



Attendance Policy

Harefield Infant School

October 2016

Introduction

For children to be successful in their learning they need regular attendance at school. . We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important

We know that the most successful learners are the ones who attend school regularly. Their learning is fluid and they do not develop gaps in their understanding. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect both their learning and friendship groups. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Special Education Needs

Regular attendance at school enables the staff to accurately assess each child's learning needs. Where children have gaps in their learning it is more difficult to assess if they have a specific learning difficulty.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We encourage this when your child starts nursery / reception.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter and website;
- Contact you if your child is absent using Truancy Call
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- If a child is persistently absent (below 95%) you will be notified half-termly;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.

- Promote the value of good attendance
- At the end of each year, the children with 100% attendance are given a small CEDRIC bear to keep.

Understanding types of absence

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. These should be applied for in writing and/or present a copy of appointment sheet.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Participation Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised
- excessive illness without medical evidence

We recognise that a child may be off school because they are ill. However sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school and may complain that they are feeling unwell. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please come in and talk to us. Try not to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bed times

Helping with homework

Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school

Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Encouraging your child to invite friends home

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a '***persistent absentee***' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable

damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our persistently absent pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an Learning Support Assistant , use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, and every day thereafter;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

On the first day of absence due to ill health parents are required to notify the school by 09:15am. The Attendance Administrator or Inclusion Manager contacts any parent by phone that has not rung in to see why their child is not in school.

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Inclusion Manager and/or Pastoral Leaders, Head of School or Executive Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Participation Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Lateness Procedures

After the classroom doors are shut at 9.00am any child who is late has to come in through the front entrance to the school. The Attendance Administrator meets any late child and notes their name in the lateness book. Lateness is then recorded in the registers.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Staff involved in Attendance

The Inclusion Manager and the Attendance Administrator work together in monitoring school attendance. They may both make phone calls to parents and monitor the registers. The Inclusion Manager sees the Participation Officer on her visits to the school. In serious cases of poor attendance the Head of School will also work with the Participation Officer and/or Social Services etc.

Part of the role of the Inclusion Manager is to build up a relationship with families and ascertain what the difficulties are in school attendance. The Inclusion Manager spends time meeting with parents to try and get them to see the importance of attending school regularly.

We have a set of standard letters that are sent to parents who have problems in getting their child to school. The Participation Officer will also visit families to encourage attendance. If parents fail to co-operate with the school and their child still has poor attendance we will work with the Participation Officer to track the family through the courts.

Our Participation Officer visits the school regularly for register checks consultations. Pupils with poor attendance are identified and monitored. If poor attendance continues Attendance panels are held with a review 4 – 6 weeks later. If still poor Fixed Penalty notice of £60 per parent per child is issued rising to £120 per parent per child (as from 1st September 2012) – or summoned to court could be £2,500 fine or even imprisonment.

Participation Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 44.1 and 44.1.a.

"If any 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."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will

give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or participationteam@hillington.gov.uk

Lateness

If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we Manage Lateness

The school day starts at **08:45am – 9.00am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked at **09:00am** and your child will receive a mark if they are in late.

At **9:30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head of School, and/or Inclusion Manager to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave

Exceptional leave is always at the discretion of the Head of School and all Hillington schools including Harefield Infant School are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave including holidays.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Taking holiday in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence.

Holidays should and are expected to be taken in the allocated school holidays. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education and the fines that may be imposed on you.

Details of parents and their child who take unauthorised leave will be referred to the Participation Team who may issue a penalty notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 28days) per parent, per child.

Where Parents/carers that have previously been issued with Penalty notices and have taken their child/ren out of school again-without authorisation from the Headteacher-further Penalty Notices may not be issued. In these cases, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team for each Parent/Carer to be summoned to the Magistrate court under Section 444(1) or 444(1a) of the Education Act 1966.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
3. In rare cases where exceptional leave may be considered, the student's attendance must be at least 95% at the time and in the previous academic year.
4. Reasons for exceptional leave and records of attendance will be logged on the students records and shared as part of the transition process.

School Targets, Projects and Initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Each week CEDRIC (Come Every Day Remember I'm Counting) the bear is awarded to the class with the best attendance. Children who achieve 100% attendance for a half term are awarded a certificate. Children who achieve 100% attendance for a full term

receive a certificate and 100% attendance badge. Children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole year are awarded a mini CEDRIC attendance bear.

End of year percentages are reported to parents and any link between poor attainment and attendance at school is made.

The people responsible for attendance:

Mrs Lloyd, Executive Head Teacher
Mrs Julia Moss, Head of School
Mrs Boden, Inclusion Manager
Mrs Marriott, Attendance Administrator

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the DFE. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment. It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

- Being Healthy
- Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being