Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Governing Board	**Date:** September 2026
Last reviewed on:	August 2026	
Next review due by:	August 2027	

At Hemington Primary School, staff and governors are committed to ensuring that every child reaches their full potential. We believe this is best achieved through regular attendance and full participation in a structured, high-quality educational experience.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the school dress code
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually well prepared for the school day with homework completed
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children are unable to attend school on the first day of the child's absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school (message can be left on the absence part of the answerphone or by direct phone call to the office).

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to enable the absence to be coded correctly
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere, a safe learning environment and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Leicestershire Attendance Team.

This policy meets the requirements of Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), which also sets out the relevant legislation and other associated guidance.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Hemington Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:
Mrs. Andrea Reay (Co-headteacher)
office@hemington.leics.sch.uk

Mrs. White (Office Administrator) is responsible for first day contact calls, administering attendance paperwork and holiday paperwork in line with the staged school system. office@hemington.leics.sch.uk 01332 810447

MS Stephanie Devreaux is our Local Authority Attendance Caseworker

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- discuss the importance of regular attendance, punctuality and prompt collection at the end of the day during the Pre-School Induction Meeting and Parents Evening.
- Check and record attendance weekly.
- give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- provide a caring and welcoming learning environment
- respond promptly to a child's or parent's/carer's concerns about the school or other pupils
- mark registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration
- regularly monitor attendance and punctuality
- Use a staged approach to improving attendance that is shared regularly with parents so attendance systems are transparent
- monitor pupils' attendance and informing parents/carers in writing if attendance becomes a concern – a meeting may be arranged with parents/carers if necessary to see what support can be provided to make improvements.
- celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- celebrate using our 'Pizza Party' reward scheme. Each week the winning class will receive a pizza slice on the board. The class with the highest number of slices will win a pizza party.

Punctuality and Lateness

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day, but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

It is also essential that children are collected promptly at the end of the school day at ***3:15pm,*** unless they are attending the onsite after school club.

- The school day starts at **8.45 a.m**. **The gates are open from 8.35am.** The school registers are closed at **9.00 a.m.** each morning. Children who arrive after the register has closed will be marked as absent for the morning session.
- If the door is closed after 9.00 a.m., late comers must 'buzz' the office. A member of staff will let them into school.
- In the case of persistent lateness, the Co-head teacher will be informed and discuss support to enable punctuality.
- If the school has been informed that the child will arrive late due to a medical /dental appointment (the appointment card/letter must be provided) then an attendance mark will be given on arrival. If the child misses more than half of the morning or afternoon session it will be recorded as an authorised absence in the register.
- The school day ends at **3:15pm**.

Absence Procedures

When a pupil does not attend school regularly, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no message or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by **9.30 a.m.** The school will endeavour to contact them by phoning the parent contacts.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer by telephone. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will refer the matter to the co-head and a safe and well check may be made. If after 5 days the authority will be notified.
- 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 via email or phone call to the school office. However, we encourage parent/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
- Failure to comply with the expectations set out by the school may result in further action such as a Fixed Penalty (fine).

If your child is absent we will:

