant local authority and stakeholders where appropriate.
Stage 3	Parents have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.	Letter 3 will be sent to parents. The letter will confirm ongoing concern, provide current attendance, enclose a registration certificate, remind parents of legal responsibilities, request medical evidence for illness-related absence where appropriate, and invite parents, the local authority and relevant stakeholders to a meeting with the attendance lead. The meeting will discuss attendance, agree an action plan, consider outside agency involvement and set an internal school attendance target. Parents will be informed that if they do not attend, the meeting may proceed and a target may be set in their absence.
Stage 4	Parents have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance remains below 90% or otherwise remains a significant concern.	Letter 4 will be sent to parents. The letter will confirm ongoing concern, provide attendance during the target period, enclose a registration certificate, and notify parents that the school intends to discuss the pupil's attendance with the relevant local authority education or attendance officer and other relevant professionals.
Improvement	During a monitoring period, attendance improves.	A letter of praise or attendance improvement letter will be sent to parents. The letter will confirm attendance during the monitoring period, acknowledge improvement and explain that the school will continue to monitor attendance to support sustained progress.

The staged process may be adapted where a pupil's circumstances require a different response, for example where there are safeguarding concerns, severe absence, social care involvement, looked-after child status, an EHC plan, cross-border local authority placement or serious medical needs. The school may move more quickly to multi-agency planning where concerns are urgent.



**Appendix A: Attendance Action Plan**

<b>Pupil</b>		<b>Date</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	
<b>Pupil Views</b>	<b>Parent/Carer Views</b>	

**Follow up / Review / Actions:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Person(s)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Current Status / Review</b>

**Outcome / Review:**

**Follow Up Action:**



**Appendix B: Attendance Letters**

**Stage 1 Letter**

Parent/carer name and address

DATE

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

**Re: [Forename] [Surname], [Year/Reg]**

I am writing to you to discuss [Forename]'s attendance, which is currently [XX]%. This is below the school's target of 90%.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be legitimate reasons, including [insert any known reasons specific to the pupil], that you have discussed with us and which have contributed to [Forename]'s attendance falling below 90%, we are informing you of this so that you are aware of the situation in accordance with our attendance policy.

Attendance below 90% is recognised as persistent absence and equates to an average of one school day missed per fortnight. Attendance of 80% equates to an average of one school day missed per week. As you will be aware, to achieve their full potential a pupil must have consistently high attendance and punctuality.

As always, we value your support in working with us to ensure that [Forename] has the best possible opportunities to access education. If we can do anything to support you in improving [Forename]'s attendance, or if you wish to discuss any concerns, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Name	of	Attendance	Lead/SLT
Job Title			









**Attendance Improvement Letter**

Parent/carer name and address

DATE

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

**Re: [Forename] [Surname], [Year/Reg]**

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has now improved from [XX]% to [XX].

Although this is still below the school's target of 90%, we recognise that [Forename]'s attendance has significantly / slightly improved and thank you for your support in this respect.

OR

[Forename]'s attendance is now [XX]%, which is on or above the school's target of 90%, and we are hugely grateful for your support in this respect.

As always, we value your continued support to ensure that [Forename]'s attendance continues to improve / remains at or above 90% so that [Forename] has the best possible opportunities to access education. If we can do anything to continue to help you with this, or if you wish to discuss any concerns, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Name

of

Attendance

Lead/SLT

Job Title

## Appendix C: DfE Attendance Codes

The following codes are based on the current DfE attendance coding framework introduced under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present at the school: morning session	Pupil is present at morning registration.
\	Present at the school: afternoon session	Pupil is present at afternoon registration.
L	Late arrival before the register has closed	Pupil arrives late after the register has been taken but before the register has closed.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than school for educational provision arranged by the local authority.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit or trip organised or approved by the school.
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another school or setting where they are also registered.
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking approved employment or performance activity during school hours.
M	Medical or dental appointment	Pupil is attending a medical or dental appointment.
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment.
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination.
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend.
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is absent from school for part of the session due to a time-limited part-time timetable.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Pupil has been granted leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child travelling with parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness, including physical or mental health illness.
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made.
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance.
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance and the transport normally provided is unavailable.
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open.
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil is absent because the school is unexpectedly closed, for example due to adverse weather.
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend because they are in police detention, remanded



Code	Definition	Scenario
		to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law.
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	Pupil is unable to attend due to an unavoidable cause not covered by another code.
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday that has not been approved by the school.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes. This code must be followed up and amended once the reason is known.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given should be recorded using another authorised code.
U	Arrived after registration closed	Pupil arrived after the register closed but before the end of the session. This is an unauthorised absence.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined the school yet but has been registered for administrative purposes.
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closure known and planned in advance, including school holidays.

### **Approval and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher, senior attendance champion, proprietor and directors. It will also be reviewed earlier where there are changes to statutory guidance, attendance regulations, safeguarding expectations, local authority procedures or independent school inspection requirements.

The school will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through attendance data, safeguarding records, behaviour information, pupil progress, parental engagement, local authority feedback and inspection readiness review.