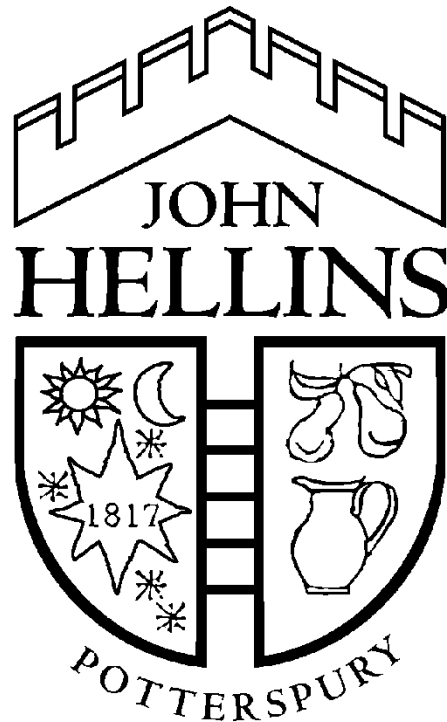


John Hellins Primary School



Attendance Policy

Policy Written:	March 2022
Approved by Head:	March 2022
Approved by Governors:	n/a
Review date	March 2024

1. Introduction

At John Hellins, we value excellent school attendance and recognise the essential part it plays in ensuring our children achieve to their best ability in all areas of school life. We are proud of our attendance record and constantly monitor individual attendance to ensure that our children are accessing all available aspects of their education. School staff work closely with families to ensure attendance in school is at the highest possible level.

2. Aims

- As a school, we aim to maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%.
- We promote parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and ensure that children and parents feel positive about school.
- We support parents and pupils to ensure that any poor attendance at school improves
- We will remind families, as obliged, that there is a legal requirement for children to attend school regularly.

3. Principles

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

4. Requests for Absence

All requests for absence must be made in writing to the head teacher who will review each request to see if it meets the criteria for authorisation (see below).

5. Unauthorised Absence

School attendance regulations changed from 1st September 2013 under Education Regulations 2013. As a result of the 2013 legislation, head teachers are not able to allow any holidays during term time. Any holiday taken will be treated as unauthorised regardless of the reasons for it.

Unauthorised absences may be reported to the Local Authority. Legal action may be taken against you if your child has unauthorised absences. Where an absence is deemed unauthorised parents/guardians may be liable to pay a penalty fine directly to the Local Authority per period of unauthorised absence. This penalty fine will be £60 per parent per child and will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court Proceedings. In exceptional circumstances, penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.

Parents requesting term time holiday will receive the letter in Appendix D informing them of this process.

Authorised Absence

The 2013 regulations allow head teachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples include:

- Illness (48 hours minimum for a sickness or stomach bug)
- Emergency medical or dental appointment
- Hospital scheduled appointments/treatment
- Days for specific religious observance
- Family or close friend bereavement
- Family crisis
- Other compassionate grounds
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day – this does not include travelling to the wedding unless it is abroad
- Offsite examinations, sports or performances
- Visit to a new school

The Head Teacher will not authorise term time holidays for recreational purposes.

6. Persistent Absence

Any child's attendance that falls below 90%, authorised or unauthorised, or any child not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, is classed by the Government as 'Persistent Absence'. Absence at this level impacts progress both academically and socially and will trigger our "Three Stage Process" (see Appendix One). This process enables us to support families in minimising this impact and ensure that school attendance is valued. Persistently absent pupils will be tracked and monitored carefully, using a RAG recording system - where there is no improvement in attendance, outside agencies will be involved as required.

7. Procedure for Notifying Absence

As a parent you need to:

- Ring or email daily to report any absence with the reason and to say when your child is expected to return
- Aim to arrange dental and doctors' appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Keep us updated by telephone, letter or email if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

Failure to communicate as required could result in a child's absence being marked as unauthorised. The school will determine if this is the case. Unexplained absences will be followed up by phone calls and home visits and the involvement of outside agencies where required.

8. Punctuality

Morning registration is prompt at 9am. We have a 15 minute dropping off period from 8:40 - 8:55am. The doors open at 8.40 am. It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to register the children for attendance, prepare them for the day, and undertake interventions or reading. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. Arrival after the close of registration at 9am will be marked as late and we will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- Take our school's details so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move

9. Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given the above information, and the school cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Social Services, the police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

10. Appendices

Appendix One - Three Stage Process

Attendance will be reviewed by the Head teacher and Wellbeing Leader at the end of every half term.

