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2026-27

Policy owner / Senior Attendance Champion	Mrs Gemma Lingham, Acting Headteacher
Academic year	2026-27
Effective from	September 2026
Governing Body approval	To be confirmed
Next review	September 2027, or earlier if guidance changes
School contact	01952 387570 a2051@taw.org.uk

1. Policy status and purpose

This policy applies to all pupils registered at High Ercall Primary School, including children in Reception. It is published for parents and carers and is available in hard copy on request.

High Ercall Primary School is committed to securing high attendance and punctuality because regular attendance supports learning, relationships, wellbeing, safeguarding and future life chances.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and is integral to our ethos: "High Expectations, High Ercall".

This policy has been updated for 2026-27 with particular regard to:

- Department for Education (DfE), Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance, July 2026.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, in force from 1 September 2026.
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026.
- Ofsted State-funded school inspection toolkit for use from 7 September 2026.
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) evidence on supporting attendance, including its evidence summary and 2026 evaluations.
- Telford & Wrekin local attendance procedures and the school-specific information supplied for term-time leave and penalty notices.

Our approach

Expect high attendance. Monitor carefully. Listen and understand. Remove barriers. Facilitate support. Formalise support where necessary. Use legal intervention only when appropriate and in line with the national framework and local arrangements.

2. Aims

- Create a welcoming, calm, safe and supportive school where pupils want to attend and are ready to learn.
- Promote strong attendance habits from the earliest point, including in Reception.
- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil while recognising that some pupils face greater barriers than others.
- Identify emerging patterns of absence early and respond before they become entrenched.
- Work respectfully with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance.
- Use attendance data intelligently at individual, cohort and whole-school level.
- Prioritise vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils with medical needs, children with a social worker, young carers and pupils experiencing persistent or severe absence.
- Ensure attendance practice supports safeguarding and complies with statutory registration requirements.
- Work effectively with Telford & Wrekin Attendance Support Team, health, social care, the Virtual School and other partners where appropriate.

3. Why attendance matters

DfE guidance describes attendance as an essential foundation for positive outcomes. Regular attendance supports attainment, wellbeing, friendships, routines and successful transition. It is also an important protective factor for vulnerable pupils.

The school will promote attendance positively and sensitively. We will recognise improvement, effort and positive habits without shaming pupils for absence that may be outside their control or discriminating against pupils with protected characteristics, SEND or medical needs.

EEF evidence does not support a single, universal solution to absence. The most promising approaches combine strong relationships and parental communication with responsive, individualised support that addresses the specific barriers faced by a pupil or family. Our attendance practice therefore focuses on relationships, early identification, targeted support and careful evaluation rather than relying on one intervention or one member of staff.

4. Legal responsibilities and regular attendance

Parents of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education. Where a child is registered at school, parents must ensure that the child attends regularly. Regular attendance means attending all sessions, for the full duration of those sessions, except where a statutory reason applies.

For the purposes of attendance law, 'parent' includes natural parents, people with parental responsibility and those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child.

The school keeps electronic admission and attendance registers and uses the national attendance and absence codes. The register is taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all pupils.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

- Promote attendance across the school's ethos and policies and set high expectations for leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure leaders fulfil statutory duties and that the attendance policy is effective, accessible and reviewed.
- Regularly review attendance data and trends, including benchmarking and the attendance of vulnerable cohorts.
- Provide support and challenge on persistent and severe absence and the impact of attendance strategies.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training and that attendance improvement is adequately resourced.
- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils while support and reasonable adjustments are adapted to individual need.

5.2 Senior Attendance Champion - Mrs Gemma Lingham, Acting Headteacher

- Set the strategic vision for attendance and ensure attendance remains a whole-school priority.
- Maintain oversight of attendance and absence data, including vulnerable groups and pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

- Ensure systems for registration, first-day response, support, escalation and safeguarding are implemented consistently.
- Lead or oversee supportive and challenging conversations with families where attendance needs to improve.
- Coordinate work with the local authority Attendance Support Team, EWO and wider agencies.
- Report to governors on trends, priorities, actions and impact, and review the school attendance strategy throughout the year.

