

Heatherley Primary School



Attendance Policy

2025-2026

Heatherley Primary School Attendance Policy

Heatherley Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all our pupils and we embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We believe that high levels of attendance are best achieved by making our school a safe, happy and exciting place to learn.

For a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. It is important, therefore, that we convey to parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Our attendance target at Heatherley Primary School is 97% which is in line with the national average.

The Senior Leader responsible for championing attendance at our school is Mrs Smith. If you have any questions regarding attendance or require support in improving your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Smith via the school office.

Our School Objectives:

1. To comply with the Pupil Registration Regulations and the requirements of the Local Authority.
2. To encourage and promote maximum attendance in school, as well as punctuality.
3. To promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality amongst pupils and their families.
4. To work with families with persistent and severe absence in conjunction with the Local Authority and offer support where needed.

5. To raise the awareness of the importance of good attendance through assemblies, certificates and awards, Personal Social & Health Education, parents meetings and newsletters.
6. To include improved / good attendance and punctuality with whole school awards.
7. To monitor and evaluate attendance and punctuality and analyse how this affects our pupil's attainment.

Legal Requirements and Responsibilities of Heatherley Primary School

- The school has a duty to complete attendance registers twice a day to show which pupils are present and for any who are absent through either authorised or unauthorised absence. This information is reported to the Local Authority. School has a legal obligation to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to contact the parent, have not received a leave of absence form or have general concerns about the absence.
- It is the school's responsibility to effectively monitor attendance and to inform parents and Governors of their findings. School will regularly check attendance, looking at the following:
 1. Absence due to illness
 2. Lateness and punctuality
 3. Unauthorised absence
 4. Frequent absence
 5. Patterns of absence
 6. Collecting children early
 7. Holidays during term time
 8. When a child's attendance falls below 90% (the government's definition for persistent absence)
- The Governors are required to ensure that the school is properly maintaining the attendance registers and making the necessary return to the Local Authority.

Legal Requirements and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- The law states that once a parent admits their child to a school, they have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, except in allowable circumstances such as credible illness or being given permission in exceptional circumstances to be absent.
- Parents and carers are responsible for their child arriving to school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn.
- Parents and carers are responsible for informing school on day 1 of an absence, stating the reason and likely return date. This can be done via our designated answer phone or via email to office@heatherley.notts.sch.uk
- Parents must notify the school if their child is going on holiday, even though this will likely be recorded as unauthorised. If we do not know where your child is, we may have to visit your home to perform a safe and well check. If we suspect you are on holiday and you are unable to prove otherwise, we may issue a Fixed Term Penalty Notice.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

MORNING REGISTRATION

Pupils are expected to be in the classroom at 8.50 a.m. ready to start the day.

A full attendance mark will be given up to 9.00 a.m.

Registers close at 9.00 am.

After 9.00 a.m. a late mark will be issued.

After 9.15 am the late mark will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Children arriving after 9.00 am should enter school through the main entrance and sign in our arrival screen so their mark can be recorded.

AFTERNOON REGISTRATION

Pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 are expected to be in class at 1.30 p.m.

Pupils in Lower key Stage 2 are expected to be in class at 1.00 pm.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 are expected to be in class at 12.30 p.m.

ABSENCE

The law states that only the school can approve an absence (the Headteacher), not parents. If doubts remain about the explanation for absence or where no explanation is forthcoming, the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

An Authorised Absence is:

- A credible illness of the pupil (not the parent/carer)
- The pupil had leave of absence granted by the Headteacher
- Medical and dental appointments which cannot be made out of school time and evidence is provided
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong

In addition, the school will consider authorising absence in the following cases:

- Bereavement within the immediate family
- External examination (eg music)

An Unauthorised Absence is:

- Time off for holidays
- Time off for birthday celebrations
- Lack of transport / difficulty in getting to school.
- Leaving early in an afternoon with no valid reason.
- Absence due to parents having minor illnesses so are unable to bring children to school
- Children avoiding aspects of the curriculum eg swimming, PE, visits etc

An absence may also be classified as unauthorised if there has been a consistent period of absence with the same verbal reason but no additional evidence provided or where a senior member of staff has reason to believe that the reason given for absence is inaccurate.

Holidays during term time

Governors of Heatherley Primary School have agreed to authorize 5 days holiday leave, to those who request it (and complete a holiday request form), during the last full week of the Summer Term (July). We hope by doing this it will support Heatherley families affected by the cost of living crisis, allowing everyone to take a holiday without the child missing too much valuable education.