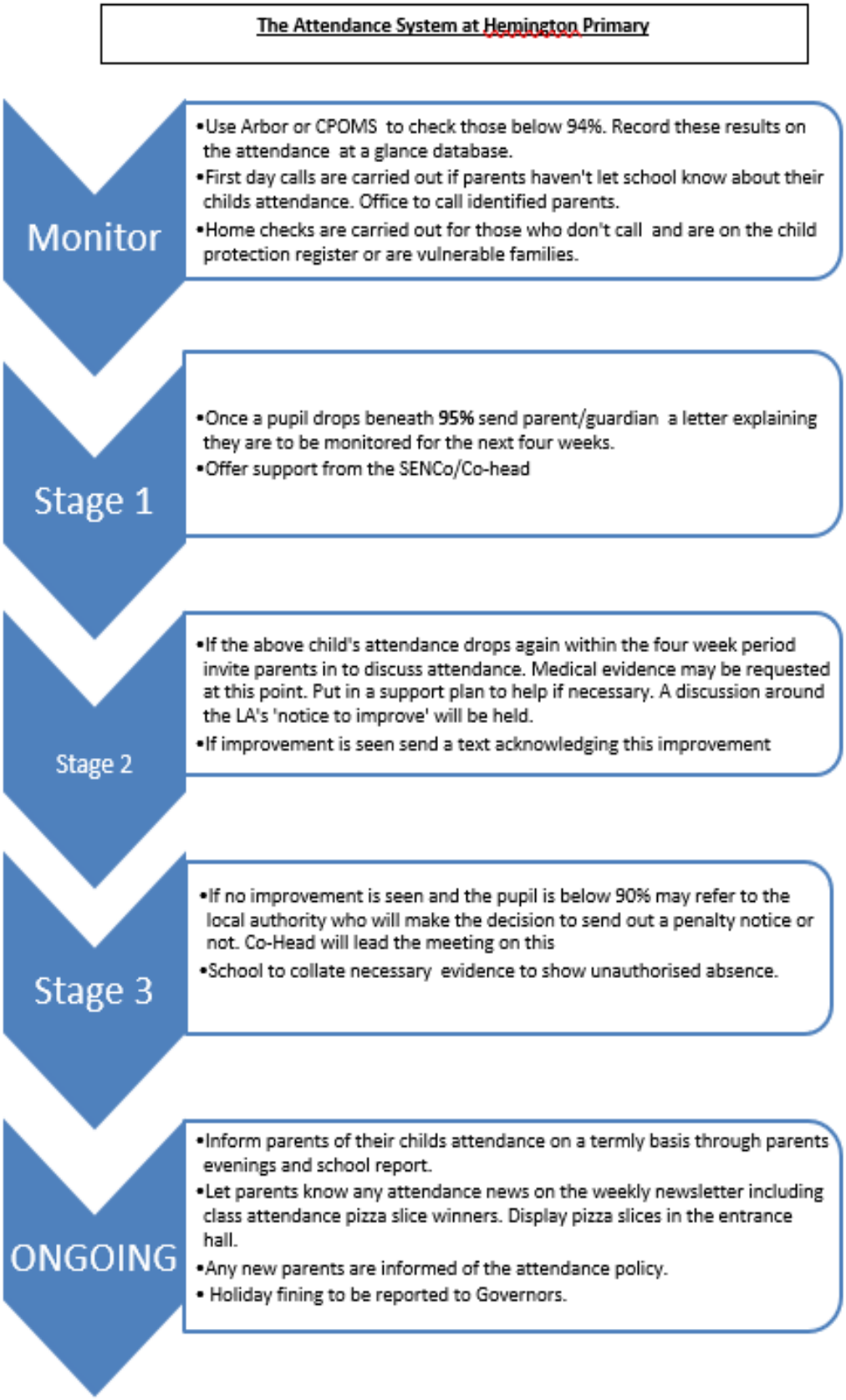
- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us
- If we are unable to contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 5th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with the Co-headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given for absence thoroughly.

Hemington Attendance System



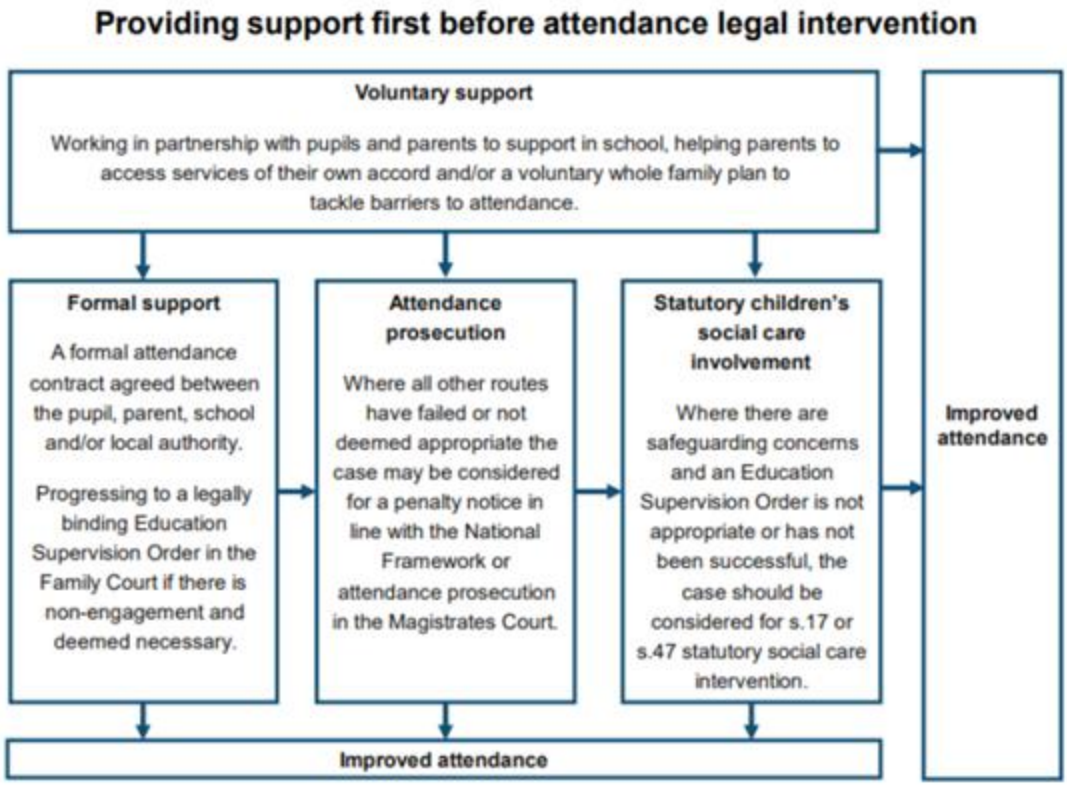
Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child (See appendix D 'Working Together to Improve Attendance'). If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We offer wellbeing and mentoring sessions in school. Alternatively, we can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Any full-time child whose attendance drops below will have an individual attendance plan (IAP). This will look at ways parents and school can support the increase of attendance and work together to support the barriers to coming into school.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.



