



Attendance Policy

Hamstel Junior School

Excellence in Everything

Date	Revised by Chris Farrell/Liz Cadman/Jo Williams September 2024
Date of next review	January 2027
Signed: 3.09.22	 Headteacher



Hamstel Junior School Attendance Information

Please find below information relating specifically to Hamstel Junior School.

School start time	8.50am
Reporting absence procedures	Please contact the school office from 7.45am and before 8.45am and on 01702 468048 or via email office@hjs.porticoacademytrust.co.uk Keep the school informed if your child is off for more than one day.
Morning registration closing time	8.50am
First day calling	This will begin at 9.15am. Calls will be made to households where no contact has been made to the school to provide a reason as to why their child is absent.
Home visit	When no contact has been made from pupils' parent or carer through the reporting absence or first day calling procedures for more than three days without a reason given a home visit will be conducted in line with our safeguarding procedures.
Late arrivals	Being punctual is very important and gives your child a good start to the day. If your child arrives later than 8:50am they will need to enter the school via the main entrance and will be given a late mark in the register. Click here to view more details about our school day and identify your child's nearest entrance to school in the morning
Requesting Leave of Absence Procedures	Please complete a Leave of Absence form and hand it into the school office. These forms can also be obtained from the school office.
Procedure for moving school	The school office must be informed when a child is moving schools. We require the new home address, name and address of the new school and a date when they will be leaving Hamstel Junior School in writing/email.
Who to contact if you have a concern about your child's attendance	Please contact the school office if you have a concern about your child's attendance we will be happy to help.
Our school observes Southend Borough Council's procedures for managing school attendance.	If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, Schools are now required to inform the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team.

Please see our [website](#) to support parents with attendance

Hamstel Junior School

Relevant documents

- Amendment to Southend Borough Council's Code of Conduct under the provision of Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2004, updated September 2022
- Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003- Advice to Parents and Carers, updated July 2021
- Children Missing in Education, Guidelines for schools SBC 2019
- School Attendance, departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DFE August 2020

1 Aims

Hamstel Junior School is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils. We will ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Hamstel Junior School actively promote the value of regular attendance and recognises that a high attendance is effective in promoting a positive attitude throughout the whole school.

1.1 Statutory Framework

Under Section 44 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. Hamstel Junior School has set a minimum attendance target of 97%, with the local authority. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

The various stakeholders in school attendance and punctuality have the following roles and responsibilities.

2.1 Parents or Carers

Hamstel Junior School wishes to work in partnership with parents to achieve good school attendance. The minimum target attendance for all pupils registered at this school is 97% (i.e. no more than 5 days absence a year).

By accepting a place at the school for their child, Parents agree to their responsibilities surrounding their child's attendance at Hamstel Junior School. Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive effective full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996). Regular

attendance includes pupils being punctual; persistent lateness will be seen as absence after the registers are closed in the morning.

- Parents should ensure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Parents/carers should also ensure that their children are properly equipped and fit for a learning environment.
- Parents should provide the school with up-to-date information about points of contact and those with parental responsibility.
- Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for their absence and the date on which they are expected to return to school.
- On the pupil's return to school the parent/carer should write a note to explain the absence, to be given to the class teacher, in addition to the original telephone call.
- Medical appointments should be made outside school time. When an appointment has been made for medical reasons the appointment letter should be shown in advance to the School Attendance Officer where a photocopy can be taken for evidence of absence.
- Parents/carers should inform the school of any relevant factors (e.g. bereavement) which could affect the child's attendance and behaviour.
- Parents/carers are not permitted to take leave of absence during term time unless deemed exceptional circumstances and agreed.
- The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. If unauthorised leave is taken, parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

(Access and Inclusion Team for Southend Borough Council may issue a penalty notice for £120.00 (or £60.00, if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school).

2.2 Pupils Responsibility

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for learning.

