Deaf Hill

Primary School

Attendance Policy 2025-2026

Approved by Local Governors – March 2026

Date for Review: September 2027

Headteacher: Mr Paul Newton

Chair of Governors: Mrs Claire Smith

At Deaf Hill Primary School, our aim is to ensure all children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential within an environment that is both safe and educationally stimulating. To help us achieve this it is imperative that children attend school every day and on time.

We are committed to:

• Promoting and modelling good attendance and punctuality
• Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality
• Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
• Ensuring that every child has access to a full-time education
• Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance, absence and punctuality data to identify pupils and families who require more support
• Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure high standards of attendance and punctuality
• Building and maintaining strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality and to enable targeted support to drive forward improvements

At Deaf Hill Primary School, we believe that successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires school and local partners to work collaboratively with families.

All partners should work together to:

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

Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation, setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

• Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
• Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
• Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

• Admissions
• Anti-Bullying
• Behaviour
• Complaints
• Mental Health and Wellbeing
• Safeguarding and Child Protection
• SEND
• Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Roles and Responsibilities

Improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility between the Governing Body, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

• Promoting the importance of attendance across the school's ethos and policies
• Making sure that the school's senior leaders fulfil their expectations and statutory duties
• Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
• Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
• Ensuring that staff receive adequate training in relation to attendance
• Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
• The link Local Academy Committee member responsible for attendance is Emily Pearce and can be contacted via telephone on 01642 244961

The Headteacher is responsible for:

• The implementation of this policy
• Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Governing Body
• Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
• Using data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

• Issuing fixed penalty notices – where necessary
• The Headteacher is Paul Newton and can be contacted via 01429 880358

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office each morning and each afternoon.
- Class teachers are responsible for speaking to children on return from absence to check on reasons
- and well-being of the child
- Class teachers are responsible for speaking to parents carers on collection to determine reasons for absence if school are unable to make contact with parents

School office staff will:

• Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
• Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers are expected to:

• Make sure their child attends everyday and on time
• Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
• Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
• Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils are expected to:

• Attend school every day on time and be ready to learn when they arrive.

By Law all children between the ages of 5 and 16 must receive a proper full time education. Those with parental responsibility are legally responsible for ensuring that this takes place.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment
See Appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8:50am on each school day.
The register for the morning session will close at 9am and will be kept open until 9:30am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:15pm / 1:15pm and will be kept open until 12:20pm / 1:20pm

Where children are accessing Alternative Provision we liaise with the school to records attendance and absence.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 6).

Parents / Carers should either:
• Telephone the school office
• Inform a member of staff on the yard or at the main reception at the start of the school day.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are concerns around children's welfare and they are absent for 3 days or more a home visit will be made on day 3 at the latest, if there are safeguarding concerns then this will on the first day of absence.

If authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school will make a home visit on day 3 at the latest to determine the whereabouts and safety of the child and leave a card to request parents make contact with school.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

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. Parents should provide proof of the appointment so that school are able to authorise this. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

• Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
• After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

• The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session. Where children are recorded as late this will be noted down and patterns are noted. Where patterns are noted parents are spoken to initially by class teachers and then by a senior leader where support will be offered.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

• Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask siblings in school or make a home visit.
• Identify whether the absence is approved or not
• Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
• Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, parents are informed in Autumn and Spring Term at parent consultations and through end of year reports.

Where school have concerns regarding attendance this will be highlighted through phone calls or letters.

Class awards and letters are provided to celebrate excellent attendance with children and parents.

<u>Authorised and unauthorised absence</u>

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as death of a parent or an unavoidable absence due to attending a funeral where no other arrangements can be put on

place, and absence is kept to a minimum. Evidence could be requested to enable the headteacher to authorise the absence.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, and where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. Leave of absence request forms are available from the school office. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence so that it can be authorised.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
• Illness and medical/dental appointments.
• Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
• The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
• One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
• Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Strategies for promoting attendance

School encourage children to access school everyday and through our engaging curriculum, breakfast clubs, wider opportunities through sport and after school clubs and fun and engaging lunchtimes.
We celebrate weekly attendance in assembly each week, sharing successes and rewarding the best attendance across school.