5.3 Attendance team and all staff

Day-to-day attendance work is supported by the school office/administration team and Business Manager. Class teachers are central to creating a welcoming environment, noticing changes, promoting good attendance and sharing concerns promptly. All staff must understand the school's attendance procedures and the safeguarding significance of unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence.

- Office staff check registers, follow up unexplained absence and ensure codes are entered accurately.
- The Business Manager supports daily monitoring, data analysis, liaison with families and local authority attendance services.
- Class teachers take registers accurately and promptly, promote belonging and positive attendance, and report concerns.
- The DSL and safeguarding team consider whether absence may indicate safeguarding risk and respond under safeguarding procedures.
- All staff receive attendance information/training appropriate to their role.

6. Parent/carer responsibilities

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.
- Ensure their child arrives on time and ready to learn.
- Telephone 01952 387570 or email a2051@taw.org.uk before 9.15am on every day of unexpected absence, giving a clear reason.
- Keep the school informed where an absence is likely to continue and engage with support offered.
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where this is not possible, keep absence to the minimum time necessary.
- Provide up-to-date contact details and emergency contacts and notify school promptly of changes.
- Apply in advance to the Headteacher for any proposed leave in term time and do not assume leave will be authorised.
- Work with school and partner agencies to address barriers where attendance is causing concern.

7. School day, registration and punctuality

The school day begins at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm. Children should not be left on the playground before 8.40am because no adult is on duty before this time.

The morning register is taken promptly at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before it closes are recorded as late (L). The gates close at 9.00am. The morning register closes at 9.30am; pupils arriving after this time without an authorised reason are recorded using code U, which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

Persistent lateness will be followed up with parents/carers and may be discussed with the EWO/Attendance Support Team. Punctuality is monitored alongside attendance because repeated lateness affects learning and routines.

8. Reporting and following up absence

Parents/carers must contact the school office before 9.15am on every day of absence. Informing a class teacher alone is not sufficient.

Where no reason has been received, the school will follow up promptly. This may include:

- telephone calls, emails or messages to parents/carers and other listed contacts;
- contacting alternative emergency contacts where parents/carers cannot be reached;
- considering known vulnerabilities, patterns of absence and the child's home circumstances;
- contacting professionals already supporting the family, where appropriate and lawful;
- a home visit through school/local attendance arrangements where concerns persist;
- referral to children's social care and/or requesting a police welfare check where safeguarding concerns require this.

9. Safeguarding, KCSIE 2026 and children absent from education

Attendance is a safeguarding issue as well as an educational one. KCSIE 2026 makes clear that absence from education, particularly repeated or prolonged absence, and children missing education can be a vital warning sign of safeguarding concerns. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures where absence gives rise to concern.

The school will not wait for a fixed attendance percentage or number of days before acting on a safeguarding concern. The response will reflect the child's circumstances, known risks, vulnerability and the pattern or nature of the absence.

Where a pupil has a social worker, youth offending team worker or other lead professional, the school will work with them as appropriate. Where a child is missing education or their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow statutory and local authority procedures and will only remove a pupil from the admission register where a lawful ground under the 2024 Regulations applies and required enquiries have been completed.

10. Early Years Foundation Stage

The school applies high expectations for attendance to Reception pupils to establish positive habits from the outset, while recognising that compulsory school age begins later. The EYFS statutory framework applies to school-based early years provision and requires providers to follow up absences in a timely manner.

For Reception-aged children, if a child is absent for a prolonged period or absent without notification, the school will attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, consider patterns and trends, the child's and family's vulnerabilities and home circumstances, and refer safeguarding concerns to children's social care and/or request a police welfare check where appropriate.

This policy is the school's attendance policy for EYFS purposes and is shared with parents/carers. It sets out expectations for reporting absence and the action the school will take following unexplained or prolonged absence.

11. Illness, medical appointments and health-related absence

Pupils who are too ill to attend should remain at home. Parents should provide enough information for the school to understand the reason for absence and code it accurately. The school will not routinely require medical evidence for every illness. Evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or where it is needed to support the pupil effectively, and requests will be proportionate.

