



Highfield Priory
School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

The Full Board of Governors is responsible for this policy.

Last Reviewed: September 2026

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Key School Contacts

Senior attendance champion (including EYFS provision)	Jeremy Duke Email: schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk Telephone number: 01772 709624
Key attendance contact	Amy Hughes Email: absences@highfieldpriory.co.uk Telephone number: 01772 709624
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Anna Morrice Email: schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk Telephone number: 01772 709624

Aims

The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential to attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding and wider life chances. The aims of this policy are to:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and punctuality;
- ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil can benefit from and contribute fully to the life of the School;
- prevent avoidable absence and reduce the risk of children becoming children missing education;
- set out clear arrangements for recording, monitoring and responding to attendance, absence and lateness;
- recognise the close relationship between attendance, safeguarding, health, special educational needs, disability and pupil wellbeing;
- work respectfully and constructively with pupils, parents, carers and relevant agencies to identify and overcome barriers to attendance; and
- promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all pupils at Highfield Priory School and Nursery, including pupils of compulsory and non compulsory school age and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attendance is recorded in accordance with the requirements that apply to the School and the appropriate national attendance and absence code is entered for every pupil.

Regulatory Framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the School's responsibilities under the following legislation and statutory requirements, as amended from time to time:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025; and
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school based providers.

The School also has regard to the current editions of relevant government guidance, including:

- Working together to improve school attendance;
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance;
- Children missing education and the related summary of responsibilities;
- Keeping children safe in education;
- Communicating with parents about school attendance;
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance;
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school;
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance and support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance;
- Providing remote education; and
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

This policy should be read alongside the following School policies and procedures: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Lost Child Procedure, Behaviour Management Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy for EYFS, Accessibility Plan, Risk Assessment Policy, Remote Learning Policy and Parent Contract.

Publication and availability

This policy is published on the School website.

This policy will be sent to Parents when pupils join the School and Parents will be reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and when the policy is updated.

This policy is available in hard copy on request from the school office.

A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the school office during the School day.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Definitions and Interpretation

- Attendance includes attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.

- Parent includes every natural parent, whether married or not, any person with parental responsibility, and any person who has day to day care of the pupil.
- Pupil includes every person receiving education at the School, except a person aged 19 or over receiving further education or a person receiving part time education suitable for people over compulsory school age.
- Children missing education, or CME, means children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. A pupil who remains registered at the School is not CME solely because they are persistently or severely absent.
- Persistent absence means missing 10 per cent or more of possible school sessions, whether authorised or unauthorised.
- Severe absence means missing 50 per cent or more of possible school sessions.
- SAC means the School's Senior Attendance Champion.

Responsibility Statement and Allocation of Tasks

The Full Board of Governors has overall responsibility for this policy. Attendance is a school leadership matter and the Board has appointed a designated senior leader as the SAC.

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	SAC	As required, and at least annually
Analyse attendance and absence data	SAC	Termly
Formal annual review	The Full Board of Governors	Annually

The Importance of Good Attendance

The School recognises that good attendance is central to its vision, values and daily life. Attendance is considered alongside attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs, disability, medical conditions, mental health, safeguarding and support for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance improvement is a continuous process and the School will review its messages, systems and strategies regularly.

Repeated or prolonged absence, sudden changes in attendance and children missing education can be warning signs of neglect, abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental ill health, serious violence or other safeguarding concerns. Staff must remain professionally curious and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy whenever absence gives rise to concern.

School Responsibilities

The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, communicate high expectations and act early when concerns arise. It will:

- communicate attendance expectations clearly at the start of each academic year and at appropriate points throughout the year;
- provide information and resources to support attendance, including guidance about illness related absence;
- contact parents promptly when concerns arise;
- seek to understand and address barriers before absence becomes entrenched;
- keep attendance information under regular review and share concerns with parents where appropriate;
- work with pupils, families, the local authority and other agencies where necessary;
- respond to absence and lateness proportionately, consistently and with care;
- use robust systems to record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at individual and cohort level;
- identify pupils at risk of non attendance, persistent absence, severe absence or becoming CME; and
- review the impact of interventions and adjust support where needed.

Communication with families

Attendance communications will be timely, clear, accessible, supportive, respectful and non judgemental. They will explain why attendance matters for learning, wellbeing and safeguarding, encourage constructive dialogue, take account of individual circumstances and known barriers, and focus on support and solutions wherever possible.

Staff Responsibilities

The SAC

The board of governors have appointed a senior member of staff of the School's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are widely publicised within School.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

- set a clear vision for improving attendance;
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure they are followed;
- monitor and evaluate progress and the effectiveness of strategies;
- oversee and analyse attendance data;
- coordinate attendance work with the DSL, SENCO and other relevant leaders;
- communicate clear messages about attendance to pupils and parents; and
- liaise with the local authority and other agencies where appropriate.

