



# Highfields Primary School **Attendance Policy**

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Highfields Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises the importance of attendance.

## **Aims & Objectives**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Foundation 1 (Nursery) and Foundation 2 (Reception) age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to establish good practice of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

## **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school before 9am to report an absence. If your child is absent for several days, please continue to inform the school.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Punctuality**

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. All school entrance gates are open at 8:30am until 8:45am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.

- Children who are late after 8:45am enter school through the reception front office. Pupils who arrive between 8.45am and 9am will be given an 'L' code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:00am will be marked with a 'U' code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- Ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day 3:00pm and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home.

School gates will be locked at 3:10pm and if your child/children have not been collected, they will be taken to reception to wait for collection. If the usual arrangements are different (i.e. being collected by another person), the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

### Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:00am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning or emailing the school office.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school or during absence if applicable. If a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.
- The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am. If we are unable to get in contact with the parent/carer the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### Request absence for holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head and or the Attendance Lead, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.

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- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without this authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. *If the absence is unauthorised parents/carers **may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21days), or, the case may be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.***

### Absence for other reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Head or Attendance Lead. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

### Unexplained absences

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited into an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

### Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate and monitor patterns of absences and any unexplained absences, with the Attendance Lead, which are below the 95% expectation.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

### Role of the Attendance Lead

- To investigate and monitor patterns of absences and any unexplained absences, with the Education Welfare Officer, which are below the 95% expectation.
- To issue letters (for children whose attendance drops below 95%) and make sure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

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- To work with the Education Welfare Officer and support families with strategies to ensure attendance improves.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

### **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing in Education (CME) case for the Local Authority.

### **Persistent latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:55am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Late letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children to bring this to their attention.

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