The Leicestershire Authority Attendance Team

Leicestershire has an attendance team and webpage which provides information, advice and a contact form. This supports schools and parents/carers. Please see the link below.

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance

Schools and Local Authorities have a number of responsibilities outlined in the government guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance. This guidance also sets out the National Framework for the issuing of Penalty Notices.

Where there are concerns about pupil absence, schools should seek to intervene early, offering support, for a parent or carer to enable their child to attend school regularly.

Regular communication between schools and families is an important part of improving attendance. Parents and carers should expect clear, supportive and consistent communication about attendance, recognising that schools and families share the same aim of helping children attend regularly, feel connected to school, and achieve their full potential.

Parental Requests for leave of absence during term-time

The parent(s)/carer(s) of any child who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday may each be fined £80 which must be paid within a 21-day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £160 which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents/carers may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents/carer will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £2500.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Co-headteacher (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the matter will be referred to Leicestershire County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice.

At Hemington Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:
... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the Headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and

short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Changing Schools

It is important if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address and telephone number of the new school
- the new home address and telephone number if it is known or is applicable

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the inclusion team will be informed.

Flexi Schooling

At Hemington Primary School, we promote full time education within a school environment as a valuable way for all children and young people to enjoy, achieve and attain their full potential. We recognise that parents/carers may choose other ways for their child or young person to engage in effective, full-time, and suitable education. One way could be for them to request for the school to agree a flexi-schooling arrangement. This request must emanate from the parent; it is not for the Co Headteachers, a member of school staff or an officer of the Local Authority to suggest or encourage a family to undertake flexi-schooling.

Flexi Schooling works alongside and adheres to the following legislation and guidance:

- Hemington Primary School Safeguarding Policy 2026
- Hemington Flexi School Policy 2026
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- DFE Elective Home Education Guidance 2024
- SEND Code of Practice 2024
- Equality Act 2010

The responsibility for a child or young person (CYP) receiving full-time education, whilst they are of statutory school age, lies with the parent/carer.

Where a parent/carer educates a CYP partly at school and partly at home or elsewhere as an expression of parental preference, this is called flexi-schooling. Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education. Parents/carers who request flexi-attendance are asking for a pattern of provision, which will involve both attendance at school, as well as times

when the child will receive educational provision at home. The child will be on the roll of a school.

Flexi-schooling is also different from temporary part-time attendance arrangements which the school/parent/carer may seek to make. Such arrangements must be monitored and reviewed with the intention that the child be returned to full time attendance as soon as possible. Flexi-schooling is full time, although the provision may be split.

A parent/carer may request flexi-schooling on a long-term basis where they favour this form of education or they may request flexi-schooling for a short period, when, for example, the CYP is unable to attend school every day due to illness or injury.