Staff with Specific Responsibilities for Attendance:

The staff identified in Appendix 1 of this policy have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- ensure registers are taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- record all absences promptly and accurately using the correct national codes;
- seek explanations for absence and ensure these are formally recorded;
- make prompt enquiries about unexplained absence, including absence arising during the school day;
- follow the first day response and escalation procedure in Appendix 1;

- identify patterns and report concerns to the SAC and DSL as appropriate;
- deal with lateness consistently and promptly;
- discuss attendance and punctuality with pupils and parents where appropriate; and
- keep clear records of contacts, decisions, support and escalation.

All Staff

All teaching and non teaching staff must understand the importance of attendance, communicate consistently with pupils and parents, report concerns promptly and complete any attendance duties assigned to them. Staff must not assume that another person has acted on an unexplained or concerning absence.

School Arrangements

The School accurately completes admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to flag and follow-up absence digitally. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in the Appendices.

Early Years

We expect all parents/carers to inform us of all absences prior or on the day they will not be attending. Children will be recorded as holiday, poorly or unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised absences in the Nursery and Preschool will be followed up in a timely manner.

If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts if parents/carers are not able to be contacted

Nursery and Preschool will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life.

Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Good attendance plays a fundamental role in supporting children's educational achievement, well-being, and safety. Establishing regular routines for young children supports the settling-in process and enhances their sense of security and belonging. Even if a child only has a part-time place, regular attendance remains especially important. Attending helps children develop habits of regular attendance and punctuality, supporting a smooth and positive transition to reception. This outlines the procedures in place to promote and monitor attendance at Highfield Priory Preschool & Nursery and the steps that will be followed if a child is absent. It also explains the importance and benefits of regular attendance.

Why attending Highfield Priory Preschool & Nursery matters

It provides a valuable opportunity for their learning and development to give them the best possible start in life.

Regular attendance helps your child:

- Build strong routines and get ready for their next stage of learning and school
- Develop social skills and make friends

- Learn through play and structured activities
- Benefit from consistent support from staff

Promoting good attendance at Preschool & Nursery

To ensure every child benefits fully from their early education, we are committed to promoting regular attendance and punctuality. We will:

- Communicate clearly with parents and carers about the importance of regular attendance
- Unexplained absences will be followed up promptly to ensure child safety and to identify any support needs
- Maintain accurate attendance records to monitor and evaluate patterns of absence and lateness, allowing us to respond effectively to any concerns

Parents/carers are expected to:

Ensure regular and punctual attendance: Children should attend consistently and arrive on time to benefit fully from the learning and social experiences provided. Establishing a routine helps children feel secure and supports their development.

Notify the setting of absences promptly: If a child is unable to attend, parents/carers must inform Preschool or Nursery prior to absence or on the **first day** of absence and provide a clear reason. This contact can be made via The Early Years Management Team (01772 706700) or email absences@highfieldpriority.co.uk. This helps maintain accurate records and ensures the child's safety.

Engage with staff to address attendance: If attendance issues arise, parents/carers are expected to work collaboratively with the setting to identify any barriers and agree on strategies to support improvement.

Monitoring Attendance

The School will analyse attendance data frequently to identify pupils and groups needing support. This includes:

- weekly review of attendance patterns and trends;
- frequent individual pupil analysis, with named actions, responsible staff and review dates;
- regular reports to class teachers, the SAC, SENCO and DSL;
- half termly, termly and annual analysis of patterns and trends;
- benchmarking at whole school, year group and cohort level;
- identifying pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and those at risk of becoming CME;
- devising targeted strategies and reviewing their impact; and
- reporting attendance information to the Full Board of Governors.

Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to be present in person for the whole school day, arrive on time, attend all timetabled lessons, follow the School's arrangements for recording attendance and not leave a lesson or the site without permission. Any unexplained absence will be followed up.

Pupils experiencing difficulties that affect attendance are encouraged to speak to any member of staff, particularly their class teacher, the SAC, the SENCO or the DSL. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to provide support or safeguard the pupil.

Additional Needs

The School recognises that some pupils find attendance harder than others. It will build trusting relationships with pupils and parents, make reasonable adjustments, and put appropriate support in place.

- For pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, the School will work with parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to ensure support and provision are accessible.
- Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the School will communicate with the local authority when attendance falls or barriers relating to the pupil's needs become apparent.
- Suitable support will be considered where social, emotional or mental health needs affect attendance.
- Where barriers are outside the School's control, the School will identify other sources of support and consider an early help referral.
- Temporary part time timetables will be used only in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest necessary period, with parental agreement, a clear plan, regular review and the correct attendance code.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority where a pupil is recorded with code I and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively in the current school year because of illness.