2.3 Portico Academy Trustee Responsibility

Portico Academy Trust has the following statutory duties in relation to school attendance:

- To ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept.
- To ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DfE and the LA, including informing the LA if a pupil has been continuously absent for 10 days or more without informing the school (Children Missing Education).
- Ensure that the school monitors attendance and evaluates the success of the school's attendance and punctuality at the school on a termly basis.
- The Portico Academy Trustees are encouraged to ask questions about:
 - the attendance of different groups within the school;

- trends in attendance.

-

2.4 Head Teacher Responsibility

The Head Teacher has the day-to-day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets its legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence.

The Head Teacher will ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. Parents indicate that they support the school in this by accepting a place at the school.

- The Head Teacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring the school rigorously monitors attendance and for taking action to further improve attendance.
- The Head Teacher has a duty under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a pupil has been absent for more than two weeks.
- Southend on Sea Local Authority monitors our attendance data electronically on an on-going basis. The information in these returns is fed back to schools in a class form and is monitored by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer.
- The Head Teacher ensures that the school works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues, e.g. Specialist Services (Social Care), Health Services and Traveller Education Services.

2.5 The Class Teacher Responsibility

The Class Teacher has a vital role to play in ensuring that poor attendance and poor punctuality are kept to a minimum. Class teachers have a responsibility to complete class registers in line with the stated school procedures (see Appendix 1).

The Class Teacher will ensure that the registers are called promptly and correctly, recorded on the Arbor systems and then saved.

- They ensure that registration periods are orderly and calm and that registers are called promptly and correctly.
- Electronic registers will be completed and closed at 9:00am.
- Paper registers (if applicable) will be returned to the office as soon as the registration period is finished so that they are available for inspection by local authority nominees, information and data reading processes.
- The Class Teachers are responsible for welcoming pupils back to school on their return from absence. They are the first point of contact for informal discussions about attendance and punctuality with parents/carers and they can often sensitively alert them to our concerns in

order to effect improvements. They will also notify other staff members as soon as possible if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties that led to absence.

- Class Teachers can support the School Attendance Officer in finding out reasons for absence. An email asking teachers to speak to the pupil or parent/carer is used to support this process. Initially this will be asking for a written letter or chasing the reply slip from the attendance letter.

2.6 The School Attendance Officer and Child and Family Support Officer, DSL

Responsibility

The School Attendance Officer has the responsibility for the first day contact. Contact with the parents must be made as soon as possible after 9.15am and a note of authorisation is made to the class registers on the Arbor system. Where parents cannot be contacted, a record must be kept in the pupil's electronic attendance file on Arbor. Any prolonged or persistent absences should be noted and referred to the Child and Family Support Officer as too, should pupils who are regularly late for school.

Persistence absence (PA)

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

Religious observance and absence

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside the school holidays and will necessitate a consideration of authorised absence for their child on any day of religious observance by the religious body to which they belong. Parents and carers are requested to give 2 weeks' advanced notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent and follow the school's request for absence procedures.

The Attendance Officer is also responsible for keeping attendance data onto the computerised attendance programme Arbor up to date and for producing reports to track pupil's attendance.

A record of any child leaving the school as a result of sickness or to attend a medical appointment, as well as their return to the school should be kept in the school office. This information will need to be taken, along with the class register printouts, to the nominated area in cases of evacuation.

- The School Attendance Officer will contact the parents/carers on the 1st day of absence, if the school has not been notified, and subsequent days after that, until a reason is provided. If no reason is given, a letter is sent weekly for the parent/carer to complete once the child has returned to school. If a child is absent for more than three days without contact being made or a reason given a home visit will be conducted.
- Pupils arriving after 9:00am are recorded as late on the inventory system and will also need to report to the school office where their name, class, lunch option, time arrived and reason

for lateness is recorded. This will be recorded as a (L) in the register. All staff are made aware that any child arriving late MUST report to the office for purposes of fire regulations.

