

HATFIELD HEATH C.P. SCHOOL – ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Hatfield Heath School is committed to providing a full and effective educational learning experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit fully from education and all the associated experiences offered, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance and engagement for all pupils. Any problems or barriers which affect a pupil's attendance and subsequent learning opportunities will be investigated and reasons identified so that we can work, in partnership with parents, pupils and external agencies, to address the issue and move speedily forward.

Our School gives a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents and guardians have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there are concerns about attendance.

Rights and Responsibilities

Our School expects pupils to attend regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.

Our School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Our Staff strive to set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.

Our School will include, in reports to parents on achievement, pupil's attendance at least annually.

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils will be welcomed and receive support to integrate quickly back in to class following an absence. It is not possible to 'catch up' in school when a child returns because obviously if time is spent doing the work missed then other work being done by the rest of the class at the time is not being done. In certain circumstances work may be sent home to enable missed work to be caught up on in their own time.

Pupils will receive recognition for good attendance at term and year end. The School will support their learning by endeavouring to ensure attendance is at maximum possible.

Pupils will have individual details of attendance and punctuality held on record which will be shared with their next school on transfer and with other linked agencies such as Educational Welfare, Health and Social Services, where the need arises.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child regularly and punctually attends school, is properly dressed and equipped and ready to learn.

Parents are responsible for informing the school as soon as possible on the first morning of any absence. For absences of 2 days or more a written confirmation should be sent when the pupil returns. Failure to confirm may result in the absence being unauthorised by the school. (Other consideration may be given where there is a Literacy concern with the parents or where English is not the first language.)

If attendance problems develop the school expects the parents to work with school staff and the Education Welfare Service to solve the concerns and move forward for the benefit of the pupil.

Parents are allowed, in *exceptional circumstances*, to request leave of absence. There is, however, no legal right to take a child out of school for holidays etc and permission to do so must be granted by the school. Any application will be considered against the reason given, the pupil's attendance record, previous requests, educational needs, family circumstances and affected assessments and examinations. Where necessary, EWO and Legal Services advice will be sought and acted upon.

Parents requesting consideration for leave of absence must do so using the correct form available from the School Office or the School website. The Local Authority recommends that parents submit a letter along with their application to state the special circumstances in which they are applying for a holiday during term time. Applications need to be completed and returned to the Office at least three weeks before the first day of requested absence. Permission cannot be given retrospectively.

Should a request not be authorised and the absence proceeds then parents are considered to be in breach of the law and the unauthorised absence details will be placed on the child's official attendance record. This record forms part of the pupil's record file which is transferred with them to their new Secondary schools or earlier if a move takes place sooner. The Educational Welfare Service may (in its discretion) seek to issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to **each parent for each child** taken out of school.

From time to time parents/carers request leave of absence via an 'Entertainment Licence' when pupils are involved in productions or activities elsewhere. Entertainment Licences will be considered on an individual basis taking into account the likely length of time requested away from school, the rehearsals involved and, as with other 'absence' requests, the pupil's previous attendance record, educational needs and forthcoming assessments and exams. An open entertainment licence with an unlimited number of days will not be granted. If the Headteacher agrees in principle to authorise the absence parents may be required to sign a commitment that they will not seek to take the child away, in term time, at a later date in the academic year.

Registration

At Hatfield Heath Community Primary School a manual and electronic registration system is used.

The manual register must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be retained for three years.

Start and Close of Registration

Hatfield Heath Community Primary School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Registration begins at 9.00 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.

If a pupil arrives during the registration period, they should report to the school office.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Educational Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff responsible for the process

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the attendance issues and will arrange the monitoring of the registers on a regular basis to identify any concerns.

The Administrative Team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely, completed in accordance to regulations and are available for inspection to relevant professionals. They are also responsible for logging data onto any school computerised system, identifying and raising concerns with the Headteacher and preparing reports.

The register is a legal document and schools must abide by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013.

The class teacher is responsible, under the above Education Act, for the register being taken twice daily, once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. Registers are then returned to the School Office.

The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register. This includes the following:

- using the correct colour ink
- ensuring that symbols used are appropriate to the circumstances
- not using correction fluid
- ensuring that all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections marked clearly
- ensuring that the registers are neatly kept thus allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation i.e. during a fire procedure

Administrative staff will ensure that class teachers are aware of the registration process and receive support/training where necessary to ensure effective application.

Procedures for following up absences/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If contact is not made then the School will phone the child's home before 10.00 a.m. to ascertain that there is valid reason and remind the parent of the contact process.

If the parent is unobtainable the school will try again during the morning. Should there be no reply a letter will be sent requesting relevant information. Where the reason for absence cannot be established the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason is provided by the parent/carer the school may decide to grant leave of absence and record it as authorised however this is not an automatic guarantee and the school, if not satisfied, may still record the absence as unauthorised.