The most recent clarification received from the DfE (2019) states that pupils should be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education, as part of a flexi-school agreement. Attendance registers will be completed in accordance with current DfE attendance regulations and guidance in force at the time of registration. The school will apply the appropriate attendance code for agreed flexi-schooling arrangements.

When an absence occurs on days when the CYP is due to attend, school will follow up the absence in the usual way in line with the school policy.

Travelling Families

Several different groups are covered by the generic term “Traveller Families” however many prefer to be known by their ethnic group - Roma, English or Welsh Gypsies, Irish or Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground or Circus), Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

There is a Showman’s site in our catchment areas. Some families remain on site all year round, but some families move around the country at certain times of the year. There is also a Travellers’ site in the catchment area of the school. Some pupils remain on site for most of the year, but others travel out of area for longer periods of time.

Latest Government Guidelines require that any pupils who travel and do not attend school all year round need to be in school for a total of 100 days or 200 sessions to obtain the ”T” code in the register. The T can only be used if it the family are travelling for work purposes, and it has been agreed beforehand. A weekly check in also needs to be arranged with the school.

Whilst they are away, pupils should also complete home/school packs (created by school staff), which should be returned to school. These packs should be collected and returned to school in person and the parent should also fill in a calendar to show how long they will be away.

Parents will be required to sign a form to say they have collected or returned packs to school (see Appendix c). This form also allows parents to indicate when children have attended another school or setting, with contact details so school can discuss pupil’s learning. This would then count towards the 100 days attendance. If a pupil does not complete 100 days in an academic year, then they will be given the unauthorised absence code and families may be liable to prosecution.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. This is monitored weekly. Persistently absent pupils (those below 90%) are tracked and monitored carefully to enable support packages. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

List of National Legislation and Guidance

working together to improve school attendance

supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

mental health issues affecting a pupils attendance in school (guidance for schools and parents)

Summary

The school has a legal responsibility to publish attendance and absence information for parents and carers, while actively promoting excellent attendance throughout the school community.

Parents and carers also have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, arrive on time, and are ready to learn each day.

At Hemington Primary School, all staff and governors are fully committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and pupils to foster a culture where good attendance is valued and celebrated. We firmly believe that strong collaboration between home and school is the most effective way to achieve and maintain the highest possible levels of attendance, enabling every child to benefit fully from their education and maximise their potential.

Appendix A – Hemington Attendance System at a Glance

Early Bird at Hemington- Punctuality Prize

Each day those who arrive in school **before** 8.45 will put their name on an early bird token. This token will be put in the daily raffle/behaviour ladder pot. The more tokens you put in the jar the more chances to win at the end of the day!

Occasional weeks we will have a 'super week'. Early birds will be pulled out in assembly and the children will get a visit to the shop.

Rewards

Each Thursday class attendance will be monitored and the highest class will win a pizza slice to go on our attendance display in the entrance hall. The class with the most pizza slices each half term will win a celebratory **pizza party.**

We also celebrate good attendance termly. We reward outstanding attendance (100%) with individual pupil certificates and prizes. A larger prize is given to those who have 100% attendance over the year.

Parents Guide to Attendance at Hemington Primary School

Hemington Primary

Aspire · Believe · Achieve

At Hemington, we expect our children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Research has shown us that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to do well in the future. We want to ensure this! Importantly, regular attendance helps children to develop their confidence and to make and keep lasting friendships.

Tel: 01332 810447 E-mail: office@hemington.leics.sch.uk

What is 'good' attendance?

Anything less than 100% attendance means that your child is missing out on their education. For example, 90% attendance is the same as missing half a day each week, or one whole month a year off school. The government wants each school to aim for 97% or above! OFSTED look at attendance due to its impact on learning.

Punctuality

Children who arrive late to school miss the start of lessons and this can affect their learning. Class 1 always do phonics at this time and class 2 or 3 do Maths/English. A late mark will be given after 9.00.

The school gate and doors open at 8.35 am. Teachers hear readers at this time and the children have fun learning tasks to do too. **The school gate closes at 8.50 am**. Registration takes place at 8.50 am and lessons start after this.

'Did you know that being just 15 minutes late each morning means your child would miss the same as 10 days off school each year?'

Holidays in term time

Governors have agreed that **no** absences for holiday requests in term time, day visits or similar will be authorised unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. However, you must still let school know if your child is going on holiday with the start and return dates. This will ensure the office doesn't phone to check why your child is absent from school whilst you are away.

