



Policy Statement & Procedures

Attendance & Punctuality

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Attendance & Punctuality Policy Statement & Procedures



This document is applicable to the following:

✓	Parent/s & Carers	✓	Staff		Community
✓	Children	✓	Governors		Volunteers/Visitors
	Contractors				

Policy Statement

The school will:

- Manage attendance and punctuality in accordance with guidance from relevant legislation including the *Education Act 1996; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013; Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service*; and any subsequent Act/s and/or national/regional guidance;
- Record pupil attendance twice per day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- Make an entry in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school’s admission roll.
- Ensure parents are fully informed about their statutory duties towards attendance and punctuality for children of compulsory school age;
- Work in partnership with parents to achieve and maintain the highest levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Encourage children to attend school as often as possible (attendance) and that they arrive and leave school on time (punctuality) – it is equally important that children do not attend school when they are too unwell to do so.

Related Documents

This policy and procedures should be considered in relation to the guidance listed above and:

- Behaviour Policy Statement and Procedures

Governor for Attendance & Punctuality	Mrs. Maureen Roberts Safeguarding Governor
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Procedures

The law states that all school-aged children should attend school everyday.

He or she should only be absent if the reason is ‘unavoidable’. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined up to £1000. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) either as *Authorised* or *Unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes (see Appendix 1).

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; truancy; absences which have never been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (see Appendix 1).

Providing a reason may not be sufficient if the reason given is not 'unavoidable'. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping or as a treat. Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between school, parents and child. It is never better to cover their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful.

Warwickshire Attendance Service

Henry Hinde Infant School work in partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) provided by the Local Authority. If attendance and punctuality problems cannot be sorted out between the school and parents, the school may refer the child to the WAS Service. They will assist in trying to resolve the difficulties by agreement with parents and the school but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

The same applies to unauthorised leave of absences – these are automatically referred to the WAS Service, who may pursue a monetary fine to each parent.

Parents may wish to contact the WAS themselves to ask their advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the local education authority.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Henry Hinde Infant School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and all staff.

Pupils

All children are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Children who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the Principal.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school by 9.30am on the first morning of any absence. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns, which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Any problems are best sorted out between school, parents and child.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching staff). The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly any

absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. School will contact parents if they have not been notified a reason for absence by 9.30am on the first morning of absence. Parents will be contacted through ParentMail in the first instance. If no reason has been given by 10am a 'phonecall will be made to the home. If no response is gained then another 'phonecall will be made to anyone who has Parental Responsibility.

Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending school, parents should contact the school by 9.30 am on the first day. A child's absence from school is considered as unauthorized until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. For reasons of safety, parents will be telephoned and/or messaged via ParentMail by school to confirm absence if no notification of absence has been received by 9.30am. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. This should be discussed with the Principal or class teacher.

Requests for Leave of Absence

From 1st September 2013, legislation does not allow any school to authorise leave of absence (e.g. for holidays) during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st September 2013:

It is illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 39 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.

Please see Appendix 2 for further details on term time leave of absence requests.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than 5 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as late, i.e. after 8:50am. The school maintains a late book in the school office. Parents of any child attending school after 8:50am must sign the child into school in the late book and give a reason why their child is late. If a child arrives after the register has closed, this will affect their attendance.

Registration

Registration will be called by the classteacher in each of the classes at 8.55am and 1.00pm. Registers will close at 9.05am and 1.10pm. If a child fails to arrive before the registers close, they will be marked as 'absent'. Children who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the school office and be entered in the School Late Book. (The administrative staff/classteacher will amend the register entry to read 'absent/late'). Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the child has to be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence' for that reason.

Communication

As punctuality and attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, our school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Information on lateness, illness and absence is regularly given to parents in the weekly newsletter (which is issued to all parents and made available on the school website). A copy of the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy Statement and Procedures is also available on the school website. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason and the significance the school places on good attendance and punctuality.

Home/School agreements outline the responsibilities of parents and school for encouraging attendance and punctuality and the expectations of the school for its pupils.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication, e.g. through a translator.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the Reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left at the end of the school day.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this. This is why the school operates an open door policy and class teachers are available during the face-to-face handover of children at the start and end of every day providing a regular opportunity for parents and staff to communicate.

At this initial meeting parents are reminded to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Principal. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This can be done by telephoning. Parents can also call into school to see the class teacher to explain an absence. All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence the school contacts the parent/guardian.

Concerns

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern with the Principal.

The attendance registers and late book are reviewed every Friday. Patterns of lateness and/or absence are analysed. This information is discussed weekly on a case-by-case basis that considers the reasons for lateness or poor attendance. If concern is raised about a particular child, the following support is actioned:

Stage	Support
1	If a child is absent and no notification is received by 9.30am a ParentMail notification will be sent asking for a reason for the absence.
2	If no response is received after the Parentmail then a 'phonecall is made to the Primary carer.
3	If no response is ascertained from the 'phonecall, then other adults who have Parental Responsibility are called.
1	Any child whose attendance drops below 96% is discussed on a Friday. A decision is made whether to write to the parent notifying them of any missed sessions and/or lateness in the preceding week, e.g. <i>Your child has been absent from school for X days this week / Your child has been late on X days this week and they have missed a total of X minutes of learning time due to lateness this year. (Letter 1)</i> If this is not appropriate, then a 'phonecall is made by the Home/School Support Worker to discuss patterns of lateness and/or absence, and offer of support from school to improve punctuality and attendance.
2	If there is not an improvement over the next half-term then an appointment made with the Principal to help identify how to best halt a decline in punctuality and/or attendance, e.g. through Early Help, referral to other external agencies, etc.(Letter 2)
3	If no further improvement is made then a letter (Letter 3) will be sent to the parents informing them of the school's intention to make a referral to WAS to bring the identified child to their attention, including children who are considered 'persistently absent' (attendance below 90%).

Truancy

All the staff at Henry Hinde Infant School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Principal is notified, who then contacts the parent and WAS. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Principal talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. You will receive information each term in your child's report. The suggestions of parents and children about how to encourage attendance are especially welcome.

Henry Hinde Infant School has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. This school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1 – Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Authorised absences are a morning or an afternoon away from school for an agreed reason by the school.

Examples of reasons for which requests may be considered for authorisation:

- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong;
- There is a family bereavement;
- The child is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a child is attending graduation of an older sibling);
- The child is too unwell to attend school.

Unauthorised absences are when the school has not agreed the reason for a child's absence.

Examples of reasons for which requests would not be authorised include the following, and would be counted as unauthorised absence:

- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- To take the child shopping during school hours;
- Unexceptional special occasion (e.g. a birthday);
- The child is away from school on a family holiday;
- The child is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

Neither of these lists of examples are exhaustive and each absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Appendix 2 – Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Is the school allowed to authorise term time leave of absence requests?

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school. At Henry Hinde Infant School we place great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement. From 1st September 2013, legislation does not allow any school to authorise leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st September 2013:

It is illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 39 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.

What are ‘exceptional circumstances’?

There is no set guidance on what an ‘exceptional circumstance’ may be. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the Board of Governors to consider the circumstances surrounding each term time leave of absence request on an individual basis. However, at our school we interpret ‘exceptional’ in this context as being a one-off and unavoidable event of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about individual requests, **the normality will be that requests will be refused in line with the law.**

We believe our request is under exceptional circumstances. How do I apply for a term-time absence for my child/ren?

Applications for leave of absence during term time should always be made well in advance of the anticipated absence on the attached form. Forms can be obtained from the school office. Once completed, the form should be returned to the school office.

What happens if I take an unauthorised term time absence?

If parents take a term time leave of absence, which has not been authorised, they may have to pay a fixed penalty fine under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. This fine is £60 per parent if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent if paid within 28 days. Furthermore, your child’s school attendance record will be permanently marked with an unauthorised absence, which will be passed on to their future schools. If a child is absent for an extended period of time without an explanation, they may be removed from the school roll meaning that they will not have a place at the school to return to.

Additional Guidance from the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Principals/Head Teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Principals/Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence, which are made in advance and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.