When a child is late for registration parents are required to provide a 'reason for lateness' which will be entered into the register.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

Parents should not normally take their children on holidays in term time. There is no legal right to do so. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 removed head teachers discretion to authorise up to 10 days of absence. However, if *exceptional circumstances* exist, you may apply, in advance to the school for leave of absence. Whilst the head teacher will consider all requests on a case by case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. In certain circumstances the school would seek advice from the Local Authority. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may (in their discretion) issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notices for term time holiday can be issued if:

- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to a holiday taken during an academic year; and
- Attendance is below 90% during the preceding 12 weeks before the holiday was taken; or
- The holiday was taken during the month of September; or
- The holiday was taken during tests or examinations; or
- It is the second holiday taken in any one academic year; or
- The pupil is in Year 6

Authorised and unauthorised absences are noted on the pupils' school records and these are sent to secondary school upon transfer. The DfE requests data about the schools absences as does the Local Authority's Welfare/Attendance Officer (EWO) who review registers and raise concerns with the school and sometimes families.

Strategies for promoting regular attendance and punctuality

In the belief that pupil's are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and School prospectus.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement, where appropriate.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (bullying etc needs to link with behaviour policy and equal opportunities policies).

Hatfield Heath Community Primary School will have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer, in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Hatfield Heath Community Primary School recognises, on a termly basis, those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance.

Governors/Policy Monitoring

The EWO and governors agree annual attendance targets for the school. These are noted by the LA and considered by Ofsted at times of an Inspection.

The Policy was agreed by governors on 6th February 2013 and will be reviewed every three years or earlier where legislation or identified needs arise.

Amended February 2013

Appendices

1. HHCPS Absence Policy
2. HHCPS Application for Leave of Absence Form
3. HHCPS Leave of Absence Parental Reply Slip

Appendix 1

Hatfield Heath Community Primary School Absence Policy

Holidays and other absences in term time are extremely disruptive to a child's education and Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday.

If *exceptional circumstances* exist then you may apply to the school for leave of absence for up to 10 days in the school year. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body. Each case will be considered individually, taking into account the child's overall attendance, previous requests, educational needs, family circumstances, affected assessments and examinations, and the reasons given for the holiday (or other absence) being taken in term time. Where necessary EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and Legal Services advice will be sought and acted upon.

Leave of absence forms can be obtained from the school office or school website, and all requests should be submitted to the school office at least three weeks before the first day of intended absence. Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the absence has taken place.

Should a request not be authorised and the absence proceeds, then this will be treated as an unauthorised absence on the child's official attendance record.

The Educational Welfare Service may (in its discretion) issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to **each parent for each child** taken out of school.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the following lessons building on that teaching after their return. As a result there is a consequent risk of underachievement, which, we know, you would be keen to avoid. What is more, the absence of a pupil has an inevitable effect on the teaching of the class as a whole, since the teacher may have to take time to ensure that the pupil who has been absent catches up on work that has been missed, and this may prejudice other pupils. Again, we know that you would not want this to happen.

Appendix 2

HATFIELD HEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

Parents should not normally take their children on holidays in term time, nor should they take them out of school for any other purpose. There is no legal right to do so. However, if exceptional circumstances exist, you may apply to the school for leave of absence for up to 10 days in the school year. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013). Each case will be judged on its merits in line with certain considerations as outlined in guidance from the DfCSF and schools own policy. In certain circumstances the school would seek advice from the Local Authority. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may (in their discretion) issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. Authorised and unauthorised absences are noted on the pupils' school records and these are sent to the secondary school upon transfer. The DfCSF requests data about the schools absences as does the Local Authority's Welfare/Attendance Officer (EWO) who review registers and raise concerns with the school and sometimes families.

NAME OF CHILD(REN):	
D.O.B:	
CLASS:	

Date of First Day of Absence: _____

Date of Return: _____

Number of Days Requested: _____

Please attach a letter outlining the 'special circumstances' for which a term time holiday is being applied for, if this is not provided the school will be unable to authorise the request.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Name: _____

School/Office use only:

Attendance percentage preceding 12 week:			
Number of sessions absence this academic year:	Auth	Unauthorised	Total

Appendix 3

HATFIELD HEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Absence Request Response Form
(In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013)**

To the Parent/Guardian of.....

Absence requested for.....to.....Number of days.....

Your application for leave of absence has not been authorised, as

Your application for leave of absence has been noted and agreed.

Your application for leave of absence has been referred to the Governors, as it exceeds the allowance of 10 days for the academic year. The outcome will be advised to you shortly.

Signed..... J H Clements, Head teacher