ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026-2027

Henry Chadwick Primary School supports the Staffordshire guidelines with regard to Attendance and Attainment.

This policy aims 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

Principles of Attendance at Henry Chadwick:

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other polices related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through the use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents and carers to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), where required, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.
- A minutes late report will also be generated for individual pupils to promote punctuality and to maximise learning time.

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
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- 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
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
    - Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
    - Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising Carole Jones to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- 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 '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 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 is Mrs Jane Jane and can be contacted via telephone on 01543 490354

Parents' or Carers' Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day. If these are during the day, a copy of the appointment letter must be provided to the school office.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up-to-date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so do performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

Admissions Register:

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise,

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for their absence. There are two main categories of attendance:

- Authorised Absence – when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- Unauthorised Absence – when the school has not received a satisfactory reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

Attendance data and targets:

Henry Chadwick have set an attendance target of 96.5% for 2026 2027

Henry Chadwick 2025 – 2026

School Attendance	95%

Definition of persistent absence:

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions.

Severe absentees are defined as those pupils missing 50% or more of possible sessions.

School Specific Procedures related to attendance:
The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- The school expects parents to make contact if a child is ill and unable to attend school, preferably before 9am (leaving a message on the office answer machine if necessary).
- The parents of a child who is absent without having notified school will be contacted directly by the school office staff by 9.30am. This will ensure that the child is safe and at home for a legitimate reason. It is important that parents/carers inform school on a daily basis if their child in going to be absent, unless notified of a longer absence on the first day – e.g. in the case of chicken pox.
- Children should arrive in school at the allotted time for their year group.
- Staggered start and finish times are as follows (this practice has been continued post-Covid due to the positive impact from a smooth dismissal and safeguarding point of view). Timings take into account that all children should be in school for 32.5 hours per week - this is equivalent to 8.45am - 3.15pm each day.
  It is with these hours in mind that our staggered timetable has been organised.
  Parents should ensure that children arrive no later than your start time and don't collect children any earlier than the finish time apart from when agreed for exceptional circumstances. Earlier arrival from 8.30am onwards for any year group is acceptable. The school gates will be locked at 8.55am.

EYFS - 8.45 – 3.20 - registration will close at 8.55am

Year 1 and 2 - 8.50 – 3.25 - registration will close at 8.55am

Year 3 and 4 -8.45 – 3.20 - registration will close at 8.55am

Year 5 and 6 - 8.35 – 3.15 - registration will close at 8.55am

- Registers will close at 8.55am, when the gates are closed; children arriving after the registers have closed, between 8.55am and 9.15am will be recorded in the Attendance book as late (SIMS will show L with the number of minutes late). Children arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session. This information is used to generate a number of SIMS Reports at the end of each month, including reports which are monitored by the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer.
- If notification is received that a child is absent through illness but there is information or a concern that the child is on holiday the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A letter will be given to parent stating that they will need to provide evidence to have the coding changed.
- Children taking part in sporting tournaments or other performances outside of school must complete a request for absence form and be in possession of the relevant Local Authority Licence.
- The Attendance Book is also used to record children who arrive after registration/leave during the day for medical/dental appointments/due to illness.
- Attendance data information is included in every Headteacher's Report to Governors. The policy is reviewed annually by the LGB. Half-termly attendance is reported to The Primitas Learning Partnership.
- The Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.
- Parents are encouraged to make medical or dental appointments outside the school day. If appointments are made within the school day, we will request evidence and children should attend for school before and after an appointment depending on the timing and whereabouts of the appointment venue.
- Attendance data is analysed half-termly so that patterns and trends can be acted upon.
- Attendance meetings will be arranged with the SLT for children with attendance below 85%. Letters will be sent to parents of children with attendance under 90% to offer support and assistance, where required.

- Leave of absence forms are available in the main office or from the school's website for requests for leave. **These will only be granted in the case of exceptional circumstances. All unauthorised absences will be considered for the issuing of a penalty notice.**

Penalty Notices may be considered if there are:

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it 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 (10 sessions) or a lower number of sessions if a pattern of absences is evident.
- 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 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 who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

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.

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
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Links to Important Documentation:

- Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices

- Department for Education Guidance – Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers

Reviewed **July 2026 (Vicki Barnes)**

Reviewed Under Chairs Powers October 2026

Adopted at LGB **November 2026**

Next Review **July 2027 – unless government guidelines change in which case it will be reviewed sooner.**