Parent / Carer Responsibilities

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs. Parents are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every day the School is open, unless an allowable reason applies;
- ensure their child arrives by 8.30am for morning registration;
- notify the School by 8.30am on the first day of absence and provide an accurate reason, including the nature of any illness;
- keep the School informed on each subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed;
- make applications for leave of absence at the earliest opportunity and before the proposed absence;
- make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible;
- cooperate with the School to identify and overcome barriers to attendance;
- keep contact and emergency contact details current;
- notify the School in writing if their child will cease attending, provide the final date of attendance and give details of the new school, future address or other suitable education arrangements; and
- comply with attendance related provisions in the Parent Contract.

Training

Attendance guidance and training will be provided at induction and at appropriate intervals. All staff will understand the importance of attendance, the relationship between absence and wider circumstances, and the School's procedures for recording, following up and improving attendance.

Staff with specific attendance responsibilities will receive training on legal requirements, register codes, local authority working, safeguarding escalation, CME, data analysis and common barriers to attendance. Written records of training will be maintained.

Information Sharing

Attendance information will be shared in accordance with legal obligations, data protection law and relevant attendance and safeguarding guidance. Data protection law does not prevent the sharing of information necessary to safeguard a child.

- The School will work jointly with the local authority, health services, children's social care, police and other partners where this benefits a pupil or is necessary for safeguarding.
- Where enquiries lead the School reasonably to believe that a child will not return and no suitable alternative education has been confirmed, the School will refer the child to the CME team of the child's home local authority without delay.
- Where appropriate, the School will attend targeting support meetings with the local authority.
- The School will provide new pupil and deletion returns, attendance returns and sickness returns as required.
- The School will inform a pupil's social worker or youth offending team worker of unexplained absence where appropriate.
- Local authority officers may access and take extracts from admission and attendance registers in accordance with the law.
- The School will provide specified pupil information to the Secretary of State when required.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Records created under this policy will be accurate, factual, secure and managed in accordance with the School's data protection, retention and destruction arrangements. Admission and attendance registers are legal records. Entries and required backup copies will be preserved for the statutory period.

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Audit and Compliance Committee, Education Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Marketing Committee and Safeguarding Committee.

Record keeping and confidentiality

Records created under this policy will be accurate, factual, secure and managed in accordance with the School's data protection, retention and destruction arrangements. Admission and attendance registers are legal records. Entries and required backup copies will be preserved for the statutory period.

Version Control

Item	Details
Policy title	Attendance Policy and Procedure
Policy owner	Senior Attendance Champion
Approval body	Full Board of Governors
Current version	2026 revision
Effective date	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or earlier following legislative or guidance change
Summary of revision	Updated CME definition and referral procedure, communication expectations, attendance return detail, national codes, EHCP liaison, individual pupil analysis, absence escalation and version control

Appendix 1 – School arrangements

Managing Attendance

The School monitors, records and shares attendance information as part of its duty to safeguard pupils, promote attendance and prevent children becoming CME. Admission and attendance registers are electronic and retained for the period required by law.

The normal school day begins with registration at 8.30am and ends at 3.15pm for infants and 3.30pm for juniors. The school day may extend for clubs, fixtures, trips and other approved activities.

Registration and Attendance Checks

Morning registration is at 8.30am. The morning register remains open for 10 minutes. Afternoon registration is at 1.25pm. Pupils arriving or leaving during the day must be signed in or out through the School office. Staff must follow up any unexplained absence from lessons or the site after registration.

Reporting Absence

Parents must contact the School by email or telephone no later than 8.30am on the first morning of absence. The reason must be sufficiently clear to enable the School to select the correct code. Where illness is given as the reason, parents should describe the nature of the illness. The School may refer parents to current NHS guidance on whether a child is well enough to attend school.

Unless another arrangement is agreed, parents should update the School on each subsequent day of absence. The School will record absence using the most appropriate national attendance code.

First day response and escalation

Stage	School action
Register check	Identify all pupils absent without a known reason and confirm that register entries are complete.
Initial contact	Contact parents or carers promptly using the available telephone numbers and other agreed contact routes.
Emergency contacts	Where parents or carers cannot be reached, contact alternative emergency contacts.
Internal checks	Check with relevant staff, siblings where appropriate, transport arrangements and any known appointments or safeguarding information.
Safeguarding review	Refer promptly to the DSL where the absence, circumstances or inability to make contact raises a welfare concern. Do not wait for a fixed number of days.
Escalation	Consider children's social care contact, a police welfare check, the Lost Child Procedure or other safeguarding action according to risk.
Ongoing absence	Repeat proportionate enquiries, record every action and maintain communication with relevant professionals.
CME referral	Where the child is believed not to be returning and suitable alternative education has not been confirmed, refer without delay to the child's home local authority CME team.
Return to school	Welcome the pupil back, seek any outstanding explanation, review support needs and agree reintegration arrangements where required.