If additional holidays are taken through the year, parents will be subject to the same penalty notice terms as listed below (see page 7).

CONCERNS

All concerns about suspected unauthorised absence or a pattern of absence or persistent lateness should be raised with the School Business Manager, Mrs Smith & the Headteacher, Mrs James.

The appropriate steps will be followed including writing to parents and/or inviting them into school for a meeting. If concerns persist the monitoring process will begin. This may include issuing a fixed penalty notice.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Heatherley Primary School will follow all of Nottinghamshire County Council's Children Missing From Education protocols when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

MONITORING & FINING PROCEDURES

First Day Absence

Parents of children who are absent are encouraged to telephone the office before 9.00 am and leave a message on our dedicated absence line as early as possible or email the office at office@heatherley.notts.sch.uk. Please give a short description. "Poorly" is not sufficient. If no reason is provided, school staff will send a text message asking parents to contact school immediately. Parents are also asked to provide an estimated return to school date.

Third Day Absence

Parents are asked to contact the school office via email or telephone with an update regarding their child's health or to clarify the reason for absence. School staff will contact parents if no update is provided.

Home Visits

If a child is missing from school in excess of 3 days, school staff may choose to perform a home visit to check on the welfare of the pupil and discuss their return to school. If no one is home and we suspect you are on holiday, we will arrange to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice once the absence reaches in excess of 4 days.

Poor percentage attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 90% school will write to the parent and advise them. If there is a failure to improve, school will begin a ten week monitoring process which may involve meetings between parents and staff and possible outside agencies. Failure to improve after the ten week monitoring will involve a referral to The Early Help Unit or the Education Enforcement Team.

Fining for holidays and persistent unauthorised absence

From August 2024, The Department for Education released new statutory guidance for ALL schools in the country that states:

- If a child has a holiday in excess of four days in a ten week period, the parents will be subject to a penalty notice of £160.00 per child per parent (if paid within 28 days, this may be reduced to £80).
- If a child has a second holiday within three rolling years of the first holiday, parents will be subject to a penalty notice of £160 per child per parent (no reductions applicable).
- If a child has three holidays or more within three rolling years of the first holiday, parents will be subject to prosecution and a fine of up to £2500 each.

- From August 2024, all parents and carers will be subject to penalty notices, regardless of their occupation and holiday pattern.
- Children who have repeated poor attendance may also be subject to the same penalty notices.
- All funds raised by penalty notices goes to the Local Authority and not to school.

Appendix

Summary of Roles

Role of the Classteacher

- To complete electronic registers in full twice each day
- To reward good attendance and punctuality
- To investigate reasons for absence where possible – talk to parents / child
- To report concerns to the School Business Manager or Headteacher

Role of the Headteacher

- To monitor attendance with the School Business Manager on a monthly basis
- To report termly to the Governing Body
- To feedback regularly to staff
- To make families more aware of their responsibilities
- To reward and encourage pupils:-
 - 100% attendance certificates and prizes

Role of the School Business Manager

- To monitor attendance / lateness each month
- To ensure admin staff record absences correctly
- To ensure parents are contacted on the first day of absence if we have received no contact from them
- To ensure letters are sent to parents in line with LA guidelines
- Keep a log of children arriving late / leaving school early
- Liaise with the Headteacher / SENCO to any patterns of absence (i.e. recurrent day, illness, unusual reasons for absence, length of absence etc)
- Collect data each half term showing whole class attendance levels and individual children's percentage
- Complete LA data returns as and when required
- Liaise with Education Enforcement to issue Fixed Penalty Notices as required

Role of Governing Body

- To monitor the school's authorised and unauthorised absences in comparison with local and national figures.
- To encourage a positive approach to attendance and punctuality.
- To raise awareness of the need for full attendance in order to achieve a high standard for all pupils.
- To be involved in presenting attendance awards, eg 100% for all year attendance.

Role of Pupils and their Families

- To make sure that the child attends school regularly and on time and keeps the school rules.
- To make sure that the child understands the importance of attending school and that the family do not approve of missing school.
- To let the school know as soon as possible if the child is ill, on the first day of absence and provide an update on day three if applicable.
- To request leave of absence from the school well in advance.
- To take family holidays during school holidays and not during term time.
- To arrange all dental and medical appointments out of school hours.
- To provide evidence of medical appointments if taken during school hours.
- To work with the school, if absence or lateness becomes a problem, to put this right.
- To co-operate in the best interests of the child, ensuring their uninterrupted education.