



Highfields Primary School Policy on Attendance



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Legal Framework:

- The Education Act 1996;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011.;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010

Principles

This policy respects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following aspects of the Convention relate most directly to this policy:

Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 28: All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.

Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

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 academy's 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 academy 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 academy office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the academy 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 academy 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 academy's Education Welfare Worker (EWW).

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

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

Unauthorised absences are those that the academy 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

Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which is subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine 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.



Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If the academy 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. The academy will ask to see evidence of medical appointments.

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 will attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% 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 a concern. If the attendance continues to be an issue the headteacher will refer the child to the Education Welfare Service



The Education Welfare Worker

Parents are expected to contact the academy 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 academy may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker 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 EWW 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.

Academy 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

Admissions Register

The academy keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the academy and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that



period; or, have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If the academy receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, then we will inform the Local Authority via electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst the academy will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Headteacher and the Governing Body

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