



Attendance Policy



Horndale County Infant and Nursery School

January 2025
Review January 2026
Approved by Chair of Governors February 2025

Horndale County Infant and Nursery School Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs L Lakey	Head Teacher	01325 300228
Mrs M Oughton	Secretary	01325 300228
Mr I Shaw	Governor with responsibility for attendance	Via School

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: Mrs M Oughton, Secretary. Telephone 01325 300228 or email m.oughton@horndale.durham.sch.uk

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs M Oughton	Secretary / Signpost where to obtain help	01325 300228
Mrs L Lakey	Head Teacher	01325 300228

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupils whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Horndale County Infant and Nursery School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 9 a.m. to 3.15 p.m. Pupils should be in school and ready to start learning from 9 a.m.

Registration is 9 a.m. The register will close at 9.30 a.m. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used.

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9.30 a.m. Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact 01325 300228 if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the electronic register.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

Contact will be made by the Secretary to the parent/carer to see why and how this can improve.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

If improvement is not made, a possible referral to the local authority for action if unauthorised will be considered.

Term dates and planned Inset days

Details of where parents can find term dates, Inset days etc are sent electronically on our Newsletter, but can also be accessed on our website www.horndale.durham.sch.uk

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form. The form can be collected from the school office.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion, although **The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance**. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School either by telephone 01325 300228 or email m.oughton@horndale.durham.sch.uk providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school, by telephone and/or email.

Doctor/dentist appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary.

If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

Depending on the reason for absence, such as illness with a recommended time frame to be absent from school – parent/carer is not required to inform us on a daily basis of the absence. If the pupil is absent for other reasons, contact should be made every couple of days to keep the school notified.

No reason for absence provided

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

At Horndale County Infant and Nursery School we promote good attendance in a number of ways.

- ☺ Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- ☺ Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- ☺ Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters, website and emails home
- ☺ Promote the benefits of high attendance to pupils by rewarding children with 100% attendance each half term (usually ice cream)
- ☺ Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- ☺ Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements

Attendance data

At School, we use the Arbor School Management System (SMS). We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF, etc.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence/punctuality

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent. If there are no identifiable reasons, a letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head for a 'planning meeting' This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality/absence.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent and have not engaged with school will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.

If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This Policy recognises the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts, it will be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

For example, safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, inclusive learning etc

APPENDIX 1

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Expect

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

Due to the age of our children, the attendance of our pupils is usually dependent on Parents/ Carers.

What is expected of the Parents/Carers?

- ☺ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- ☺ To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- ☺ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- ☺ To work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- ☺ To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for leave of absence during term time will be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- ☺ To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as Assessments and Phonics Tests.
- ☺ To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

What is expected of the School?

- ☺ To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- ☺ To meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- ☺ To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- ☺ To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absences with effective monitoring and intervention.
- ☺ To consistently record authorise and unauthorised absences
- ☺ To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- ☺ To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- ☺ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- ☺ To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

Monitor

Recording

An electronic register is taken in classes. The register can have an audit trail of changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed.

The Secretary reviews attendance data for all children to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.

Our school uses this attendance data rigorously to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 96% an emailed letter will be sent to the Parent/Carer advising them of the attendance percentage figure and offering help and support from School. If a child's attendance falls below 93% another emailed letter will be sent. If a child's attendance falls below 90% an emailed letter will be sent and the head teacher will contact the parent.

Pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if, after a two week period there appears to be no improvement, the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s does not attend the meeting or after such a meeting the attendance does not improve a formal referral to the Attendance Improvement Team will be made.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.

Facilitate support

At Horndale County Infant and Nursery School we intend to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school and that this might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

Enforce

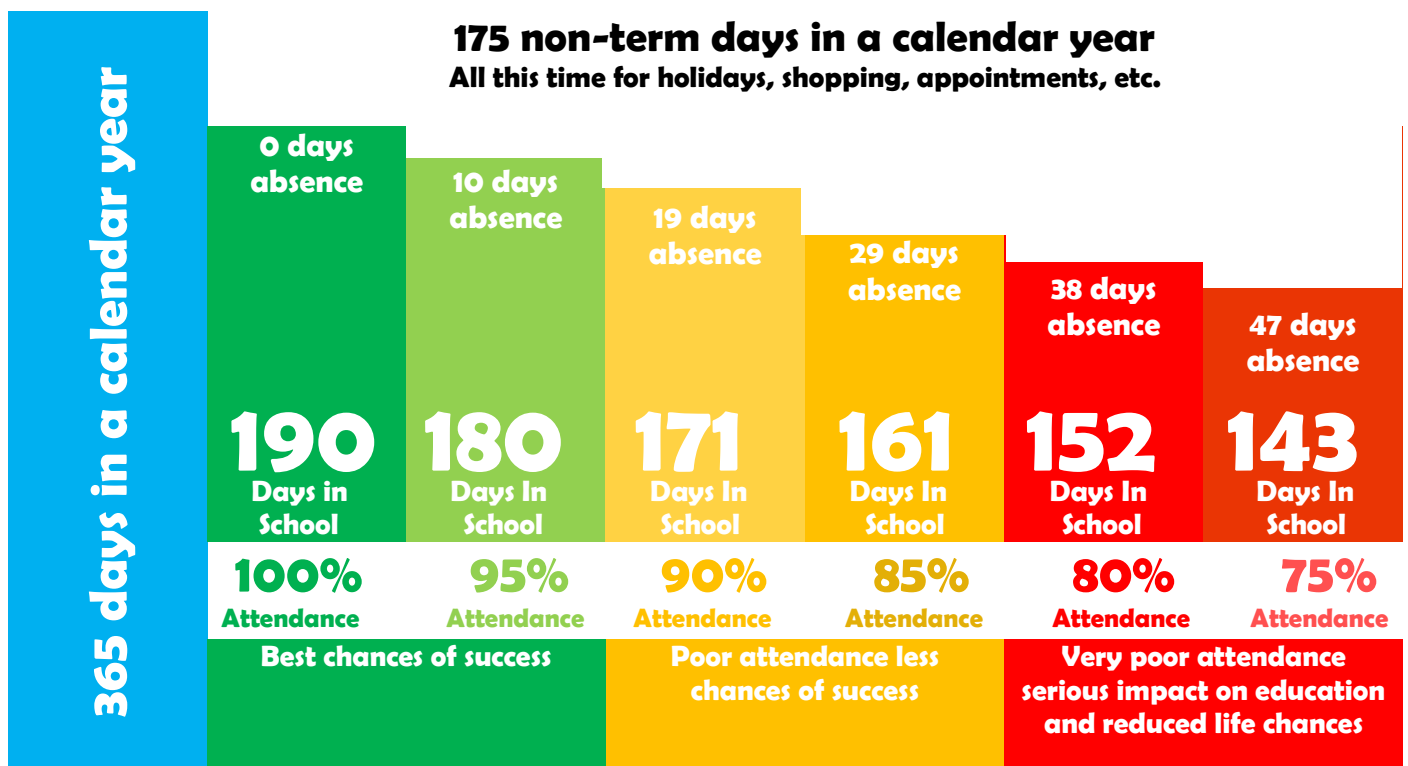
Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. At Horndale, we strive for the highest possible standard of education for all pupils and recognise that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance and punctuality. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will pupils be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Parents and carers play a key role in ensuring infant-aged pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time.

- ☺ Gives your child the best possible start in life
- ☺ Your child is able to keep up with their work - children who are late or absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress, their ability to develop at the same rate as their peers and meet expectations for their age
- ☺ Helps develop friendship and social skills



DID YOU KNOW? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.7%



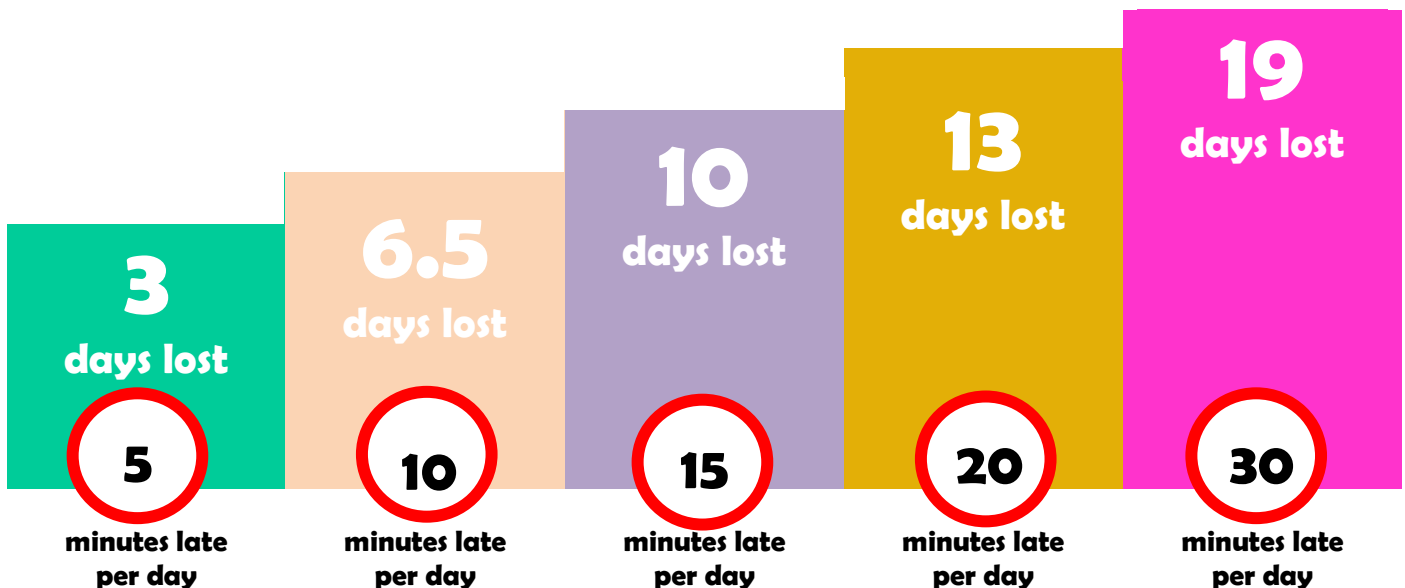
PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

As well as regular attendance at school, parents need to ensure that their child arrives at school in good time each morning. Being late for school has many negative consequences:

- Gets the day off to a bad start
- Increases stress and upset for the child
- Affects the child's overall confidence
- Disrupts the learning of other class members
- Creates bad habits which could lead to poor attendance
- Confusion for your child as work or activities might have been started

Don't be Late Through the Gate!

School doors open at 8.50 a.m. with the registers at 9 a.m. Better still, come to our free Breakfast Club. Doors open at 8.30 a.m. and are closed at 8.40 a.m.



Every school day counts BUT every minute is equally important!