

Hellingly Community Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Reviewed by: Lynn Hill

Date: November 2018

Signed by Headteacher:

Date: November 2018

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Date: November 2018

Date to be reviewed:

Date: November 2019

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Hellingly Community Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

This is underpinned by our vision that every child has the right to be able to Reach for the Stars.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- ❖ **truancy before or during the school day**
- ❖ **absences which have never been properly explained**
- ❖ **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Role of Parents and Carers

- to ensure that the aim is for their children to achieve 100% school attendance
- to ensure that pupils are on the school premises no later than 8.55am and not before 8.45am. Before 8.45am, pupils remain the responsibility of parents or carers
- to take children who are late to the main entrance to sign in
- to collect children promptly at the end of the school day, which finishes at 3.15pm. After 3.15pm, children are the responsibility of their parents or carers
- to collect children promptly from after school clubs
- to ensure that the school has current parent/carers and emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses

Absences for Medical Reasons

It is the responsibility of parents or carers:

- to notify the school by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, as early as possible and no later than 9.15am. The person advising the school that the child will be absent **MUST** have parental responsibility for the child. If another adult leaves a message, the school will confirm this instruction by telephoning the adult(s) with parental responsibility for the child as per our records.
- to agree a later registration time with the Headteacher if the child needs regular medical attention before coming to school. The child must always sign in on arrival
- to inform the office in writing or to provide Medical Appointment Cards if the child needs to attend a medical appointment in school time. Whenever possible, please try to make all appointments out of school hours
- to liaise with the school about specific family problems, which might cause absence

Absence for Holidays

Parents are strongly requested not to take holidays in term time.

Holidays taken in term time without the agreement of the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised and will be shown on the child's end of year report. Unauthorised holidays of five days or more will be notified to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service.

It is the responsibility of the parents or carers:

- to collect and complete a request for absence in term time form from the Headteacher and return it to school at least fourteen days before the requested period of absence
- to avoid booking a holiday in term time unless this has already been agreed by the Headteacher, due to exceptional circumstances.

Role of the School:

The school's role is:

- to register the children promptly and accurately
- to record absence appropriately, including signing in and out during school hours
- to record as late, pupils who arrive after 8.55am and before the close of registers at 9.15am

- to record as late, pupils who arrive after 1:15pm and before the close of registers at 1.30pm
- to record as unauthorised absences, pupils who arrive after the registers close at 9.15am/1.30pm
- to check registers daily for first day absence
- to telephone those parents who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence, priority being given to:
 1. children on the Protection Register or involved with Social Services such as LAC or those with child protection plans
 2. children in families where there is a particular concern
 3. children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact
- to send a letter home that day to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask them why the child is absent
- to keep records of all telephone calls and keep all letters concerning absence
- to monitor regularly absence and lateness, to look for patterns and to take appropriate action
- to involve the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service if a parent or carer fails to make first day contact on three occasions during one school year
- to alert the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service and seek advice regarding migratory, missing or removed children
- to inform the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service of any concerns regarding absence or punctuality
- to obtain details of telephone contacts for all pupils and to ensure that records are updated regularly by writing to parents to remind them of their responsibilities, whilst requesting current contact information. An emergency telephone number must be recorded for every pupil
- to send reminders regarding absence and punctuality on the school's regular newsletters
- to raise concerns regarding absence at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if necessary
- to discourage the practice of taking children out of school for odd days and holidays
- to report all unauthorised absence on the child's annual report
- to publish attendance data to parents
- to set attendance targets annually and monitor

The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged out of school time.

Frequent absence/poor attendance

The school aims always to work with parents/carers and support them in ensuring their child has a good attendance record. Attendance is monitored weekly and interventions applied as necessary to work with parents/carers to improve the child's attendance. Interventions will include:

- Letters to parents notifying you of our concerns
- Attendance meetings with parents
- Request for medical evidence
- Persistent lateness will trigger a letter notifying you

If absence is persistent or there is cause for concern, it is the school's duty to inform ESBAS.

If a child is off school for medical reasons and no letter is received on their return then a reminder is sent out with a slip. If school does not receive the slip or a letter then the absence will be unauthorised.

If a child is late for school five times then a letter is sent to the parents. If a child is late eight times or more, an attendance meeting will be held with the Headteacher and an individual 'register close' time of 9:05 am will be established. If a child is then late again it will be unauthorised. Ten unauthorised absences trigger a referral to ESBAS or fine.

Rewarding good attendance

The majority of pupils at Hellingly Community Primary School have a good attendance record. To reward this, the class each week with the best attendance is celebrated in the weekly newsletter.

95% and above – good green attendance group

90% - 94% – requires improvement amber attendance group

Below 90%- serious concern – red attendance group

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Crawford, Acting Headteacher
Mrs Hill, School Business Manager
Mrs Boorman, Secretary

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Hellingly Community Primary School Nov 2018