- Stage 1 - Where any child's attendance falls below 90%, or any child is not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 1 Letter will be sent home by post (see Appendix A).
- Stage 2 - If, during the following half term, attendance has not increased or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 2 Letter will be sent home by post. This letter will set a target of 96% attendance for the subsequent half term.
- Stage 3 - If during the half term following the Stage 2 Letter, attendance has not increased to the target set, or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 3 Letter will be sent home by post – which will include a date for the parents to attend a meeting with school to discuss the attendance and will also trigger a referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team

Note – where the target of 96% is met or exceeded, a positive acknowledgement letter will be posted home.

Appendix A – Stage 1 Letter

Dear Parents of xxxxxxxx,

Attendance

At John Hellins, we value excellent school attendance and recognise the essential part it plays in ensuring our children achieve to their best ability in all areas of school life. We are proud of our attendance record and constantly monitor individual attendance to ensure that our children are accessing all available aspects of their education.

Working alongside the Local Authority, we are required to identify any child's attendance that falls below 90%, or any child not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, as this is classed by the Government as 'Persistent Absence'. In these instances, we are required to support the child and family to ensure that the attendance at school improves. We are also obliged to remind families that there is a legal requirement for children to attend school regularly.

During the xxxxxxxx half term, xxxxxxxx was absent for xxxxxxxx sessions. Whilst we realise that these absences have been explained, it is important that we highlight the significant potential impact on your child of this - both academically and socially. As such, we would like to offer support to you and your child, to minimise the impact on your child's progress, and to ensure that school attendance is valued and that you and your child feel positive about school.

I would ask that you consider these attendance figures, and if you would like support with any difficulties, or to discuss any issues surrounding attendance, please contact Gill Wilcox (01908 542405 gwilcox@johnhellins.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

Jodie Matthews
Head Teacher

Appendix B – Stage 2 Letter

Dear Parents of xxxxxxxxxx,

Attendance

At John Hellins, we value excellent school attendance and recognise the essential part it plays in ensuring our children achieve to their best ability in all areas of school life. We are proud of our attendance record and constantly monitor individual attendance to ensure that our children are accessing all available aspects of their education.

Working alongside the Local Authority, we are required to identify any child's attendance that falls below 90%, or any child not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six week

period, as this is classed by the Government as ‘Persistent Absence’. In these instances, we are required to support the child and family to ensure that the attendance at school improves. We are also obliged to remind families that there is a legal requirement for children to attend school regularly.

We wrote to you in xxxxxxxxxxxx. At the time of the letter sent to you, xxxxxxxxx’s attendance was xxxxxxxxxxxx. This figure was xxxxxxxxxxxx at the end of the xxxxxxxx term during which xxxxxxxx had xxxxxxxxxxxx absent sessions. Whilst we realise that these absences have been explained, it is important that we highlight the significant potential impact on your child of this, both academically and socially. As such, we are setting a target of 96% for xxxxxxxxx’s attendance during this half term. We will review this at the end of the half term and may invite you to come in for a meeting to discuss xxxxxxxxx’s attendance and how we can support you and xxxxxxxxx to increase this. As required by law, we may also refer xxxxxxx’s attendance figures to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Matthews
Head Teacher

Appendix C – Stage 3 Letter

Dear Parents of

Attendance

We wrote to you in xxxx this year regarding xxxx’s attendance. At the time of the letter sent to you, xxxxx’s attendance was xxxx%. We set a target for this past half term for xxxxx to achieve 96% attendance. Xxxxx’s attendance has been xxxxx %. As communicated in my previous letter, we would now like to meet with you on xxxx at xxxxxx to discuss xxxx’s attendance and how we can support you and xxxx to increase this. Please can you confirm your attendance to me, or the School Office.

As required by law, we will also refer xxx’s attendance figures to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Matthews
Head Teacher

Appendix D – Unauthorised Absence Letter

Dear Parents of xxxxx

Thank you for your email notifying us that xxx will be absent from school xxxx. As you may be aware Headteachers are no longer allowed to authorise absence during term time. We will therefore record these absences on the register as unauthorised. Please be aware that taking

your child on holiday in term time may incur a fixed penalty fine of £60 per parent per child from West Northamptonshire County Council. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Please refer to our website for more information regarding term time absence:
<https://www.johnhellins.co.uk/page/?title=Holidays&pid=74>

Yours sincerely

Jodie Matthews
Head Teacher