Pound Hill Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Three reasons to read the Attendance Policy are:

1. **Understand attendance expectations** – The school aims for attendance above 95% and expects pupils to attend every day and arrive on time.
2. **Know the rules for absences** – The policy explains which absences can be authorised, including illness, medical appointments and certain exceptional circumstances, and which cannot, such as family holidays.
3. **Know what happens if attendance is poor** – It explains how the school monitors attendance and the possible steps taken when attendance or punctuality becomes a concern, including meetings and potential penalty notices

This policy was adopted on:	December 2022
The policy was reviewed on:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027

Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Recording attendance 5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance 8
7. Attendance monitoring 8
8. Monitoring arrangements 9
9. Links with other policies 9
Appendix 1: attendance codes 9

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- ✓ Promoting good attendance (above 95%)
- ✓ Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ✓ Ensuring every pupil has access to high quality education to which they are entitled
- ✓ Acting early to address patterns of absence
- ✓ Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- ✓ Developing robust relationships with partner agencies to promote attendance and challenge absence

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- ✓ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- ✓ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- ✓ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- ✓ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- ✓ This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ✓ Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- ✓ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- ✓ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- ✓ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- ✓ Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- ✓ Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Safeguarding and Disadvantaged Committee have responsibility for monitoring attendance and promoting high expectations.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ✓ Implementation of this policy at the school
- ✓ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- ✓ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- ✓ Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- ✓ Initiating referrals for Local Authority consideration for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- ✓ Leading attendance across the school
- ✓ Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- ✓ Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- ✓ Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- ✓ Having an oversight of data analysis
- ✓ Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- ✓ Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- ✓ Co-ordinating targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the headteacher and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The Family Liaison Assistant

The Family Liaison Assistant is **responsible for**:

- ✓ Monitoring identified individual pupil's attendance
- ✓ Providing regular attendance updates to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- ✓ Working with Early Help to tackle persistent absence
- ✓ Working with pupils and families to promote good attendance and reduce absence

The Family Liaison Assistant is Vikki Heasman and can be contacted via 07521916043 through email via the school office

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- ✓ recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via BROMCOM. The registers are taken twice a day
- ✓ Morning: 8.30am to 8.40am (registers close at 8.40am)
- ✓ Afternoon: 1pm to 1.05pm
- ✓ Promoting and supporting pupils' positive attitudes towards attendance
- ✓ Setting up support activities for pupils
- ✓ Creating transition activities for identified pupils

3.6 School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- ✓ Record absence information on BROMCOM from:
    - Telephone absence line
    - Email (Office@...)
    - Telephone calls
    - Face to face
- ✓ Record lateness (time and reason) on BROMCOM
- ✓ Identify absent pupils from 8.40am, cross check with reported absences then ring parents by 10am
- ✓ Report vulnerable pupils' absences immediately to SLT/DSL team
- ✓ Collate and send daily absence report to SLT/DSL team
- ✓ Undertake further work to support SLT/DSL if pupils are absent without parental contact
- ✓ Collate and submit referral forms
- ✓ Create parental communication linked to absence
- ✓ Communicate with parents to promote attendance and reduce absence
- ✓ Transfer calls from parents to the Family Liaison Assistant in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ✓ Make sure their child attends every day on time (before 8.30am)
- ✓ Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am and at the latest 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- ✓ Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- ✓ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- ✓ Make sure pupils attend sessions before or following appointments

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- ✓ Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. At the time of taking, it will mark whether every pupil is:

- ✓ Present
- ✓ Absent

Administration staff will amend the register before 10am and at other times under the direction of the Headteacher

- ✓ Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- ✓ Ill
- ✓ Attending a medical appointment
- ✓ Late (before and after) register closes
- ✓ Other reason (As agreed by Local Authority or headteacher)

Any changes to the attendance register must be authorised by the headteacher, be recorded on BROMCOM and will include:

- ✓ The original entry
- ✓ The amended entry
- ✓ The reason for the amendment
- ✓ The date on which the amendment was made
- ✓ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Administration errors will be amended without details recorded. These errors may include:

- ✓ Recording a pupil present or absent incorrectly
- ✓ Incorrect coding

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:

- ✓ Whether the absence is authorised or not
- ✓ The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- ✓ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.40am. The administration staff are responsible for recording late arrivals after 8.40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office no later than 9am. (see also section 7).
Notification can be given:

- ✓ By telephone (including recording on the absence line)

- ✓ By email (office@...)
- ✓ In person

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified. Further illnesses may be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Planned Absence

Medical

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents *must* request this absence at least 5 school days in advance of the appointment unless it is an emergency appointment where as much notice as possible must be given. Proof of appointment must be given to the school office. This may include:

- ✓ Appointment letter
- ✓ Text reminder

Notification can be given:

- ✓ By telephone (including recording on the absence line)
- ✓ By email (office@...)
- ✓ In person

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Religious Observance, Family Holiday or Other Exceptional Circumstances

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Parents must request other absences at least 3 school weeks in advance of the absence unless it is an emergency where as much notice as possible must be given. A Withdrawal from Learning request form must be given to the school office prior to the absence.

