



Hazeldown Primary School

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Hazeldown School Attendance Brochure



Missing school . . . missing out!

We look forward to welcoming you into
our school community.



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SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

We request that parents support attendance in line with statutory expectations and the expectations within our Home-School Agreement.

Attendance is currently a focus for all schools. Whilst we compare favourably with the national average figures for attendance, these are not high enough and we will be working hard this year to support getting all of our children being in school as much as they are able to.

We are really keen to work with parents to support your children being in school as much as possible whilst also being required to follow the Department for Education guidance and Devon County Council's application of this. Whilst we do understand parental perspectives and wishes, we are also very aware that these don't always match with national guidelines and expectations. We ask that you work with us to enable your children to have the best start in life through attending school as much as possible and developing habits and attitudes which will support their future success.

The images below are from the government's 'Moments matter' campaign. Every day in school is important and does matter. Learning in primary school is not like it was when we, as parents, were at school – it is really focused, progressive and experiences and knowledge build session by session. Children at Hazeldown are taught to understand their learning, take ownership of it and, through the use of the metacognition cycle, plan, monitor and evaluate their learning during lessons and over time. Every lesson is therefore really important.

Almost every time a child is feeling under the weather or is anxious about coming to school, they will be absolutely fine once they are here. Unless they have a temperature, they should come to school with a cough, snuffle or cold. If they would be better off staying in at break, we will accommodate this and if they aren't up to active PE sessions we will find them a valuable, calmer role such as observing and feeding back to their peers. If they do go downhill, please be assured that we will call you.



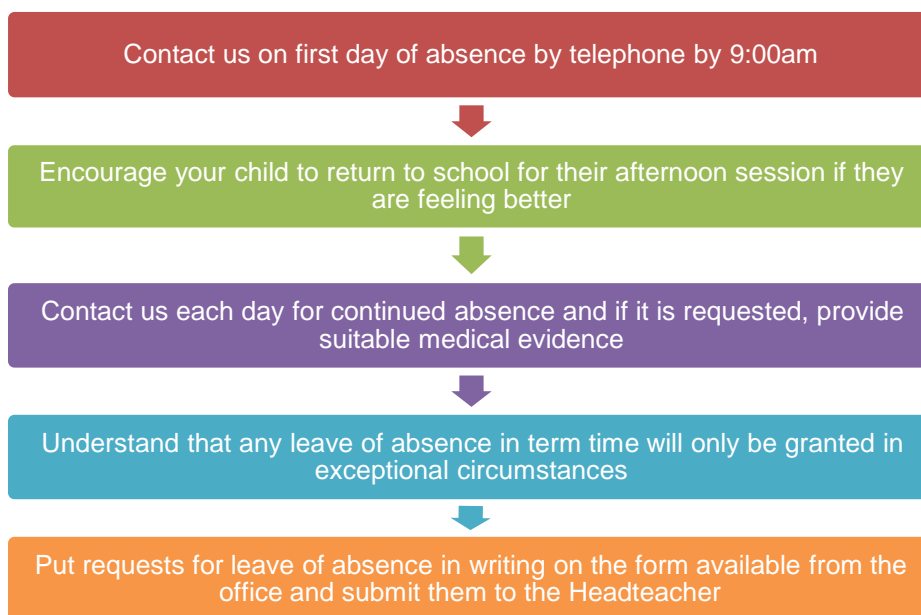
If they are feeling under the weather, please support your child by not telling them that if they feel poorly, they can tell an adult and you will come and collect them. This happens more than you might think and, in most cases, they will have exercised this option by 10:00am at the latest.

We are able to administer Calpol to children – you just need to complete the green permission forms from the office beforehand.

Contacting School About Absence

If your child is unable to come to school, please let the office know before 9:00am. Please make sure that we have a clear, and valid reason for their absence. If you do not let us know in the morning, we will need to then spend time calling you. We will also be unable to cancel your lunch order so you will still be charged.

Please follow this process if your child is going to be absent from school:



The following points explain the attendance process in more detail:

Illness

In order to make informed decisions about their pupil's fitness for attending school, the NHS have a really useful guide for parents which clarifies whether your child is too ill to attend school:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

This gives clear guidelines to follow but, if you are still unsure, you can call the office to check.

Whilst there are some illnesses such as diarrhoea and vomiting where you cannot bring your child to school, you can bring them with general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above.

Authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Headteacher or members of the office staff team, who are delegated to carry out this task.



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In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence. However, this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis.

Sickness and Diarrhoea

Following a bout of sickness and diarrhoea children need to be clear of symptoms for 48 hours after the last bout before returning to school. Parents need to make the judgement about whether their child is fit to return to school after this time.

Medical Appointments including Dentist

As far as possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, parents should let us know **prior** to the appointment. Where there are concerns about attendance, we may request to see official confirmation of the appointment.

Pupils should attend before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the pupil's record. Should a pupil arrive late following an appointment, they should report to the school office to be signed in by a member of the office staff team.

Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code. Please note that although the absence is authorised, it will still be accountable on the child's overall percentage attendance figure.

Time out of school during term time, including weddings and funerals

The changes the DfE have put in place for this year have removed what was an 'H' code from the register process, which is an indication of further tightening up of expectations for children to be in school during term time. Time out of school for holidays will not be authorised. This is what the H code covered. There are fewer occasions where we will be able to class time away from school as an 'exceptional circumstance' and authorise absence.

We will continue to authorise time to attend a wedding, but these will only be of close relatives i.e. siblings, parents (or another family member who is bringing up the child) or brothers and sisters of the child's parents. We may ask for confirmation, for example we may request to see a copy of your wedding invitation.

