

Attendance Strategy 2025-2026

School Matters!



Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow

Working Together to Improve Attendance

Autumn 2025

KEY FACTORS, APPROACH AND RESPONSIBILITY

At Heather Garth we recognise that positive relationships and mental health and well-being are key factors for good attendance. We approach each child and family individually and aim to adapt accordingly so that each child can thrive. We welcome parents as partners so that together we can promote high standards of learning, behaviour and attitudes to enable every child to thrive and be the very best version of themselves. An essential factor in this is good attendance.

The responsibility for good attendance is everyone's, both families and school. The importance of good attendance is discussed with children, with families and as a school team so that we can target the right support to the right people at the right time. Once again, partnership working is key. As detailed in this strategy, we will support families to ensure that the child connects and feels as though they belong in school and good attendance is a foundation of this. As a school, we have a duty of care towards our children, and at times, we may have to challenge families to pursue good attendance for reasons of safety, or simply because, the benefits of good attendance are so crucial to the child's development.

THE LAW

The law in the UK entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

OUR SCHOOL APPROACH

Our school approach is written in conjunction with the DFE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. We work together with partners to ensure that we have the right culture in school to promote good attendance alongside the right support being offered at the right time to enable pupils to fully access education.

We recognise that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, and therefore, we remain professionally curious at all times, seeking to expose the barriers to school attendance. We build strong relationships with our families ensuring that they know we are a source of support, approachable at all times, and that we genuinely want to achieve the very best for their children.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Our office team is a parent's first point of contact when discussing their child's attendance. Their warm and supportive manner ensures families know we want to help them in ensuring their children attend well at school. It is made clear on all communications about attendance that the aim of our procedures is to support and empower families, rather than punish.

When a pupil's attendance is identified as a concern by the Attendance Officer, the relevant communication is shared with emphasis on supportive practice. At every step of monitoring attendance, families are made aware that they can speak to school.

Where attendance requires a formal attendance meeting (below 90%), our attendance team (Attendance Officer, Family Engagement Officer, Headteacher (if necessary) and Education Welfare Officer) will meet with families to discuss attendance barriers, ways we can support and to ensure school has all the relevant information. This is recorded, signed by both parties and then tracked and revisited the following half term.

As a school we continually look to employ supportive strategies and techniques to improve pupil attendance.

OUR SCHOOL STRATEGY

- Our attendance policy sets out the clear expectations of the school. All staff are familiar with the policy because good attendance is everyone's responsibility. This policy is shared with parents, is available on our website and is communicated with pupils in the appropriate ways.
- School attendance expectations are set at the point of admission to our school.
- Attendance expectations are reinforced at transition, SEND reviews and parent meetings.
- A colour coded system ensures clarity of expectations for parents, and helps them to understand where their child's attendance falls against those expectations.
- Attendance forms part of parent meetings and our expectations are set out clearly.
- All children engage in a Celebration Assembly each week which reinforces the school attendance target of 96% and celebrates class attendance.
- All classes with above 96% attendance, and no more than 3 late marks, receive a £5.00 voucher every week to save and spend at the end of the school year on a class treat.
- The focus for celebration is on classes rather than individuals to ensure that pupils do not feel unnecessary pressure in unavoidable circumstances. Where there are long term individual circumstances in a single class, this is taken into account as part of the weekly celebration.
- Attendance data, alongside our expectations, are included on annual school reports.
- Attendance expectations are shared with Governors within the Headteacher's termly report.
- Class teachers talk to their pupils about the importance of attendance regularly.
- All families are regularly reminded that term time holidays are not authorised under any circumstances and that holidays taken in term time may be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) – via the school attendance leaflet.
- All families are aware that a leave of absence request needs to be submitted for any planned absence from school.
- First day calls are made where a child has not attended; this reinforces our expectation that children should be in school, acts in line with our safeguarding policy and is a first step in supporting families with attendance.

MONITORING PROCESS

- Attendance is tracked on an individual basis. Any pupil who does not have attendance levels of 96% or more at the end of each half term is discussed by the Attendance Officer and the Headteacher and appropriate actions are agreed and tracked for impact.
- Half termly attendance percentages are communicated with families informing them of their child's attendance level and any actions required.
- Letters are sent to families half termly/termly to update them about their child's attendance level.
- Attendance is monitored at each pupil progress meeting when discussing barriers to pupil progress and is also included on all SEND review paperwork.
- Each pupil is tracked across the year so that patterns can be monitored carefully.
- Pupils who end the year being monitored for attendance become a focus family for the start of the new year. These pupils' attendance will be monitored more closely and these families will be prioritised for support.
- Dips in attendance between monitoring points result in a school attendance discussion (meeting) or follow up attendance letter. Action/support is then decided based on the circumstances.
- Contextual factors (pupil premium) etc are discussed each half term so that the necessary enquiries/investigations can be pursued for underperforming groups.
- Lateness is monitored to identify families who are frequently late and may require additional support.
- Staff are professionally curious, looking for patterns of absence to highlight to the attendance team.
- CPoMs is used to record any concerns, discussions about attendance with families or professionals.

F A C I L I T A T E	SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication between school and parents • Parents to inform school of the reason for absence or lateness • Morning calls where absence has not been reported by parents • Visit by a member of the Attendance Team to home address where absence has not been reported – welfare visit • Attendance letters • Attendance meetings/agreed action • Weekly attendance celebration in assembly • Termly attendance certificates for pupils • Attendance included at parents' meetings, SEND reviews and on end of year reports • Onsite Family Engagement Officer
	TARGETED SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key person welcome • Adaptive start/finish times • Change of entry point/routine • Focused morning activities • Attendance contracts/minutes from meetings signed by school and parent • Liaison with/referral to external agencies where required (Aspire/CAMHS/School Nurse) etc
	ADDITIONAL SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast club offer • Separate entrance point/start time • Soft start activities for the day with a member of staff • Parenting support • Temporary reduced timetable • Bespoke SEND provision • Visual timetables • Reward charts/motivational activities • School based early help • Further liaison with/referral to external agencies where required (as above) • Next step identified as formal pathway (LA EWS)
	FORMALISED SUPPORT WHEN SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT HAS BEEN INEFFECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School begins to issue further attendance letter to reinforce the severity of the situation • School seek support from the LA EWS • Referral to Early Help (with consent) • Attendance below 50% refer to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) • Support in place continues throughout this stage • Weekly attendance reviews • NTI (Notice to Improve) is issued • Should attendance fail to improve FPN to be processed or alternatively referral to EWS • Still no improvement, case put before the Local Authority School Attendance Panel (LASAP) for a Education Supervision Order

FORMALISE
SUPPORT