Please take your holidays out of term time!
2 weeks on holiday brings your child's attendance to 95%. Lots of learning is being missed!

If your child is absent

Everyone gets poorly at some time! If you know your child is going to be absent from school, you should:

- Ring school or email office@hemington.leics.sch.uk at the earliest opportunity to let Mrs White know why your child is absent.
- If your child has a medical appointment please bring the paperwork in advance. This will be noted on our SIMs system.
- School will contact parents on the morning of the absence if the above has not been carried out.
- If no message or letter/email is sent your child's absence will be unauthorised on the computer system which Education Welfare can look at.

Next steps

1. **STAGE 1** - If the attendance of a pupil falls below 95%, or a pattern of time off can be seen, parents will be called asking if **support** is needed. We will do what we can to help!

2. **STAGE 2** - If after four weeks there is no improvement a stage 2 attendance meeting will be held to discuss how we can **support** you in improving your child's attendance. If their attendance is below 90% our Education Welfare Officer may become involved. It may be suggested that you provide **medical evidence** for absence. Unauthorised absence will be looked at at this point.

3. **STAGE 3** - If improvement is not seen after the four weeks in part 2 Education Welfare do have legal powers to enforce school attendance orders, prosecution for irregular attendance or penalty notices.

Tel: 01332 810447 E-mail: office@hemington.leics.sch.uk

Appendix B

GOOD PRACTICE FOR TRAVELLING FAMILIES

Several different groups are covered by the generic term "Traveller Families" however many prefer to be known by their ethnic group - Roma, English or Welsh Gypsies, Irish or Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground or Circus), Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

The "T" code should be used when Traveller Families are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

Children who attend another school whilst travelling should be coded as "D".

The "T" code should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

In order for the school to code absences for children from the traveller community as **"Travelling" (T),** the follow criteria should be met:

- ✓ A child should have 100 days attendance (200 sessions) in an academic year.
- ✓ Parents should provide the school with notification of travel, (dates, destination, length of time and evidence of parents work commitment).
- ✓ School should provide parents with schoolwork packs with parents collecting and returning the completed packs to school when child returns from travelling.

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. School should arrange an initial meeting with parents before children start school.
2. Parents should ascribe, to being either Traveller, Gypsy, or Other on the school's data sheet (parents **must** put something in this box). In the case of showmen, I suggest ascribing to "other" and writing showman in the space provided.
3. Parents **must** update the school of any changes to contact details such as phone numbers and addresses.
4. Parents are encouraged to show the school their children's birth certificates before their children start school.
5. Where possible school should nominate a dedicated member of staff to provide support and address concerns parents may have.
6. School may provide parents with a sticker with the contact number and name of the dedicated staff member.
7. School may provide parents with a printed month of the calendar for them to log periods of travel.
8. Parents **must** give the school notice of travel for the absence to be coded with a "T" Notice **must** include dates for departure, destination and return dates.
9. Parents **must** where possible provide school with evidence (work/employment/rent papers) with regards to travel for the absence to be coded as "T"
10. School to provide work packs for children to complete when travelling, (schoolwork packs may sometimes contain work children have already done as well as a diary). Parents **must** collect and return completed packs to the class teacher. Packs **must** be signed for on collection and return.
11. Parents **must** inform the school if their children are unable to attend school because of illness or appointments, (doctors, hospital, dentist, opticians).
12. Parents **must** inform the school if their children will be late to school or if they have any concerns regarding their children when at school.

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name ..... Class .....

Home Address .....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Please explain the **exceptional circumstances** that make it necessary to request a leave of absence:

.....

.....

.....

.....

I make application for my child named above to have an authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and will be recorded as such. Please be aware that these remain on your child's record and are then monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could then be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

Name of Parent/Carer making request .....

Signed .....

Date .....

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using this form. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on 1st September 2013. **These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes school will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements;
- day trips;
- sporting fixtures and shows;
- birthday treats.

There are certain times of the year when a child may experience particular problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence, the school will take these and other factors into account.

If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. **Unauthorised absences may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.**

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible. The reason for the request should be given in detail.

Once the school receives the completed form your request will be considered and a written response will be sent home. Please note applications can not be considered retrospectively.

Guidance from page 10 of 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify 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 pupils and parents to listen to and 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 an attendance 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: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.