



Hill Farm Primary

Attendance policy

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Review Cycle:	Annually
Review Date :	September 2024
Ratified by Governors on:	
Policy approved by:	Ruth Winters
Author:	Leah Hammond
Signed – Headteacher	Dawn Wilson

1. Aims

Our school aims to:

Ensure that all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a pupil's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged pupils in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Local Authority so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage pupils to have a sense of responsibility for their attendance.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance. As a school we always offer support in the first instance and ensure partnership working with families.
- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their pupil attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping pupils with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the pupil's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Improving attendance at Hill Farm is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents/carers, governors and all staff.

School responsibilities

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes pupils regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any pupil presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.

- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their pupil's attendance through established procedures.
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance and governors.
- Work in partnerships with Parents/Carers, The Family Hub, Children's Services and other outside agencies.

Pupil expectations

- To attend every day and on time.

Parent/carer expectations

- Parents/Carers are to sign an Attendance Agreement, outlining expectations every academic year or when a new child joins Hill Farm Primary School.
- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- If pupil is late then Parent/Carer should complete a Reason for Lateness form, at the Main School Office.
- To contact the school on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours. If unavoidable, informing the school in advance medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- To regularly update emergency contact details.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

The school gates open at 8.20 until 8.50 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher at 8.55am (AM session) by 1.30pm (PM Session). (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). All attendance records are documented using Arbor. Attendance registers are legal documents and need to be filled in accurately.

Lateness

Once the gates are closed at 8.50 am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9.00 am will be marked as late on the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late and the amount of minutes late after registration. This is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Registration will close at the start of break time for all pupils. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late and not gain an attendance mark for the morning (Attendance code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment (evidence of appointment provided) and subsequently come to school later than break time will have the absence recorded as an authorised medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will initially be advised of the concerns the school has through a discussion with the pupil's class teacher. If this doesn't resolve the issues then parents will receive either a letter or phone call outlining the school concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Collecting before 3.20 p.m.

If it is necessary for your child to leave school before the end of the day to attend an appointment, please complete a form which is available from the school office, stating the time at which the child will be collected. No child will be allowed to leave the site unless collected by his or her parents, or another adult who is known by the school to have permission from the parent to collect their child. All children must be signed out at the school office.

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours.
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Head Teacher)
- Fixed term or permanent exclusions.

Please note that these absences although authorised will still count against a pupil's overall attendance figure.

From the 1st September 2013, the new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their pupil on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their pupil on holiday during term time without consent from school (See appendix for the full legislation).

Unauthorised Absences

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Head Teacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.
- Any late after registration has closed.

- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter, email or telephone.
- Staying at home to look after a siblings or sick relatives.
- Going shopping, birthdays, going to the airport to meet relatives or hair cut etc.
- Any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher.

Also any absence where we are not given any reason for will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Patterns of Absence

If a pupil is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school on 02476595455. Choose option 3 and then leave a message with your pupil's name, class and reason for absence.

If a parent/carer does not inform the school a member of staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence, send a text message or in cases where attendance is already being monitored may undertake a home visit to ascertain why the pupil is absent. Absence reporting is an essential part of safeguarding, the school needs to the whereabouts of all pupils to ensure they are safe

Illness

Where pupils have frequent short term illnesses and broken weeks that are adversely affecting their attendance, we will monitor their attendance and may contact parent/carers to discuss if there is anything we can do to help as a school.

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send learning material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

The School's Approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of 96% minimum in line with government expectations. In order to achieve this we have a number of strategies in place. These include:

- Weekly class attendance awards for reception, Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Reward systems put in place for individual pupils to help encourage improved attendance.
- Class attendances to be shared with pupils, staff and parents.
- At the end of every term, every pupil achieving 99% receives an award.
- Every half term, pupils with attendance between a certain amount to receive a letter to let parents/pupil know what their attendance is and advising them what it needs to be to meet

the school target. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss with us strategies to encourage improved attendance.

- A list of school holidays is sent home at regular intervals and is on the school website.
- Yearly certificates and rewards are given to pupils achieving 100%, 98%+ and 96%+.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance Lead for Hill Farm Primary School is Leah Hammond.

Contact details- Leah.Hammond@castlephoenixtrust.org.uk

All staff who take the register have responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor system. This is monitored weekly by our attendance leader for the school. The summary findings are shared with Senior Leadership Team, half-termly and appropriate actions are put in place to follow up on any concerns. In addition to this the Attendance Lead monitors specific attendance concerns and follows up on them in person weekly either by way of a phone call or a home visit. Where capacity allows, the Attendance Lead will also carry out three-day home visits to discuss the absence and offer any support that the pupil may need in order for them to return to school.

The attendance lead may also request penalty notice fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 96% and a parent/carer is failing to communicate with school then a clear strategy of intervention will be put in place. Persistent absence is classed as 90% or lower.

If attendance falls below 90% the following actions will be put in place.

1. The Attendance Leader or one of the Safeguarding Team will phone home to discuss the situation and may depending on the circumstances arrange a home visit.
2. A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their pupil's attendance with a member of SLT in school.
3. Targets will be set to improve the attendance. An attendance plan will be written and agreed and the attendance will be monitored closely.
4. Further absences may only be authorised if appropriate evidence is provided.
5. The pupil's attendance will be discussed with the local authority and outside agencies may be informed and asked for involvement.
6. If there is no significant improvement in attendance or it worsens over a 5 week period a fixed penalty notice will be requested.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

Leave of Absence (Holidays in Term Time)

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to 'Family Holidays' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Head Teachers in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised.

Parent/Carer are to request a leave of absence form from the main office at least 10 days before the leave is due to take to place.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a pupil's attendance at a school at which they are registered. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Sec 36 of The Pupils Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence would warrant a penalty warning. If improvement is made no further action is taken. However if there is no improvement after a period of 30 sessions (15 days), and the pupil has any further absent, then a penalty notice will be issued.

Penalty notices are £60 per pupil, per parent to be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay within this period will increase to £120 per pupil which must be paid within 28 days.

There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

Further details of the penalty notices will be provided at the time it becomes necessary.

APPENDIX

Absence Codes

/ Present (AM)
\ Present (PM)
B Educated off site (not Dual registration)
C Other authorised circumstances
D Dual registration
E Excluded
F Extended family holiday (agreed)
G Family holiday (not agreed)
H Holiday annual family (agreed)
I Ill
J Interview
L Late
M Medical/Dental
N No reason yet provided for absence
O Unauthorised absence
P Approved sporting activity
R Religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
U Late (after register closed)
V Educational visit or trip
W Work experience
School closed to pupils
Y Enforced closure
X Non-compulsory school age abs
Z Pupil not on roll
- All should attend / No mark recorded

Detailed explanation of categories of absence.

Illness

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

Medical / Dental Appointments

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school to confirm the appointment.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Religious Observance

Hill Farm Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to Hill Farm Primary School if they intend their child to be absent.

It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- The death of a pupil.
- A pupil has transferred between schools.
- A pupil is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failures to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.

- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Penalty Notices in detail (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children's regular attendance at school.

The penalty is £60 for those who pay within 21 days and £120 for those who pay within 28 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 28 days may be prosecuted. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

APPENDIX 2- Attendance Tiers of Action

Attendance Tiers of Action

