

High Ercall Primary School



Attendance Policy 2024-25

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| Date of Policy Creation | 1 st September 24 | Named Responsibility | Claire Machin |
| Date of review completion | 1 st September 24 | Named Responsibility | Sarah Roberts |
| Inception of new Policy | 4 th September 24 | Named Responsibility | |
| Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body | Full Governors: 24 th September 24 | | |

For reference: These acronyms are within the policy:

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| NAP | Nominated Attendance Person |
| EWO | Education Welfare Officer |
| AST | Attendance Support Team |

“Every Day Counts and Every Child Matters”

This policy applies to all children registered at High Ercall Primary School. It is available to all parent/carers on our website and by hard copy on request. At High Ercall Primary School we inspire and nurture all our children to become aspirational life-long learners through an inclusive, ambitious and engaging curriculum.

School Mission Statement

“High Expectations, High Ercall”

High Ercall Primary School provides a safe and secure environment, in which our happy and confident children are nurtured and valued as unique individuals. Our children learn to become **resilient**, self-assured and **respectful** of all, thriving on the high expectations of behavior and learning which are evident across school. Our values-based curriculum nurtures curiosity and creativity by inspiring, challenging and engaging the children. Our children take **responsibility** for their learning and work in partnership with their parents and the school. They are equipped with the skills to **reflect** upon themselves as learners, and to become **resourceful** young people ready to make a positive contribution to their community and the world around them.

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of 96.6%* and above.
- Increase parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly.
- Ensure that our policy applies to all children, including Reception aged pupils, in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies to improve attendance.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- Celebrate weekly class attendance percentages and award attendance trophy in whole school assemblies and share weekly attendance winners onto the school newsletter.
- Report attendance to parents on the pupil annual school reports.
- Promote good attendance through new parent welcome meetings, parents’ evenings and newsletters.

*This target rate is subject to change each academic year

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders manage transition and settle into their next stage of education more successfully.

As a Governing Body we aim to:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support school to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school cultures.

- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure all school staff receive training on attendance.
- Support school staff in monitoring and responding to attendance concerns by appointing an Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Parents/Carers should:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling 'unwell' is not enough.
- Telephone or email on the first morning of any absence by 9.15am informing us of the reason; 'ill/unwell' is not sufficient. This is to ensure our registration coding is accurate.
- Continue to contact the school daily by 9.15am when your child is absent.
- Make all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Provide evidence of these appointments and notify the school not less than 24 hours in advance. Without proof of the appointment, the absence will not be authorised. If it is unavoidable for your child to miss school for the purposes of a medical appointment the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Not take a planned holiday during term time unless exceptional circumstances.
- Provide medical evidence where the illness/absence is frequent or prolonged.
- Ensure we have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and emergency contact details. We should hold 2 contact numbers, at least, for each child.

Reporting an Absence

Please telephone the school office on **01952 387570** and speak to a member of staff stating the full reason for absence. You can also email the school office at **a2051@taw.org.uk**. This needs to be completed on every day of absence before 9.15am. It is not sufficient to inform the class teacher. All year groups must follow this procedure. Reporting of absence is the responsibility of parents/carers.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.

School Times

- Morning: 8.45 am – 12.15pm
- Afternoon: 1.15 am – 3.15 pm

Children should not be left in the playground before 8.40am as no adult will be on duty before this time. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gates by 8.50 am at the latest. The register will be taken promptly at 8.55 am and the school day will start on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

Late Arrivals

- From 8.45am the pedestrian gates will be staffed by a member of Senior Management
- Children that are not in class on time for the register will be marked late. (L code)
- All gates will be closed at 9.00 am.

Pupils arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late and receive an L code and minutes of lateness recorded. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Parents remain responsible for their child’s punctuality. All reasons for lateness can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness. Persistent lateness will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. A meeting may also be arranged with the Head teacher.

Collection information

Collection from School

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. All pupils are brought directly to the school playground by their class teachers/club leaders and handed one by one to parents. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school will make every attempt to contact parents and carers, but we are then obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety i.e. the local police station. We will share concerns with other agencies.




If you are running late or unavoidably delayed, please keep the school office informed.

Pick Up Arrangements

Please inform the school office at the start of the school day if there are any changes to your regular pick-up arrangements. Please only contact the school office during the teaching day if your arrangements have been changed in an emergency. This minimises the disruption caused to the children’s learning as all new arrangements have to be communicated through to the class.

High Ercall’s Attendance Team

If you are worried about your child/children’s attendance the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with a member of our attendance team who may be able to offer support, help and advice. Class teachers will also support with any worries which are impacting on your child's attendance.

| Mrs Johnson | Mrs Machin | Mrs Roberts |
|---|--|---|
| Administrator | Business Manager | Headteacher |
|  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks the registers and makes first day contact calls to establish reasons for absence where no contact has been made by parent/carer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks the MIS system and attendance daily with Mrs Johnson • Attends an EWO attendance meeting to monitor children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the school’s Senior Attendance Champion and leads attendance across the school |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enters codes into register for each child to ensure registers are accurate. • Prints attendance percentages for celebrations of classes in assembly on a Friday | <p>punctuality and children with attendance of 90% and below, every 3 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees attendance and liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) - Rebecca Giles • Liaison with parents to offer support • Completion of a yearly action plan • Organises an annual meeting with our EWO and new Reception starters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a clear vision for attendance improvement alongside The Governing Body • Evaluates and monitors expectations and processes • Has an oversight of data analysis • Devises specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data • Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues alongside Mrs Machin • Delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families through the Early Help offer • Liaises with the school EWO with Mrs Machin • Shares attendance data with the Governing Body and action planning |
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High Ercall's Attendance Team will:

- Follow up the unexplained absence by phone call, email, and letters as necessary.
- Telephone all listed contacts on a pupil's records if the number one contact is unobtainable and send emails to contacts.
- In cases where there is a concern for the vulnerability of the pupil additional measures should be utilised to ensure the reasons for absence are confirmed and the school will consider contacting any additional services who support the family e.g. social worker, strengthening families worker
- Make a referral to the EWO in order to conduct a home visit, where there are persistent concerns or an absence remains unexplained or unclear.
- Remind parent/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the school website.
- Publish each child's attendance percentage on her/his annual school report.
- Meet every three weeks with the Education Welfare Officer and discuss all pupil's attendance. The Education Welfare Officer will inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality. Children with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees. Attendance will be regularly monitored for these children.
- In the first instance we will discuss the absenteeism with the Education Welfare Officer and may send a 'SAL1' letter to all pupils whose attendance drops below 95%. The pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored by the NAP and EWO. If attendance does not improve, or falls again below 90%, we may send a further 'SAL2' letter, which requires parents/carers to provide medical evidence for absence. We may also consider the use of a Notice to Improve and/or Penalty Notices to enforce an improvement in attendance if concerns continue. This will always be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Where explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or where absence persists, school staff may invite the parents/carers to an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) in school to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a pupil from attending school. If parent/carers do not attend or send apologies, a referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team (AST) via the Education Welfare Officer.

- The Headteacher, EWO or NAP will contact parent(s) where there are problems of lateness, either by telephone or by the standard letter. Persistent lateness can be as detrimental to a pupil's education as poor attendance.
- We will share data with the "DFE Wonde" attendance software using pupil data and school comparison data. We will use available local and national figures to benchmark our attendance performance as well as to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- We may refer to additional support for families where this may resolve attendance concerns. This could include Strengthening Families, School Nursing Service or any external agency who can provide support. Referrals will always be discussed with parents.
- Continuing attendance concerns with no improvement, or a lack of engagement with support, may result in the issue of Local Authority warning notices, an interview under caution and/or prosecution in the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Gaps in learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement. Such low attendance is well below our school expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters.

Regular Attendance

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school. (Supreme Court Ruling April 2017).

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent.

(Registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the Education Act 1996). *"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."* A pupil accruing unauthorised absence is an offence for the parent.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term-time holiday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)

- Where there is no explanation for absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

Part-Time Attendance

High Ercall Primary School does not promote part-time attendance unless prescribed by an ECHP or built into a short term modified timetable to support a pupil with medical needs.

Exceptional Leave – Term Time Leave of Absence

Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school office. These are also available on the school website. DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence.

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of High Ercall Primary School support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered individually and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

Penalty Notice Framework

In line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10-week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed below.

From August 19th 2024 the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'.

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.

- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 which must be paid within 28 days.
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – however, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

Removing barriers to attendance

In line with the ethos of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', we will offer support to families to overcome any barriers to attendance. Every family and every situation is different, so your support will be tailored to your needs. We will always start with a conversation, listening to your concerns and identifying your family's needs. Sometimes, all of the support a family might need can be provided by school. In other cases, with your consent, we may suggest or signpost you to external services who are more specialised in the area that you would like help with. Parents/carers can approach any member of staff who will help you to explore the support you need.

SEND and Disadvantaged children

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

Children Missing Education

In accordance with the DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidelines 2016: schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the Local Authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register after making 'reasonable enquiries', to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Monitoring attendance is an essential part of safeguarding children at High Ercall Primary School. In accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, we shall notify Family Connect if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register. We will also consider unexplained absence as a potential child protection or safeguarding concern, including and in particular any child missing 10 days or more.

Admissions and Joining/Leaving High Ercall Primary

Joining High Ercall Primary School

The LA Admissions Team co-ordinate all school transfers and a transfer application should be completed by the parent via the online portal via the Telford and Wrekin Council website.

Once the school place is offered via Telford and Wrekin Council and the pupil commences at High Ercall Primary School, the NAP will update the SAMS admission portal of an on-roll date.

Leaving High Ercall Primary School

If your child is leaving our school (other than to go to Secondary School) parents are asked to:

- Complete a Leavers Form (which can be obtained from the school office). This asks for comprehensive information about new school details, address details and leaving date.
- When pupils leave and we do not have information about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education.' This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Telford and Wrekin Council Attendance Support Team, the Police and other services to try and locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

“Every Day Counts and Every Child Matters”

Appendix 2

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send the request form below to the Headteacher. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **before** the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request). In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) Guidance '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024)*' states that: *Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.* Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy supports that view. Where such requests are made, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances** before the leave is granted, if the leave is granted the Headteacher has the discretion to agree the duration of that leave.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents therefore, need to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time, the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
 - whether the child is compulsory school age;
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
 - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, there is an expectation that all schools involved will communicate and all agree a decision whether to authorise or not. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any leave requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant the leave. but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave in term time period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**
7. Should the School decide **not to grant the leave** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 per parent per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

Request for Leave during Term Time

Date.....

To: The Headteacher of:.....(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name)

from (date) to (date) for school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) and (parent/carer).....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) School(s)

.....

.....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school

Current Attendance.....% Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of unauthorised absence sessions during previous 10 school weeks

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed?

What action are other schools taking?

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Job Title.....

Print Name Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent

Any notes

