

Hillesley

PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

2019-20

Ratified by:
Governing Body on 19/3/2020

Next Review:
March 2021

Introduction

Hillesley CEVA Primary School seeks to establish and maintain 100% pupil attendance in all years. Regular pupil attendance is a vital factor in ensuring pupil progress, continuity in education provision and, ultimately, success. Hillesley CEVA Primary School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels respected.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96+ - An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

95%-96% - A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better.

90-95% - Absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school.

Below 90% - Absence IS causing **SERIOUS CONCERN**. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school will work with you and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

In Hillesley Primary we aim to have a whole school attendance rate of a minimum of **96%**. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in

every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance;

b) Prior to the engagement of external attendance support services, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement. (See Appendix A and B)

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.55a.m. Children are entitled to enter the school from 8.45am. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 9.00 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he/she must report to the school office and will be marked as 'Late'. Arrival after 9.15 a.m. is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent/both parents or carer with whom the child resides.

Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Attendance may be discussed with parents during consultation evenings.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education.

For Key Stage 1 children, full time means 21 hours. For Key Stage 2 children, full time means 23.5 hours per week. This is achieved by regular attendance at school.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/ hospital may be required.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) If your child is absent due to vomiting/diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set “focused absence targets” as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session. The Headteacher, not parents, authorises absence; Hillesley Primary adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

The local authority has full responsibility for prosecuting parents where absence continues to be problematic.

Family Holidays/Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body and in line with the Department of Education's statutory guidance and department advice, August 2013.

When an application is made for authorised absence during term time the Headteacher will give consideration to the following:

- Nature of the proposed absence/is this an exceptional circumstance
- The age of the child
- The timing of the absence
- The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years. Absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 90% or where the absence would take attendance below 90%.
- The child's progress

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

1. To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival.
2. If a parent, due to nature of the work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays. This would need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.

Please note to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The date and time of the request will be looked into when considering the exceptional circumstances listed above.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only a school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day

- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Holidays not agreed

Penalty notices

If a child of compulsory education age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at alternative provision made for them then the parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Payment of a Penalty Notice fine

Arrangements for the payment are detailed on the Penalty Notice and are as follows:

- If paid within 21 days, the penalty is £60 per responsible parent, per child
- If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £120, per responsible parent, per child.

Example:

In a one child family where both parents have equal responsibility, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £120 if paid within 21 days and £240 if paid after 21 days.

In a two child family, where both parents have equal responsibility and both children have been absent from school, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £240 if paid within 21 days and £480 if paid after 21 days. The LA will not accept payment after 28 days and will, proceed to prosecution. A Penalty Notice can only be issued when an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason or in one of the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:

- Holiday during term time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 10 week period
- Persistent late arrival at school after the registers have closed, and where the U code is used on the attendance certificate on at least 10 occasions within a 10 week period.

In all but exceptional cases, the school will issue a formal warning letter to a parent giving fifteen school days for an improvement to be made, before requesting a Penalty Notice.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice, so these 15 days allow parents time to make representations to the school. If there is further unauthorised absence during the fifteen-day period the school can request a Penalty Notice be issued by the LA.

The school will follow the necessary guidance for further absences as per 'A guide for schools and other professionals in Gloucestershire' – September 2013.

Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

Individual children

Certificates are awarded at the end of each for anyone with 95% attendance or above. This is celebrated at the school assemblies.

At the end of the year any pupils with 100% attendance during one or more terms, will receive a special 100% merit badge, presented at Celebration Worship.

Individual Incentives

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Individual rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be subject to regular review in light of changes made to legislation or the publication of new advice.

APPENDIX A

FIRST LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING POOR ATTENDANCE

Hillesley
PRIMARY SCHOOL



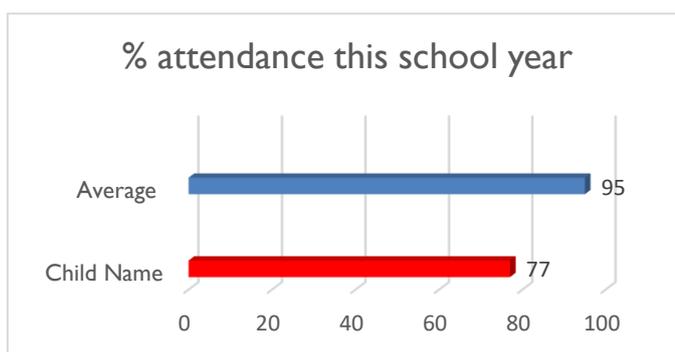
Parent Name
Parent Address

Date

Attendance Concern

Dear

I am concerned that <Child's Name> has missed more school than his/her classmates this



year.

<Child's name> has been absent for _____ days so far this school year. This means their attendance is currently ____%. This includes illness, medical appointments, other authorised absence and unauthorised absence.

The attendance target for each child is 96%. Pupils can fall behind when they miss school; whatever the reason for the absence. Every child benefits from good and punctual attendance. We ask that you make every effort to ensure that _____ is in school as regularly as possible. We will be monitoring _____'s attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement.

We appreciate your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Jayne Pedley
Head Teacher

APPENDIX B

SECOND LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING POOR ATTENDANCE

Hillesley
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Parent Name
Parent Address

Date

Persistent Attendance Concern

Dear Parents

As you are aware, we monitor the attendance and punctuality of the children closely at Hillesley Primary School.

I am writing to you as «chosen_forename»'s attendance remains a cause for concern and is below 90% so far this academic year.

As I informed you in my last letter, we have been monitoring _____'s attendance and he/she now has an attendance figure of _____ % for this academic year. This calculation includes sickness, medical appointments, authorised and unauthorised absences. I have enclosed a copy of your child's attendance grid that shows the absences or late marks.

This means that _____ is now considered to be a 'Persistent Absentee' as they are missing more than 10% of school.

I am concerned that there has been no significant improvement since my last correspondence and I would like to arrange a meeting with me at:

to discuss your child's attendance and how it can be improved.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Pedley
Head Teacher