We will also authorise absence to attend a funeral, but for a slightly wider family group than weddings.

Visits to look round secondary schools, or a music exam would be other examples of an appropriate reason to authorise absence. We work really hard to apply the national expectations fairly. If your reason doesn't fit, or you are unsure if it will be authorised, then please come and talk to us about it.

Please note that, the updated national guidance is clear that if you do not complete a request form for time out of school and later ask that it be retrospectively authorised, even if it might have been for a reason we would normally have classed as 'exceptional circumstances' and authorised, we are unable to go back and authorise the time.

Funerals and Weddings

For local funerals & weddings we will authorise one day of absence. For funerals and weddings that are not local, we will allow time for travelling, depending on where they are being held. We may ask for confirmation, for example we may request to see a copy of your wedding invitation.

Lateness

Children can come into school between 8.30am and 8.45am. Parents can choose within this timeframe to suit their needs. All children should be in their classrooms by 8:45am to be registered. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom for registration at 08:45am. The register closes at 09:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. If children arrive at school after 8:45am, they should come in through the front door to sign in.

If your child travels on the bus and it is late for any reason, they should come in through the front door to sign in and to let the office team know they were on the bus. This will avoid them being recorded as late.

Ensuring your child is in school ready for the register is important for them. It can be really difficult for children to come in to school late, once learning has started. They have often missed key information and, more importantly, feel flustered and anxious, which can take quite some time to subside and impacts on their learning. 5 minutes late every day equates to 3 days of missed learning and 15 minutes late equates to two weeks of missed learning in a year.

Illness of other family members

If a parent is unwell and unable to get their child to school it will be marked as unauthorised. If you have no-one able to help, local taxi companies are used to bringing children to school safely. If you telephone the school office informing them of the situation they will ensure a member of staff at the school gate sees your child in to school safely. If they arrive late, due to the unforeseen circumstances, ask the driver to bring your child to the door. Office staff will then register them and make sure they get to class.

Clarification on Penalty Notices

The following points regarding holidays and avoidable absences are a reminder so there won't be any unwelcome surprises in the future, should there be a situation where your child accumulates a number of unauthorised absences.

In September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools



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authorising absence requests. In addition on 19 August 2024, an amendment to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force and set out a new National Framework for issuing penalty notices. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'. A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

Please remember that, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

This school will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. In addition to natural parents and any person with parental responsibility, any person considered to have day to day care and control of a young person is deemed to be a parent in matters relating to education and school nonattendance (s576 Education Act 1996).

From 19th August 2024, following changes to secondary legislation, the amount charged in a penalty notice was increased.

The first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause, and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the school's responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstance).



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How we keep in touch with you about your child's attendance

We regularly monitor attendance and will contact you if there are concerns. This may be by letter, by telephone call or you may be asked to attend a meeting to jointly review how we can support ensuring your child in attending school as much as they are able to.

How does your child compare?

Many parents are unaware of the percentages which are viewed as acceptable regarding attendance. This is understandable because scoring 90% in a test or exam is really positive. 90% attendance, however, is not.

For clarity, attendance thresholds are as follows:

There are 190 school days each year: this means there are 175 non-school days a year.

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
95%	Improvement Required	9	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress
92%	Concern (Persistent Absence*)	19	
90%	Serious Concern **	30	Serious Concern Missing this much education is not fair on your child and will result in legal action

*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

** Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

If you are worried about your child's attendance the first action is to discuss your concerns with us directly. The school has specialist staff who may be able to help, and all schools work closely with Early Help, health professionals and local authority teams who may also be able to help if needed. We are committed to supporting you so it's important you contact us as soon as you have concerns.



How we celebrate attendance

Whole class attendance is celebrated weekly focusing on an intrinsic motivation for being in school, engaged in learning and ensuring they are making progress and preparing themselves for future life in line with our strap-line 'Learning for Living'.

Days absent – Weeks absent (per school year)	Percentage of school year missed.	Overall attendance (1 school year).
5 days (1 week)	2.6%	97.4%
10 days (2)	5.2%	94.8%
15 days (3)	7.9%	92.1%
20 days (4)	10.5%	89.5%
25 days (5)	13.2%	86.8%
30 days (6)	15.8%	84.2%
35 days (7)	18.4%	81.6%
40 days (8)	21%	79%
45 days (9)	23.7%	76.3%
50 days (10)	26.3%	73.7%
55 days (11)	28.9%	71.1%
60 days (12)	31.6%	68.4%
65 days (13)	34.2%	65.8%
70 days (14)	36.8%	63.2%
75 days (15)	39.4%	60.6%
80 days (16)	42.1%	57.9%
85 days (17)	44.7%	55.3%
90 days (18)	47.3%	52.7%
95 days (19)	50%	50%

- **190 days in school year (38 weeks).**
- **1% of this is 1.9 days.**
- **Therefore approximately every 2 days of school missed will lower the yearly percentage of a student/pupil by 1%.**

Holidays during term time are not acceptable reasons to be out of school and neither are day trips or birthday treats. If you avoid keeping your child out of school for these reasons, when there is a genuine reason to be away, it will have significantly less impact on their attendance figure.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss attendance, please speak to us. Our Attendance Officer is Mrs Radford and is the first port of call for questions or to request support. I have taken over the Attendance Champion role from Mr Goodenough and Mr Hardee and Miss Swainson are also key members of our attendance team. If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance, one of us, or occasionally another member of staff, may be in touch to talk through how we may be able to support.



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