Where mental or physical ill health, a long-term condition or disability affects attendance, the school will work with the pupil, family, SENCo, health professionals and local authority as appropriate. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral support, an individual healthcare plan, reintegration planning or alternative provision where statutory criteria are met.

Remote education is not a routine substitute for attendance. Where used for an individual pupil who cannot attend, it will be a last resort and form part of a plan to support reintegration, in line with DfE guidance.

12. SEND, disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable groups

High expectations apply to all pupils, but equal treatment does not always mean identical treatment. The school will make reasonable adjustments and tailor support where barriers arise from SEND, disability, medical needs or other circumstances.

Attendance data will be reviewed specifically for pupils who may face greater barriers, including:

- pupils with SEND or disabilities;
- disadvantaged pupils and pupils eligible for free school meals;
- children with a social worker or previously known to children's social care;
- young carers;
- pupils with long-term medical or mental health needs;
- looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- pupils experiencing family difficulties, housing instability or other significant barriers;
- pupils who are persistently or severely absent.

Support may include a named consistent adult, meetings with the pupil and family, reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, Early Help, home-school plans, health input, social care involvement, support from the Virtual School, or other appropriate services. The impact of interventions will be reviewed and adjusted.

13. Monitoring, data and thresholds

Attendance is monitored daily and analysed regularly at pupil, group and whole-school level. The school uses local and national comparison information to benchmark performance and identify patterns. Leaders and governors focus on both overall attendance and whether targeted pupils and groups are improving over time.

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions (attendance of 90% or below). Severe absence means missing 50% or more of possible sessions. These thresholds trigger increased attention, but the school may intervene earlier where patterns, vulnerability or context indicate a need.

The school may use staged school communications and Attendance Support Meetings to support improvement. Any school thresholds such as 95% are prompts for review and conversation, not automatic grounds for punitive action or automatic demands for medical evidence.

14. Persistent and severe absence

Where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, the school will intensify support. The starting point is to listen to the pupil and family, identify barriers and agree actions. Support will be reviewed for impact.

Where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance), the school will consider the heightened safeguarding and welfare implications and work closely with the local authority and relevant services. Where voluntary support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, support may be formalised through the local authority and legal intervention considered where appropriate.

15. Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, for example as part of a medical or reintegration plan. It will not be used to manage behaviour.

- Parents/carers and the school must agree the arrangement.
- It must have a clear purpose, review dates and proposed end date.
- It must be in place for the shortest time necessary, with the ambition of return to full-time education.
- The pupil and parents will be involved in reviews.
- A social worker will be kept informed where the pupil has one.
- For a pupil with an EHCP, the local authority will be consulted so the support package can be reviewed.
- Attendance will be recorded using the appropriate national codes.

16. Promoting attendance and belonging

Good attendance is a learned behaviour. The school promotes attendance through relationships, a welcoming environment, clear routines, parent communication, assemblies, new-parent meetings and everyday conversations.

Recognition will focus on positive habits and improvement and will be used sensitively. The school may celebrate class or individual improvement where this does not disadvantage pupils whose absence is linked to disability, medical need or circumstances beyond their control.

The school's behaviour expectations - Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Ready - and its 5Rs support a calm, inclusive environment where pupils feel they belong and want to attend.

17. Leave of absence in term time

Parents should always apply to the Headteacher in advance for any request for leave in term time using the school request form. Leave should not be booked before permission has been granted. Schools should not authorise leave retrospectively, so leave taken without an advance request will normally be unauthorised.

Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff formally delegated by the Headteacher, may authorise a request and determine the duration. The school will consider every request individually. The school will not operate a blanket ban and will not operate a blanket policy that automatically grants leave.

Leave in term time will only be authorised where the Headteacher considers that exceptional circumstances apply. Generally, the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation is not an exceptional circumstance. Parents will be informed of the decision in writing, which may be provided by hand, email to the registered email address or post.

If a request is refused and the pupil is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

18. National Framework for Penalty Notices and Telford & Wrekin arrangements

In July 2026 the DfE reviewed and amended the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' statutory guidance. This guidance sits alongside the 'National Framework for Penalty Notices' which the Government introduced in August 2024 and 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

In Telford & Wrekin it is the delegated responsibility of the Attendance Support Team to issue Penalty Notices following referrals from schools, and only they can issue Penalty Notices relating to school absence.

