Hipsburn Primary School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

January 2023

Our School Vision:

"The most valuable gift we can give a learner is to enable them to think for themselves, to care for others and thereby acquire a sense of self-worth and confidence which can be used to benefit both society and the individual."

The school attendance target for 2022-2023 is 96%

Statement of intent

Hipsburn Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Hipsburn Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Hipsburn Primary School believes attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community; our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

Education Act 1996
Equality Act 2010
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
Children and Young Persons Act 1963

<u>**Working together to improve attendance (DFE 2022)**</u>

DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies: ·

Complaints Procedures Policy
Primary Behavioural Policy
Children Missing Education Policy

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Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the Senior Leadership Team - SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the policies and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Adhering to the school policies
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"**Absence**" as: – Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9.20am – Not attending school for any reason.

An "**authorised absence**" as: – An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave. – Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave. – Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave. – An absence due to a family emergency.

An "**unauthorised absence**" as: – Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason. – Truancy before or during the school day. – Absences which have never been properly explained. – Arrival at school after the register has closed. – Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays. – Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed. – Leaving school for no reason during the day.

"Persistent absenteeism" as: Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.45am. Doors close at 8:55am. Pupils will have a morning break at 10.30am which will last until 10:45am, and a lunch break at 11:45am to 12:45pm (EYFS and Key Stage One) and 12.15pm to 1.15pm for Key Stage Two. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark. The afternoon register will be marked at 12:45pm or 1.15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present. Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am (01665 830210) on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

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If a parent informs the school that their child is ill and this is not the case, the absence will be unauthorised.

In line with local authority guidance, the school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence when the attendance is below 96% so that support can be obtained from the Education Welfare Officer if required. It is the responsibility of the parents to obtain this evidence. If no evidence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In the case of Persistent Absenteeism (PA), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the EWO and the Attendance Officer at the start of the new academic year and thereafter. For those children with consecutive persistent absence, medical evidence may be required from the first day of absence in the new academic year. The school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 3 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96% a letter will be sent to parents.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Statutory Attendance Codes used at Hipsburn Primary School

/ Present (am)	Present	In for whole session
\ Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D Dual Education	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
E Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
#: School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y: Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X: Non-compulsory school age	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
Z: Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
- All should attend / No mark recorded	No Mark	No mark for session

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When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal. The Local Authority cannot override any decisions made by the head teacher and therefore any appeals to the Council will be redirected to the school.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances such as in events that are unlikely to occur again. For example:

- a family funeral
- a wedding day (one day per academic year). No authorisation will be given for travel as travel can commence the previous day after school or after registration
- respite for a child in care
- In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form at least one week prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

The head teacher cannot grant leave of absence or authorise any absences which include:

- family holidays
- holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.
- visiting relatives
- birthdays
- shopping including uniform shopping
- closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

In term-time when leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised. Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least one week in advance. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least one week in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out. Temporary late starts or early finishes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Children are not permitted to leave the school premises during lunchtimes.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 1:15pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.

- The following areas will be systematically searched:

All classrooms
All toilets
Changing rooms
The library
Any outbuildings
The school grounds

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance intervention

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target. The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

100% Certificates
Special Attendance Assembly

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, except for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer/headteacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps during break times
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence below 96 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one half term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher may issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The headteacher will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The headteacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance.

The headteacher will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. Our aspirational target for attendance is 100%. Should attendance hit or fall below 96 percent, our attendance procedures will be triggered.

Full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website. This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if deemed necessary by the head teacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2026.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance 'zones' have been set to help us to consistently reward good attendance and manage attendance which needs improvement.

Hipsburn Primary School defines key levels of attendance as:

Attendance	Description	Approximate days lost per year	Approximate weeks lost per year	Approximate numbers of lessons / learning hours missed
99-100%	Excellent	0 to 4	Less than 1	0-20
96-98%	Good	5 to 9	1 to 2	25-40
90-96%	Unsatisfactory	10 to 13	2 to 3	45-100
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4	100+

Working together to improve attendance (DFE 2022)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect
Aspire to high standard of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school ready to learn.

Monitor
Rigorously use attendance data to analyse 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 parents and pupils 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 pupils right to an education.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Hipsburn Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The office is responsible for checking attendance on a weekly basis. A spreadsheet is sent to the Headteacher detailing weekly and termly attendance to date.

2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers with pupils. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Headteacher.

3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Headteacher.

4. Contact is made with the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

5. If a pupil's attendance is recorded as 96 percent, a letter (Letter 1) is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. Parents are given the opportunity to talk to the school to support them with their child's attendance. In line with the local authority guidelines, if a pupil's attendance continues to decline after the initial letter, a second letter (Letter 2) is sent requiring medical evidence for any absence. It is the responsibility of the parents to obtain this evidence. If no evidence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The Attendance Officer will invite parents into school for a formal meeting.

6. If attendance does not improve after this time a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer to support attendance. Parents are required to attend a meeting with the EWO where an agreed monitoring period, and targets are set. If the targets are met a letter is sent home from the school to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.

7. If there is no improvement a fixed-penalty notice may be issued.

8. If a child is recorded as a persistent absentee parents will be invited to an attendance meeting at the beginning of the academic year with our EWO to support attendance for the forthcoming year.