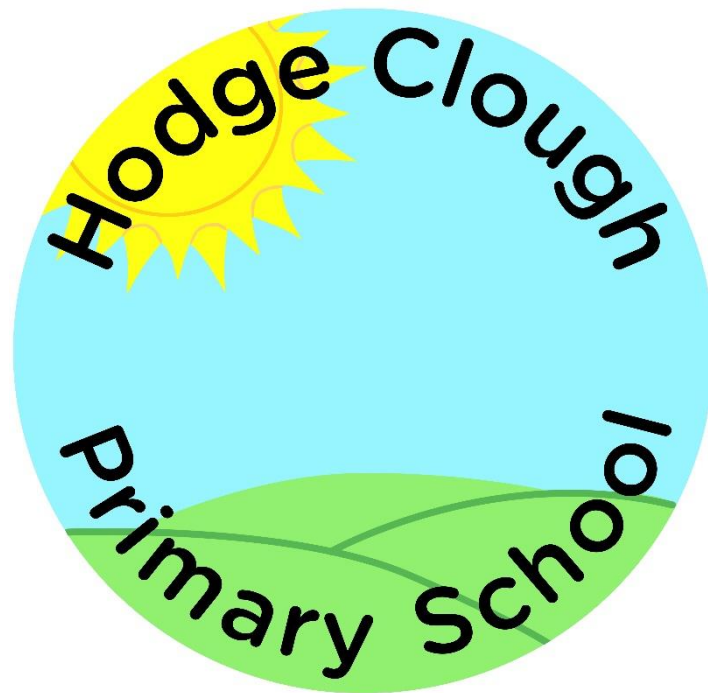




Attendance Policy

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Signed: Emily Edwards (Chair of Governing Body)

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Statement of Intent

The aim of Hodge Clough is to:

- Facilitate pupils' regular attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all their pupils.
- Clearly inform parents of their role in maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Follow the rule of law and the requirements of the Department of Education
- Follow advice and guidance from the LA.

School Attendance - the Statutory Framework

The Education Act 1944 Section 36 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/31/part/II/crossheading/compulsory-attendance-at-primary-and-secondary-schools/enacted>

Pupil's Registration

Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law". a) From 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended. The amendments remove all reference to the statutory threshold that a Head teacher may grant up to 10 school days leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time.

b) The amendments make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

c) Head teachers should revise the school's policy on the granting or otherwise of term time holiday in line with the new regulations. Should the Head teacher feel that exceptional circumstances are clear in the application for holiday leave then it is up to Head teachers to determine the length of any leave granted.

d) The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that unauthorised absence is investigated and where deemed necessary and appropriate that compulsory school attendance is enforced via the prosecution of the responsible parent. However, to be effective in raising, promoting and sustaining good levels of attendance it is not just the Local Authorities enforcement role that is important; schools have a crucial role in supporting, encouraging and informing parents and pupils of expected attendance levels and school policy and action including referrals to the LA with the possible outcome of a Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

e) In supporting schools to reduce holiday absence the Local Authority has provision to receive referrals from schools to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday leave during term time. Where the exceptional circumstances criteria has not been met and schools warn parents in writing that the absence will be unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority this provision can be actioned if the school feel this is an appropriate course of

action. The Penalty Notice is issued initially at £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days of issue. Should the parent(s) fail to pay this then Penalty Notice fine increases to £120 per parent per child from the 22nd day of issue to the 28th. Subsequently to this if payment is not received the Local Authority will consider initiating prosecution proceedings for the unauthorised holiday absence.

f) In August 2013 the Government reviewed its guidance to schools, academies and Local Authorities regarding attendance matters. This guide gives important information on the use of national attendance and absence codes and of the Local Authority's role to investigate and prosecute unauthorised absence.

g) Please find the link below to the Department for Education's website page to obtain a copy of this guidance.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/f00221879/schoolattendance>
Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003)

Key Points

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.
- Whilst it is right for school to understand pupils and their families have problems, we still expect regular attendance at school.
- Lateness will be actively discouraged.
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation will be required. All unexplained absence will be treated as unauthorised. School will make enquiries as to why the child is absent.
- School is not obliged to accept parental notes if there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered. In such cases the absence will be unauthorised.