It is only the Headteacher (or delegated member of School Staff) who has the discretion to authorise any request for leave in term time and it is also they that decide the duration of that leave. Parents must submit a request for leave in term time to the school, allowing ample time for consideration to be given. Any circumstances that parents wish to be considered should be included in the request. Holidays should not be booked before permission is granted. The legislation does not allow for any school to adopt a blanket ban, all requests for leave in term time will be considered to determine if there are exceptional circumstances and parents must be notified of that decision.

The government introduced changes in legislation from August 2024 that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and sessions do not have to be consecutive.
- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met, so for eight sessions of unauthorised absence. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday
- Penalty Notices increased to £160 from August 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.

- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. as is usually the case for an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included in schools' attendance policy and on school's website, or a warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence)'.

In developing and publishing the National Framework, the Government renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this initiative. The legislation does not allow for blanket bans, therefore all requests for leave in term time will be considered. However, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance - July 2026, National Framework for Penalty Notices 2024 and local Code of Conduct, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (amended July 2026) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 37.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent, emailed to the registered email address of the parent held on school records or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10 week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Please follow the links below for more detailed information:

[Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/>

19. Formal support and legal intervention

Where voluntary support has not been successful or has not been engaged with, the school will work with the local authority to consider formal support. Depending on the circumstances this may include an attendance contract, Education Supervision Order, Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice or prosecution. Legal intervention is not a substitute for appropriate support and will be considered case by case.

20. Admissions, transfers and children missing education

The school will maintain the admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Parents leaving High Ercall Primary School should provide the new school, address and leaving date promptly.

Where the destination of a pupil is unknown, the school will make reasonable enquiries and liaise with Telford & Wrekin Council. A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register where one of the lawful grounds in the 2024 Regulations applies. Safeguarding procedures remain active throughout.

21. Collection arrangements

Parents/carers should collect children promptly at the end of the school day or after-school activity and notify the school office as early as possible of changes to collection arrangements. Persistent or significant late collection will be managed under the school's safeguarding procedures, including contacting emergency contacts and other agencies where necessary.

22. Monitoring, review and publication

The Senior Attendance Champion will review the effectiveness of this policy and the school's attendance strategy throughout the year. Governors will receive regular information about whole-school attendance, persistent and severe absence, vulnerable groups, punctuality, support and impact.

The policy will be published on the school website, shared with families joining the school, and highlighted at the beginning of each academic year and whenever significant changes are made. Pupil and parent views will inform review where appropriate.

23. Evidence and statutory framework

- DfE (2026), Working together to improve school attendance - statutory guidance, July 2026.
- DfE (2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- DfE (2026), Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026.
- Ofsted (2026), State-funded school inspection toolkit, for use from 7 September 2026.
- Education Endowment Foundation, Supporting attendance: summary of evidence; and EEF/YEF attendance evaluations published May 2026.

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Telford & Wrekin local attendance procedures / information supplied to schools for 2026.

Appendix 1 - Parent guide: requesting leave in term time

Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should complete the school request form and submit it in sufficient time for the Headteacher to consider the request before the proposed absence. Parents are strongly advised not to make non-refundable bookings before receiving the school's written decision.

There is no automatic right to leave in term time. Each application is considered individually and on its own merits. The Headteacher will consider the circumstances presented and, if leave is authorised, determine the period authorised.

Generally, a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation will not amount to an exceptional circumstance. If leave is not authorised and the pupil is absent, the absence will be unauthorised and may be referred to Telford & Wrekin Attendance Support Team under the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

The school may consider relevant factors including the circumstances giving rise to the request, the impact of the absence on the child's education, any known vulnerabilities or family circumstances, and any other relevant information. The decision will not be based on a blanket rule.

Appendix 2 - Request for leave during term time

Date.....

To: The Headteacher of:.....(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name)

from (date) to (date) for school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) and (parent/carer).....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) School(s)

.....

.....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school

Current Attendance.....% Last Year’s Attendance.....%

Number of unauthorised absence sessions during previous 10 school weeks

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed?

What action are other schools taking?

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Job Title.....

Print Name Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent