



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body:

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Date: Aug 2022

Head teacher

Signed:

Date: Aug 2022

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This document is to enable the Governing Body of the school to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under Section 175 and that the school complies with legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of children of the Education Act 2002. The review of this policy will be as and when required in response to national requirements and in light of continuous school-based monitoring and evaluation data.

Based on a LA model policy (April 2010)

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Exhall Junior School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## **2 SCHOOL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Exhall Junior School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### **2.2 Attendance Lead**

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body as part of the Head Teacher's report. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **2.3 Registration**

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Class teachers (who take the registers) and office staff (who process the registers) are responsible for the completing the attendance registers.

ii) The register will be called promptly at 8.55am and 1.00pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at 9.30am and 1.30pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.5 on page 5).

### **2.4 Categorising absence**

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked no reason given unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. Where no reason is given by a parent/carer

after 10 days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Exhall Junior School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Exhall Junior School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

a) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

b) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand, evidence to support the appointment will be required);

c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. school closure including extreme weather conditions;

d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;

e) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent after a period of 2 weeks;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil being taken shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## 2.6 Staff training

The Office Attendance Lead will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **3. COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

3.1 The Office Attendance Lead will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body (see para. above). The half termly report should include commentary against the school target of 96%. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs, Looked after Children and those who are known to be vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Exhall Junior School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

#### **4.2 First-day calling**

Exhall Junior School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be called first, if no reply an email is sent on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will leave a message for parents/carers to contact the school as soon as possible with a reason for absence. If no reason is provided within 10 days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

#### **4.3 School Strategies to Tackle Absence**

The Office Attendance Lead is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Exhall Junior School intervene in non-attendance at an early stage (see Appendix 1).

Exhall Junior School will organise Attendance Review Meetings to intervene in levels of non-attendance/punctuality when parents will be invited to discuss the issues of the attendance. During these meetings we will look to discuss barriers to children's attendance and how we can support families in overcoming these. Further support may be offered in school and/or by external agencies.

#### **4.4 Referral to the Warwickshire Attendance Service**

If there continues to be unauthorised absences (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS). The WAS team will work with the school and families to improve attendance. If there is no improvement in attendance from the school target that has been set WAS will send reminder letters regarding a child's attendance, set a formal target period within which attendance would need to significantly improve. If there is no improvement legal action may be taken. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (ie the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more.

#### **4.5 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in their classroom for registration at 8:55am, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who

arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (iii) on page 2) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be marked as arrived after register is closed. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. A reminder letter informing parents about the importance of punctuality will be sent for those who have arrived late on two or more occasions that week. If punctuality does not improve a meeting will be arranged by the Attendance Lead to see the head teacher to discuss reasons and strategies to improve. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to WAS.

4.6 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main office. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.

4.7 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day are signed out at the main office.

#### 4.8 Celebrating Attendance

a) Each week in assembly we celebrate the children's attendance for the previous week.

b) At the end of each half term (6 times per year), individual pupil attendance is celebrated with Gold, Silver and Bronze awards.

c) At the end of the academic year, we celebrate children who have had 99%-100% attendance for the whole year.

d) Throughout the year we also celebrate improved attendance by way of recognizing individual pupils.

### 5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

5.1 The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

5.2 The Headteacher shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. All applications of this nature need to be made using the WCC Request for Leave of Absence.

5.3 Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

5.4 The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted. At Exhall Junior, this will be a maximum of 10 days in any two-year period.

5.5 The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

5.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.

5.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

5.8 It is important to note; Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child.

5.9 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

## **6 PARENTS' / CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

6.2 Exhall Junior School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

6.3 Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify the school on the first day of absence by telephoning the school, leaving a message on the school answer phone if necessary
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The school will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

A Guide for Parents/Carers is attached (see Appendix 1).

## **7 PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

7.2 Pupils should attend school on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence.

## **8 GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 175 (2) - The governing board of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## 9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### Exhall Junior School Student REGISTRATION/ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

DAILY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY
Morning attendance is input onto SIMS.	Teacher
Record relevant details for any children arriving late in the 'late' book.	Office
Input 'L' as appropriate against individual children's records on SIMS. Record the reason, number of minutes late and dinner choice.	Office
Retrieve all sickness notifications received, input onto SIMS.	Office
Make a note of all children with an absence code of 'N' – unauthorised absences. (Check whiteboard for any notifications of medical appointments etc).	Office
Ring home to find out the reason for any unexplained unauthorised absences.	Office
Arrivals after 9.30 am need to be recorded as 'U' – Late After Registers Closed on SIMS. Record the reason, number of minutes late and dinner choice.	Office
Afternoon attendance is input onto SIMS.	Teacher
Input attendance where manual input is required e.g. where Junior Jam take the register.	Office
If there are any children with an absence code of 'N' in the afternoon ONLY check the signing out book. If there is no known reason for unauthorised absence raise the alarm.	Office
WEEKLY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY
Every Friday print off manual attendance and dinner registers for the next week and put into the register folders ready for Monday morning.	Office
Every Friday file that week's manual attendance & dinner registers in the 'Registers' file.	Office



HALF TERMLY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY
Run a report detailing % attendance for all children for the previous half term.	Office
<p>Issue letters for all children who have between 94 – 86% attendance using the standard letter template.</p> <p>For children whose attendance falls below 85% initiate Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the absence mgmt. process dependent on history.</p>	Office
<p>Run a report detailing all instances of unauthorised absences - code of 'N' or 'O' for the previous half term.</p> <p>Issue letters for all children with instances of unexplained unauthorised absences – Code 'N' or 'O' using the standard letter. (There should not be any instances in the afternoon only).</p>	Office
ANNUAL ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY
Run an attendance report for all those with 99% attendance and over (check there are no missing marks before the report is run).	Office

**EXHALL JUNIOR SCHOOL**  
**ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**  
**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration, school gates open at 8.35am. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.55am and the afternoon register at 1.00pm

What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 8.55am in the morning and 1.00pm in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between 8.55am and 9.30am he/she will be marked late (before registers close).

If your child arrives after 9.30am he/she will be marked as late (after registers close) – this will count as an absence on your child's attendance record.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office to register. If a pupil is persistently late a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher to discuss reasons for lateness and to address strategies from improving punctuality.

Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We expect parents/carers to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone/email you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive a verbal or written explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's attendance register and Junior of year report.

What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement (short period)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate/appointment letter.

What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays etc.

Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences and will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. Note: you can leave a message on the school's answer phone if you wish to report an absence before the office opens at 8.30am.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child as these are a vital link between school and home.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

You may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with our Family Learning Mentor. We may also be able to signpost you to additional support outside of school to someone who works with families if attendance difficulties arise.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN  
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in **exceptional circumstances**
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

**Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.**

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_

First Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (they can only be exceptional circumstances) (see overleaf before completing)

.....  
.....  
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

(For siblings) I have also applied to \_\_\_\_\_ School/Academy for leave of absence for \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert child/children's name)

Signature of resident Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For school use only: NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received by school: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> date of absence requested: ..... Last date of absence requested:.....

Expected date of return to school: .....

Absence Authorised: Yes/No

The reasons for this decision are:.....

- LOA record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/ for other relevant information

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: ..... Date: .....

- Copy of this completed section must be sent back to parent with letter