Submission of a Withdrawal from Learning Form can be:

- ✓ By email (office@...)
- ✓ In person

Failure to submit a Withdrawal from Learning Form at least 5 school days in advance of an absence (unless an emergency) will result in the request being denied and the absence recorded as unauthorised.

Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- ✓ Before the register has closed will be marked as late (L).
- ✓ After the register has closed will be marked as absent (U)

The time of arrival and reason will be recorded for all lates.

During Attendance Review meetings, pupils who have been late are identified and the context to each late is discussed. Unless in exceptional circumstances, when a pupil is late three times the process of challenging these lates starts. The process will follow but not adhere to the following structure:

- ✓ Late Letter 1 – "inform and remind" of expectations around punctuality
- ✓ Late Letter 2 – "Warn and inform" of changes from "L" to "U" code (time of unauthorised lateness) and risk of referral for FPN
- ✓ Late Letter 3 – "Inform of changes" and that lateness will be recorded as unauthorised (and referral for FPN is appropriate)
- ✓ Persistent Late Letter – where non-punctuality has been persistent, extreme and that following other protocols will not achieve any immediate and significant improvement
- ✓ Meeting with Headteacher
- ✓ Referral for FPN to Local Authority

At all times, communication with FLA is ongoing and supportive developing an understanding of attendance and punctuality requirements and the impact of pupil learning.

4.5 Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- ✓ Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may:
    - Contact the family via the FLA
    - Attend the property
    - Call the police and request a Welfare Check by officers. Where pupils and families have been identified as vulnerable, a request for a welfare check may be initiated immediately the child is identified as absent.
- ✓ Decide whether the absence is approved or not and inform the parents
- ✓ Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- ✓ Review registers on a regular basis to review attendance and attendance codes used, and may contact parents to request explanation for previous absences

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents are expected to access their child's attendance by using the BROMCOM parent portal (My Child at School). This gives a real time attendance report. Parents are able to request an attendance report for their child at the end of each academic year.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a situation where there is no immediate alternative to withdrawing a child from the school and then for only the shortest length of time possible so that other arrangements can be put in place.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 school weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the Withdrawal from Learning Form, accessible from the school office or the school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- ✓ Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- ✓ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ✓ Religious pilgrimage – where the pupil undertakes a pilgrimage as part of their religious duty. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ✓ Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- ✓ Citizenship appointments at embassies
- ✓ Employment opportunities such as modelling but only if attendance does not drop below 95%

- Close family events such as funerals and weddings <u>may</u> be authorised (one day only)

- × Family holidays <u>will not</u> be authorised in any situation

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- ✓ The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- ✓ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- ✓ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Pound Hill Junior School promotes good attendance as part of its culture and ethos. Teachers are responsible for creating a positive and welcoming environment for all pupils. Teachers promote the value of being in school and in class on time.

Pupils are welcomed and praised for improving attendance by Senior Leaders and the Family Liaison Assistant who supports families to develop positive attitudes toward attendance and punctuality. The Family Liaison Assistant is a vital 2-way communication pathway for parents to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns without the formality of meetings with senior leaders and the headteacher.

The school celebrates attendance in Friday Celebration Assemblies through the Class Attendance Award and Most Improved Class awards. Parents have real time access to their child's attendance through My Child at School App. There information displayed on this app will change as, following each registration, the office reviews registers and updates recorded information (codes and reasons).

7. Attendance Monitoring

Explain how your school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. A fortnightly Attendance Review takes place between the Headteacher and the Family Liaison Assistant. Actions are agreed for all identified pupils.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school:

- ✓ Reviews all pupils through the Attendance Review Process and undertakes individual agreed actions
- ✓ Analyses attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, reporting this to Governors
- ✓ Identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children or individuals whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- ✓ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support and challenge to these pupils and their families
- ✓ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- ✓ Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, school leaders and Governors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- ✓ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- ✓ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- ✓ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- ✓ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

During Attendance Review meetings, pupils whose attendance has dropped below 95% are reviewed and the context to each pupil is discussed. Unless in exceptional circumstances, when a pupil's attendance has dropped below 90% the process of challenging this absence starts. The process will follow but not adhere to the following structure:

- ✓ Absence Letter 1 – "inform and remind" of expectations around punctuality
- ✓ Absence Letter 2 – "Warn and request" that all illness absences require proof of attendance at a hospital or GP surgery.
- ✓ Absence Letter 3 – "Inform of changes" and that all absences will be recorded as unauthorised (and referral for FPN is appropriate)

- ✓ Persistent Absence Letter – where absence has been persistent, extreme and that following other protocols will not achieve any immediate and significant improvement
- ✓ Meeting with Headteacher
- ✓ Referral for FPN to Local Authority

At all times, communication with FLA is ongoing and supportive developing an understanding of attendance and punctuality requirements and the impact of pupil learning.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum at the start of every academic year by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- ✓ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- ✓ Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed