



Highfields Primary School Policy on Attendance





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Regular school attendance is very important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory age (5 years to 16 years) receive full-time education and that they arrive to school on time. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Punctuality

It is very important that classes make a prompt and effective start. Parents must ensure that their children arrive at school by 8.55a.m. for the morning session.

All children who arrive after this time are late and must get a late mark from the school office before entering school.

Any child arriving after the close of the register (9.10a.m.) will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session unless there are special circumstances.

"Overslept" is not a special circumstance.

Registers will be kept open longer during times of inclement weather.

This information is monitored closely by the school and the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer. If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge it will be dealt with in the following way:

- Parents will be invited to talk to the Headteacher
- A written warning will be sent to parents
- Continued lateness will be referred to the School Education Welfare Officer.

Reporting absences

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence stating the reason for the absence and preferably before the start of the school day.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.



A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if the child has a medical appointment.

All absences are monitored by the Headteacher on a weekly basis. **All** children are monitored when attendance falls below 90%. Continued absence will mean that parents/carers will be called to discuss any issues around attendance. If this does not improve then a referral will be made to the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents.

Unauthorised absences are those that 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
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If the school is satisfied that a child of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school because of illness, doctor/hospital or dentist appointments, then the absence will be treated as authorised.

Family Bereavements

The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person’s life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

Family Holidays

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance.

Leave of absence **will not** be granted unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Where leave is granted the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

Any period of leave taken without agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

We **will not** agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:



- During the first two weeks of a school year. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible
- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods – SATs for Year 2 and Year 6 and the Phonics screening in Year 1.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly.

Any child who has an attendance of 90% or less will receive a letter from the headteacher informing the parents/carers that attendance is becoming a concern. If the attendance continues to be an issue the headteacher will refer the child to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the local authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

School Initiatives

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents /carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report



- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the schools target for attendance

People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Headteacher and the Governing Body

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.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.