- Children arriving after 9:15am will be marked in the register as a (U) indicating that they have arrived after the registers have closed.
- The School Attendance Officer and Child and Family Support Officer will monitor late arrivals from 8:50am every half-term and make necessary arrangements to contact the parent/carers regarding the frequency and/or patterns of late arrivals. During this phone call or letter support will be offered by the School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team.
- On occasion throughout the school academic year a School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team, supported by a member of the SLT will carry out a late gate in order to assess and evaluate the late arrivals.
- Parents/carers of pupils being collected late without prior knowledge need to come to the school office. The child's name, class and time being picked up late is recorded on the inventory system after 3:30pm. This will be monitored every half-term and phone calls to parents/carers who frequently collect their children late.
- If there are any Child Protection concerns, the designated person for Child Protection, will be informed on the first day of absence.
- The Local Authority School Attendance Officer from the Access and Inclusion Team will meet fortnightly with the School Attendance Officer and Child and Family Support Officer to review and discuss attendance figures.
- The School Attendance Officer and Child and Family Support Officer will review whole school pupil attendance and identify pupils with below 95% attendance. In discussion with the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, parents/carers of these pupils will be sent a Level 1 letter identifying irregular attendance and maybe invited to an informal meeting with the Child and Family Support Officer to discuss the matter further.
- **Level 1-** During the Level 1 process a level 1 letter will be sent home with a target of 100% attendance being set for six weeks, from the date of the original Level 1 letter. If during the six-week review period absences occur a second level 1 letter may be sent, reminding parents and carers that the original target is not being met. If this target is not met then they may be referred to a School Based Meeting with the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team and the Child and Family Support Officer, DSL. At times there may be instances when cases can be fast tracked to School Based Meeting, missing out the initial Level 1 process.
- During the monitoring period medical evidence is required for all absences in some cases a follow up home visit may be made by the School's Child and Family Support Officer.
- **School Based Meeting-** If this meeting is to be scheduled the school will contact parents/carers by letter. During the meeting, the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team and Child and Family Support Officer will complete a parenting contract outlining discussion points of the meeting, support offered

and action plan agreed. If these targets are not met then a further target may be set or the case will be moved to Level 3.

- **Level 3-** Weekly home visits will be completed by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team to address the barriers around poor attendance.
- **Level 4 –** Pupil planning meeting at Southend Borough Council which is attended by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team and line manager, parents and representatives from the school. At this meeting an Action plan is agreed with a first or final warning letter being issued. Any unauthorised absence after this will result in the parents/carers being issued with a penalty notice. Further unauthorised absences after this may result in court action by the Local Authority.
- If a child has been absent for more than 10 days and no known reason has been given, then a ‘Child Missing in Education’ (CME) report is completed by the School Attendance Officer and forwarded to Local Authority Pupil Services where investigations are made as to the whereabouts of the pupil. This may result in the pupil being taken off roll.
- Class Teachers are provided with the name of any child in their class who are moving to Level 1, or beyond. This is in order for them to be aware and to support improvement.

2.7 Holidays and Extended Holidays

The Head Teacher will not authorise any holidays during term time, in line with the Governments amendment regulations. However, the Head Teacher may authorise leave in term time due to exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will authorise up to two days for religious observance and up to three days for attendance as a member of a wedding party dependant on details at the Head Teacher’s discretion (for example bridesmaid/ring bearer). The Portico Academy Trust and Head Teacher will not authorise any leave of absence when pupils are scheduled to take end of key stage tests. Parents will be notified as soon as these dates are known.

Under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the school seeks to minimise the number of absences taken in term time and will only agree to these in exceptional circumstances. Leave of Absence forms are available from the school office and on the school website. This form must be completed four weeks prior to leave of absence. In some circumstances, parents may be required to meet with the Child and Family Support Officer to discuss the leave requested. If unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time and is not granted by the Head Teacher the School Attendance Officer will monitor for three weeks following leave of absence and expect 100% on their return.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Local Authority Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to **each parent for each child** taken out of the school (Appendix 2). If unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time the School Attendance Officer will monitor for three weeks on their return and we expect them to achieve a target of 100% (treated like a level 1). Penalty notices can be issued if there have been 6 sessions (3 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year.