Persistent, severe or repeated absence

Where attendance concerns continue, the School will meet with parents and the pupil where appropriate, seek to understand barriers, agree actions and support, identify responsible staff and set a review date. Support may include pastoral input, reasonable adjustments, health or SEND liaison, early help, attendance support from the local authority or referral to another appropriate service.

If attendance does not improve, the School will review the plan and may seek further local authority support or consider contractual or statutory action. Any action will be proportionate and will not replace safeguarding action where a child may be at risk.

Authorised Leave of Absence

Leave of absence will be granted only where permitted by the attendance regulations and, where required, only in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in writing to the Head through schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk at the earliest opportunity. Each request will be considered individually, including the circumstances, duration, impact on education, previous attendance and relevant background.

Examples that may be considered include bereavement or terminal illness of a close family member, attendance at a family wedding or funeral, circumstances connected with service

personnel leave, or absence recommended by an appropriate health professional. These examples do not create an automatic entitlement. The Head will determine whether leave is granted and its duration.

Religious observance will normally be authorised where the day is exclusively set apart for observance by the relevant religious body and the request is made in advance.

Medical and dental appointments

Routine appointments should be arranged outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, parents should notify Amy Hughes in advance and provide appropriate information. Pupils should attend before or after the appointment where practicable.

Reporting duties

- New pupil and deletion returns will be provided when a pupil is added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points.
- Attendance returns will include pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend regularly and pupils absent continuously for 10 school days where one or more of codes G, N, O or U have been used. Returns will be provided at the frequency agreed with the local authority and at least monthly.
- Sickness returns will be made where code I absence is expected to reach 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively in the current school year.
- Any absence giving rise to a welfare concern will be managed immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, regardless of reporting thresholds.

Remote education

Absence from in person education must still be recorded using the appropriate absence code. Remote education may be used in limited circumstances where a pupil is well enough to learn but unable to attend the site. It will not be used as a substitute for addressing attendance barriers or safeguarding concerns.

The School will consider agreement with parents and the pupil, relevant medical advice, involvement of the local authority where the pupil has an EHCP or social worker, clear reintegration planning, regular review and a time limit aimed at returning the pupil to in person education. Engagement with remote education may be monitored separately from the attendance register.

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence code will be used where prior permission has not been granted and the School is not satisfied with the explanation, or no explanation has been provided. This includes an unauthorised holiday, absence without an accepted reason, absence without permission and arrival after the register has closed without a reasonable explanation.

Appendix 2 – National attendance and absence codes

The School will use the national attendance and absence codes required by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current statutory guidance. The following summary reflects the codes contained in the ISBA model supplied to the School. Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, the current legal code takes precedence.

Codes for attendance and absence

Code	Meaning
L	Late arrival before registration ends (9am)
D	Dual Registration
B	Education Offsite
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
K	Attending educational arranged by LCC
C	Leave granted by school
C1	Leave granted for participating in a regulated performance
C2	Leave with reduced timetable which does not require them to attend
J1	Interview with prospective school or employer
H	Family holiday granted by the school
E	Excluded with no alternative provision made
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
G	Family holiday not granted by the school
N	No reason yet provided
O	No reason for the absence is established
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access by LCC to facilitate their attendance
Y1	Not within walking distance and usual transport is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises is out of use and we cannot facilitate the child
Y4	Whole school is closed when it should be open and the session is cancelled
Y5	Unable to attend as the pupil is subject to detention
Y6	Travel or attendance is prohibited by guidance of the law relating to an incidence or infection/disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

Appendix 3 – Admissions register

The School will maintain an electronic admission register for all pupils admitted to the School and will notify the local authority when a pupil is added or deleted outside standard transition points. A backup copy will be made at least monthly. Each entry and backup copy will be preserved for the period required by law.

A pupil's name will be deleted only on a statutory ground. When notifying the local authority of deletion, the School will provide the required information, including the pupil's name and address, parent details, emergency telephone number, future address where applicable, future school and start date where known, and the statutory ground for deletion.

The School will not remove a pupil from the admission register merely because the pupil has stopped attending or cannot be located. Required enquiries, local authority notification, safeguarding action and CME procedures will be completed before deletion where applicable.

Appendix 4 – Attendance register

The School records and monitors attendance for all pupils, including those of non compulsory school age, in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register is kept electronically and backed up at least monthly.

The attendance register is taken twice each day. For every pupil, the School records whether the pupil is present, arrives before the register closes, is attending an approved place other than the School, or is absent. Absence is recorded using the appropriate national code.

Attendance records will be used to identify patterns at individual and cohort level, intervene before concerns become entrenched, prevent children becoming CME and support safeguarding. Register entries are preserved for six years from the date on which the data was entered, or for any longer period required by law or the School's retention schedule.