



# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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## **Aims**

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good, regular, punctual attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
- To improve overall punctuality, attendance and persistent absence
- To promote and support good attendance throughout formal education

## **Objectives:-**

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the Aims and Objectives to be met

## **Actions**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information,
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the School Development Plan
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children or young people.

## **Procedures and Attendance Strategies at Hawthorn Primary School**

- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session and will inform the office staff, Parent Support Advisor or the Headteacher of any absences that are cause for concern or suspicion, as appropriate.
- Learners arriving late will report to the office where staff will keep a record of the times and reasons that a learner is late.

- Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill by 9:30a.m. and the expected day of return.
- The school office or Parent Support Advisor will make telephone/text contact with home during the first morning when a child is absent if the parent/carer have not notified the school.
- Where a learner is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted personally to discuss the pattern of absences by the Head, Parent Support Advisor or by letter.
- The Head and Parent Support Advisor (PSA) will monitor absences and will meet every 3 weeks to evaluate attendance.
- Procedures to monitor and follow up absences are described in the flowchart at Appendix 1.
- The Head and PSA collate attendance data to monitor attendance patterns of different pupil groups, including Looked After Children (LAC) and persistent absentees (PA children) with attendance falling below 96%.
- The school will liaise with Education Welfare Officers to follow up absences that are suspicious or causing concern.
- The PSA will provide positive support to individual families to help address issues which are impacting on punctuality and attendance
- The PSA will provide positive support to individual pupils to help address issues which are impacting on punctuality and attendance
- Where necessary the school will work closely with the LA to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school
- Individual children and classes will be rewarded for good attendance with a range of incentives
- Children will be offered a varied, relevant and stimulating curriculum within a safe and caring environment which ensures that they enjoy school and are keen to attend.

The school will do all that it can to ensure that learners come happily, willingly and punctually to school to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

## **Consultation Process**

### **1. The Attendance Group**

The Attendance Group will meet periodically to review this policy and make any changes, which are deemed supportive to the aims of the policy.

### **2. The Governing Body**

The final policy, after consultation, will be presented for approval to the whole Governing Body.

### 3. The Parent(s)/carer(s)

**Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:-**

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- On the school website

### 4. The Children or Young People

**Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:-**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

#### **Time schedule for implementation**

- This first edition of this policy will be in place by November 2015
- It will be reviewed annually.

#### **Procedure**

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

##### **• Authorised**

Where the school approves pupil absence for example, family bereavement, religious observance.

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child be absent. Please let us know and we will do our best to deal with it sympathetically.

##### **•Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Behaviour issues in school
- Going for a family day out

- Sleeping in after a later night
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, personally at the office by Email ([admin@hawthorn.doncaster.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hawthorn.doncaster.sch.uk)) or by appointment
- If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s) or carers, then the school will contact the home by telephone or text message on the initial day. **This contact needs to be recorded in the register (Sims) and in PSA log book**
- The head teacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Children or young people with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the school.

## Identification and Referral

### Step One

When a child or young person is identified as giving cause for concern with regard to attendance or attendance falls below 96%, the class teacher will inform the Parent Support Adviser (PSA) who will investigate the circumstances and send out Letter 1 if necessary. Following this letter there will be a two to four week monitoring period when the school will closely monitor the attendance of the child or young person concerned.

Step **Two** and **Three** are interchangeable.

### Step Two

The monitoring process has continued for the last two to four weeks. If the child or young person's attendance has improved then no further action is necessary.

If the child or young person's attendance has not improved, then it may be decided to send **attendance Letter 2**. This will inform the parent(s)/carer(s) that no further absence will be authorised. It will also advise parent(s)/Carer(s) that the next step may be to refer to the Education Welfare Officer if the child or young person's attendance does not improve and that it is their legal duty to ensure full school attendance.

### Step Three

The school may invite the parent/carer into school for a meeting and complete an Attendance Support Plan.

### Step Four

If attendance has improved school may want to continue to monitor the situation for a further four weeks and if improvement continues it may be decided that no further action is necessary. If the child or young person's attendance has not improved, the school would refer to the Education Welfare Officer.

Schools are recommended to write to parents to advise them that a referral has been made.

The referral should consist of:

- Referral Form
- Copies of all correspondence sent to parent(s)/carer(s)
- Copies of the Attendance Support Plan
- Print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.
- A CAF - if this is in place

This process clarifies that the child or young person now belongs to the officer for the school and it will enable the officer to make an assessment as to whether the child or young person goes on to the Targeted Case Work Delivery. This could lead to legal action or it could be a welfare case which could be ongoing.

## Completing the Register

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils can and should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children or young people formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons.
- Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers are required to be marked in ink or electronically. Any alterations should be Visible and explained. Tippex or similar products may not be used
- The register must be marked using the symbols referred to in The Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulation 2006 and the associated DfE guidance)
- Hawthorn school is to register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998 in order to use computerised registers
- Registers should be completed and submitted to the office by 9.00am.
- Electronic registers have to be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents.**

## Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8:50a.m. though the school doors open at 8:40a.m (8:30am and 12:15pm for Nursery). All pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Children not in school at 8:50a.m. is to be recorded in registers and on Sims a 'L', with no exceptions. Registers close at 9:20a.m. (12:30pm for afternoon Nursery) after which time arrival will be recorded as a 'U'.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken, including contact by letter, advising parents that punctuality is being monitored. If no improvement is evidenced after 3 weeks monitoring, parents are to be invited in to school to complete an action plan for improvement. Parents with children in Nursery will be contacted and asked if they still require the place. If a child has 3 consecutive lates then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Office.

### **Leave of absence during Term Time**

Parent(s)/carer(s) are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time.

The Government has implemented new legislation effective from 1 September 2013 which means that no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. When a parent/carer wishes to apply to take their child out of school during term time they must complete a leave of absence from which should be submitted to the school at least 6 term time weeks before the proposed start of absence. When a parent takes their child out of school during term time without the authorisation of the Head Teacher a request will be made to the Local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the school will consider the following:

#### Exceptional circumstances:

- a. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be evidenced by production of the policy document of the organisation.
- b. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- c. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided.

Where there are other factors which the head teacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances this may be referred to the local authority for advice.

Schools reserve the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in instances of unauthorised absence of leave. Decisions will be made on an individual basis and notification will be given of the school's decision at least one week from receiving the requested holiday form.

### **What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away during the first morning of absence
- Send a note when your child returns to school
- Try to make appointments outside school time
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Ensure the school has up to date contact details

### **If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the head teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service

You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation 01302 737235.

### **Leavers**

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to secondary school, parents/carers are requested to complete the school transfer form. An appointment needs to be made so it can be completed with the Headteacher.

### **Child Missing Education**

When pupils leave and parents/carers have not given us the above information, if they cannot be contacted, then the child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Legal Note**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on guidance produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Local Authority. We very much want to work with you to promote good attendance and avoid legal action.

However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) if unauthorised absences continue.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.