Should the pupil fail to return following an extended holiday, without any other contact to the school, following notification to the School Attendance Officer and Child Employment Service, they may be taken off roll. Similarly, if extended leave is refused by the school, and the child is absent for 10 days or more the child can also be removed from roll following guidance from Pupil Services. Parents/Carers should consider this carefully before taking extended leave as they may have to reapply for school place on their return. (Education Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 S.9 (e)

3 Partnership Between Home and School

Hamstel Junior School will inform parents/carers if there are concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality. Likewise, the school expects to be contacted by parents/carers if they have concerns relating to their child's attendance. The school will arrange to meet parents who have attendance concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in order to resolve the situation. However, if contact with the parents fails to sustain an improvement in attendance, the Headteacher will refer the matter to Local Authority Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team.

4 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- The school will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- Year 2 induction, parent consultations and formal reports for parents/carers make clear the school's expectations in terms of attendance and punctuality and the effect that issues relating to both can have on a child's educational outcomes. This is further supported by the Key Information Document in which parents are made aware that by accepting their child's place to attend Hamstel Junior School, they are committed to ensuring their child meets the school's attendance and punctuality target for each student. An attendance leaflet will be provided to all year 2 parents and sent home at the beginning of every academic year to outline the school's expectations of attendance.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupil's needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- The class of the week receive a certificate during assembly and class of the week trophy.

- Half termly draw where all children with 100% attendance are entered to win a £10 Amazon voucher.
- Parents/Carers pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The School Attendance Officer will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters and a school attendance leaflet, etc.) of the importance of good attendance by the Inclusion Team.
- Pupils will be reminded of the benefits of good attendance during school assemblies provided by the Local Authority's School Attendance Officer, Access and Inclusion, School Attendance Team.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- The Head Teacher will report annually to the school's Trustee board on attendance matters.
- The Child and Family Support Officer, DSL, when appropriate, will liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Specialist services (Social Care) and other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

5 Attendance Concerns

When a pupil of this school is absent for no apparent reason, it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons, they should bear in mind factors that could relate to the Safeguarding, Child Protection, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. The Class Teacher will have a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole school staff.

Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time Appendix 1



Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time



Please complete this form for **any leave of absence requests during term time**. Forms must be completed and handed in to the office at least **one month prior to the leave** for consideration by the Head Teacher. Please attach supporting evidence to this form, identifying the exceptional nature of the leave.

If your child is absent without permission granted by the Head Teacher the leave will be recorded as unauthorised.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Head Teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. If the leave is granted, the Head Teacher can also determine the number of days the child may reasonably be away from school.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's academic progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance for the school year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken without permission, schools are now required to inform the **Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team** who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. If the penalty notice is not paid within 21 days it will increase to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Please complete one form per child per period of absence. Please attach supporting evidence.

Name of child: _____ Class: _____

First day of absence: _____ Date of return to school: _____

Number of days requested: _____

Reason for leave of absence: _____

Signed: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

School/Office use only

Attendance percentage preceding 10 weeks:	
Percentage of authorised absences this academic year:	
Percentage of unauthorised absences this academic year:	

Authorised / Unauthorised Head Teacher _____

Appendix 2

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 introduce changes to the procedures for issuing penalty notices with effect from 1 September 2013. The amendments reduce the timescale for paying a penalty notice from 28 days to 21 days (£60 initial penalty notice), and from 42 days to 28 days where the initial fine has not been paid (penalty increased to £120). This allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. Each parent can be issued with a penalty notice of £60 for each child for unauthorised absence if paid within 21 days, or £120 for each child if paid within 28 days. Non-payment will result in the Education Welfare Service considering prosecution.

DEFINITIONS

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and which do not fall within the category of "exceptional circumstances". This includes absence for family holidays/family events (unless agreed within the exceptional circumstances category), keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy absence, unexplained absence and where children arrive at school too late to be registered as present.

Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave during term time can be issued when:

There have been six consecutive sessions (three days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year).