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations in 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Oldham Local Authority requires all schools to use the standard symbols for marking registers.

It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after Class registration has taken place, but before the close of the registers, details as outlined within the defines school times below.

In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

If a child is continually late for school, the Attendance Officer and then the Head teacher should be informed. The parents will then be contacted to discover any problem or reason for the continual lateness.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses' registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office and sign in where their attendance will be recorded. The pupil's record in the register will be amended as appropriate.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances.

Registration Procedure

Registers will be completed as quickly as convenient, preceding both daily sessions. Only 10 minutes of the school day have been allocated for the registration procedure. Registers will be saved to the school office following this registration period.

Guidance on key attendance marks are below, with a comprehensive list within Appendix A.

Punctuality

Pupils arriving at school after registration in the mornings must report to the school office and sign in, the entry will be adjusted in the class register. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration.

An explanation note may authorise this absence, e.g., visit to doctor/dentist.

Wilkes St: Nursery, Reception and Y1	
Doors Open for Registration	8.30-8.40
Late (L)	8.41-9
Unauthorised Late (U)	9.01 onwards
End of school day	3pm
Conduit St: Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6	
Doors Open for Registration	8.45-8.55
Late (L)	8.56-9.10
Unauthorised Late (U)	9.11 onwards
End of school day	3:15pm

Absence

The school prospectus states:

Parents are asked to notify the school in person, by telephone or letter if their child is absent for any reason.

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary, on occasion, to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences. Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol. Reporting by telephone, e-mail

or verbally to a member of office staff or by note are all acceptable.

This reason will be logged against the child's name.

We operate a first day absence system through one of the above forms of communication. On the first day a child is absent, if school have not received a reason for the absence, a phone call or text message will be sent to the primary contact telephone number within SIMs requesting a reason for the absence.

This will be recorded within the attendance part of SIMs.

If we receive a reason because of sending a text message, e-mail or phone call the log will show that the reason was received because school had to make contact first.

If a reason is not received after sending a text message, it will be logged against that absence that school did request a reason via text message.

If, after two weeks, no satisfactory reason has been given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence is an absence from school without a valid reason by a parent/carer or an absence without the knowledge of the parent/carer. The former is unlikely, as contact will be made by school to enquire about the reasons for non-attendance if none is received by school on the first day of absence.

Children who have Persistent Absence (90% and below) will automatically not have absences authorised, unless exceptional circumstances which will be reviewed by the attendance officer and the head teacher.

An unauthorised absence, which gives cause for concern, will be referred to the Attendance Service. A record of any actions taken will be kept in school.

Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil school will involve the Attendance Officer.

We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised and unauthorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

Regular attendance is no more than 10 sessions missed per academic year.

This is the equivalent to 5 school days or 10 half days.

Fixed Penalty Notices:

Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more within each school year, may be they continuous or sporadic, may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice in the first instance of £60 per parent per child.

Non-payment of fine or persistent absenteeism may result in an increase of fine and/or county court action. Further unauthorised absence could also lead directly to court action.

There are 2 session marks per day and the 10 Session threshold could be made up of any combination of unauthorised marks.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Unauthorised holidays.
- No reason provided for absence.
- Unsatisfactory reason for absence.
- Unauthorised late marks.

Religious Observance

Children are entitled to leave of absence for religious observance in the family faith. Requesting Leave of Absence

Parents must request for leave of absence to the attendance officer directly to the Attendance Officer, this will then be discussed with the Deputy or Head teacher.

Religious observance is limited to 2 days per school year, examples of authorised leave are where school is open and religious holidays such as Eid, Hanukah and Wesak are being held.

Leave in term time

Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the head teacher and governing body.

The following requests for leave of absence will automatically be unauthorised:

- Any holidays or general leave.
- Leave of absence leading up to year 6 SATs- this is the time children are consolidating learning for their national tests for the end of Key Stage 2.

Requests for leave of absence can be submitted online using Google Form link below

<https://forms.gle/4wsPdGPKdew859MYA>

Covid guidance

As COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people, combined with high vaccination rates in the population, there are no longer specific rules relating to it in schools, colleges, childcare and other education settings. Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to go to school, college or childcare.