Attendance monitoring

1. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT .
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Headteacher.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not
established are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. Office staff will make a phone call home, to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. (Letter 1)
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the Headteacher/office staff contacts the parents to discuss
this. (Letter 2)
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the Headteacher/Trust Attendance Lead to set improvement targets. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the Local Authority. (Attendance Action Plan)

8. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home or a telephone call made from the office staff to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
9. If targets are not met, the senior leaders make a referral to the Local Authority. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents . If there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.
(Durham Led ACC procedures)
10. If attendance continues not to improve then court proceedings will be invoked, and this could lead to a fine or custodial sentence.

Monitoring whole school attendance

The school will:
• Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
• Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:
• Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
• Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:
• Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
• Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:
• Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
• Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
• Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, e.g. Early Help.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Paul Newton (Headteacher) . At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

Support

The school will:
• Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
• Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
• Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
• Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
• Child protection and safeguarding policy
• Positive Behaviour and Relationships policy

Legislation and guidance

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- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Appendix 1: DfE Attendance Codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024'

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

W	**Work experience**	**The pupil is on a work experience placement**

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	**Authorised leave of absence**	**The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances**
C1	**Leave of absence**	**The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad**
C2	**Leave of absence – Part-time timetable**	**For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable**
E	**Suspended or permanently excluded**	**The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made**
H	**Authorised holiday**	**Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances**
I	**Illness**	**The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness**
J1	**Leave of absence**	**Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution**

M	**Medical/dental appointment**	**The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment**
R	**Religious observance**	**Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance**
S	**Study leave**	**Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations**
T	**Parents travelling for occupational purposes**	**The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade**
Q	**Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements**	**The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority**
Y1	**Unable to attend due to lack of transport**	**Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance**
Y2	**Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel**	**The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency**
Y3	**Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**	**Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use**
Y4	**Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed**	**Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly**
Y5	**Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention**	**If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing**

Y6	**Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**	**Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health**
Y7	**Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause**	**The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent**
Unauthorised absence		
G	**Unauthorised holiday**	**The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school**
N	**Reason not provided**	**Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)**
O	**Unauthorised absence**	**The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence**
U	**Arrival after registration**	**The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session**

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	**Not required to be in school**	**Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend**
Z	**Pupil not on admission register**	**Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school**

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix B: Letter 1

Dear Pupil Name: ******** Year Group: *********

Since returning to school in September, it has been noted that your child's attendance is below 96%, which is lower than school expectations.

Attendance is *****%

I have enclosed an up-to-date attendance printout for your information and would like to bring to your attention that **** has only attended ** out of a possible ** sessions, 1 session is equal to half a day, ** authorised absences and ** unauthorised absences.

If you would like to discuss the content of this letter or if you require support regarding your child's attendance, please contact the school office and they will arrange an appointment for you to come into school.

Please be aware that Early Help Assessment support (EHA) is available in school on request.

I look forward to an improvement in attendance.
Yours Sincerely

Paul Newton
Headteacher

Appendix C: Letter 2

Dear

I note that the attendance at Deaf Hill Primary School of ******* has continued to be unsatisfactory. I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since November to date, out of a possible ** school weeks, ** has so far only put in ** unbroken weeks. As you will appreciate this is a situation which is far from satisfactory.

Attendance is currently *** %, * authorised sessions of absence and ** unauthorised sessions of absence.

If ***** continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure ****'s regular attendance at school and therefore make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Paul Newton
Headteacher

Appendix D

Attendance Support Plan

Attendance Support Meeting							
School name				**School contact**			
Date plan put in place				**Next review**			
Child's name		**DoB**		**School**			
Child's name		**DoB**		**School**			
Child's name		**DoB**		**School**			
Parent/Carer		**Relationship to Pupil**			**Lives with pupil**		
Parent/Carer		**Relationship to Pupil**			**Lives with pupil**		
Present at meeting:							
Background *Current attendance? Attendance patterns? Services involved? FSM/Pupil Premium/SEN/EHCP/EAL/Child in Need/Child Protection/Child Looked After/Medical? Siblings?*							
Attendance Support Meeting Minutes							

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PLAN		
Identify worry/ barrier. What are we worried about?	**Action/Who/When**	**How do we know it's working well?**

Review 1 minutes

Review 2 minutes

Outcome