Reporting Absence

Class teachers will report persistent absences and absence concerns on CPOMS, the Attendance officer or the Head teacher will action this.

A brief record of children's attendance is reported on termly and annual report to parents.

Persistent Absence (currently set at 90% and below or 10 days' continuous absence) is reported to the LA every half term.

Only school may authorise a pupil's absence.

All absences must be explained by the pupil's parents / carers.

Regular attendance

School considers regular attendance to be at 95% or above. Over an academic year this would allow for five days or ten sessions of absence to illness or other absences which would normally be authorised.

Parents/carers of pupil's whose attendance falls below 95% may be contacted and ask to attend a meeting to discuss how to improve their attendance.

Any pupil who falls below 90% attendance will be considered persistently absent, their parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting at school to discuss their child's attendance and the local authority attendance service will be informed who may also contact parents/carers.

Parents/carers of pupil's whose attendance is below 90% will be asked to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness, for example a letter from the child's GP.

New guidance from the LA

The new guidance from the LA aims to:

Make penalty notices more effective by ensuring they are only used in cases where they are the most appropriate tool to change parental behaviour and improve attendance.

Prioritise the support first approach by expecting support to be used in cases where it is appropriate and using penalty notices in cases where support is not appropriate (e.g., a term time holiday) has not worked or has not been engaged with.

Improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered.

Improve the deterrent effect of a penalty notice by increasing the amount and introducing a new national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3-year period to break cycles of repeat offending.

A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

A requirement that when the national threshold is met, schools make an assessment on a case-by-case basis whether a penalty notice can and should be issued. The following should be considered:

1. if support or further support is appropriate instead, and
2. whether there is a different tool or legal intervention that is more likely to improve attendance in this case.
3. The option of using a Notice to Improve where support is appropriate but not working or being engaged with, to give a parent a final opportunity to engage in support before they are issued with a penalty notice if it is appropriate in the individual case.
4. An increase to the rate of a penalty notices from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days, and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days.
5. An additional rung to the ladder of escalation, with any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period being charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
6. A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

We expect that pupils:

Will attend school regularly.

Will arrive on time.

Will be prepared for the demands of the school day.

Will inform staff if there are any problems that may impinge on their ability to attend school.

Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

Their child attends school regularly.

Their child is on time.

They contact the school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.

Their child is appropriately dressed and equipped for the school day.

Class teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class and maintaining an accurate register on SIMS.

If the teacher becomes concerned about absence, then the pupil should be referred to the School attendance officer.

Attendance Officer

Has responsibility for the attendance of all pupils from nursery through to year 6.

Responds to concerns raised by teachers.

Checks the registers daily and will contact parents and carers on the first day of absence where it is unexplained.

Records reasons of absence on SIMS.

Liaises with families and escalates concerns accordingly through letters, referrals, initial meetings and Fast Track meetings.

Establishes any reasons of concern for absence such as poor health or home conditions.

Confirms attendance codes and discuss with the Head if there are unusual or exceptional circumstances.

Monitors and updates the electronic registers (SIMS) on a weekly basis.

Reports persistent absence to the LA half termly.

Liaises with the LA attendance service as necessary.

Submits referrals to the LA as per their guidelines of any 10 unauthorised sessions.

Provides incentives for pupils with good and excellent attendance.

Head Teacher

Make any final decisions on acceptability of reasons for absence and then the authorisation or not of the absence.

To be the point of escalation for concerns regarding attendance.

To oversee the Attendance Officer's role and monitor attendance periodically.

Referral to LA Attendance Officer

When making a referral to the school's Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

Action already taken.

Up to date and comprehensive attendance record including reasons given.

Any SEN needs of the child.

Any other home circumstances and identified challenges with the parents.

Any health concerns or disability

Appendix A

Official registration codes.

Present (a.m.)	/
Present (p.m.)	\
Educated off-site	B
Other authorised circumstances	C
Dual registration (attending other establishment)	D
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	E
Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	G
Illness (not appointment)	I
Transition time (at other school)	J
Late (before the close of register)	L
Late (after registration closed)	U
Medical or dental appointment	M