

Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

Aims of the Policy

- To improve the quality of school life and create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to children, parents and staff that good attendance is valued by the school, and to recognise that regular attendance is an achievement within itself.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.

Introduction

Heckmondwike Primary School is a happy school where children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about the welfare of each child.

At Heckmondwike Primary School we believe that good attendance is essential if children are to:

- take full advantage of the opportunities that school offers
- learn effectively and acquire the appropriate skills which will prepare them for life.

The school aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance by operating an Attendance Policy within which staff, children, parents, local community and Education Access can work in partnership. The school will closely monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage excellent attendance and liaise with home and other agencies when this is appropriate. Excellent attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The Attendance Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Communication

Information about lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in home-school communications to Parents. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the Nursery and Reception Class, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. The importance of punctuality is also stressed so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being collected on time at the end of the school day is also emphasised, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left (siblings from within school are **NOT** allowed to take a Key Stage One child home).

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which means they become unhappy, and may not want to attend school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Heckmondwike Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including children, parents and staff.

Children

All children are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Children who experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher. At the end of each week, the class with the best attendance is rewarded in assembly. The class with the best overall attendance each half term is rewarded with a class treat. Individual children with excellent attendance are rewarded in an end of year awards assembly.

Parents

The role of the parent/guardian in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, either in writing or by telephone call. A child's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from parents.

At Heckmondwike Primary School we intend to maintain close, effective and positive links with parents and ensure that they are informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. At the end of each term the school will write to parents whose child's attendance is a cause for congratulation or concern.

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered support from the school in matters of communication.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of children in their class, monitoring attendance and punctuality is an integral part of the class teacher's role. Class teachers are responsible to the School Governors, Head and Senior Management Team for:

Taking the Register

- An Attendance Register is a legal document and Class Teachers are responsible for marking the register twice a day (8.55am and 1.15pm or 12.30pm in Reception Class).

Following up absences (and lateness)

- Any absence should be followed up by talking to the child and then the parent/guardian.
 - Acceptable forms of communication can be a note, a personal visit from the parent/guardian, or another responsible adult, or a telephone call.
 - If no response is forthcoming teachers can arrange for parents to be telephoned. (Secretary or Community Worker can be asked to do this.) However, if no reason is given for the absence a standard letter (first letter) should be sent after the third day of absence and noted in the records.
 - If parents/guardians do not respond within 7 days to the first letter a home visit by the Head Teacher/Educational Social Worker may be arranged
- NB** All reasons for absence must be recorded in the school register.

Recording Information in the Registers

- Teachers must sign and date all letters from parents when they are brought in. These can be put in an envelope. At the end of the academic year, the notes from targeted families are put into the child's record folder (Blue Confidential - Office).

Providing Support and Guidance

- Teachers should encourage patterns of punctuality and good attendance as it is good educational practice.

- All teachers should be aware of responding early to developing problems of attendance and punctuality, for example:
 1. authorised absences - excessive numbers of authorised absences such as illness may need following up with the School Nurse.
 2. patterns of lateness - are parents/guardians aware that the child is regularly late.
 3. identifying patterns of absence - are children absent on particular days, swimming days, PE days, class visits etc
- Generally speaking the poorest attendance is with younger children who need to develop good habits early on. Close links with parents are essential but these need to be formalised so that issues such as punctuality and attendance can be discussed openly and frankly

Lateness

- Regular lateness must be followed up in the same way as developing patterns of absence.

If Class Teachers are concerned about a child's absence and/or punctuality they should discuss these matters with the child. If there is no improvement then the parents/guardian should be contacted. If there continues to be no improvement after contact with the parent/guardian then the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Key Stage Co-ordinator (Urgent concerns should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher).

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team will be responsible for collecting and analysing statistics.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will be responsible for supporting all staff in developing strategies to improve levels of attendance, also reporting levels of attendance to the Governing Body annually.

Registration

Registers will be taken promptly at 8.55am and at 1.15pm (8.55am and 12.30pm in Reception class) in the classroom and will be marked in accordance with the symbols shown in the register front sheet (see Appendix 1).

Registers will close at 9.00am and at 1.20pm (9.00am and 12.35pm Reception class). If a child fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she will be marked as absent. Children who arrive after the registers have been closed should report to the school's Main Office and sign the Late Book. If a child is persistently late, the Head Teacher will contact the parents.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the child must be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

All registers are online and accessible in school's Main Office at 9.00am each day to enable the school's 'first day' absence telephone call system to operate.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise absence. Heckmondwike Primary School records absences according to DfE guidance. This states that:

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the child was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the Governing Body)
- the child was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable causes'
- 'the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent belongs'
- the child is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- leave of absence is authorised by the school for exceptional circumstances.

Absences should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the child stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- the child is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions
- the child is away from school on leave of absence for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school
- the child is on a family holiday.

In compliance with regulation 8 of the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016, where unauthorised absence exceeds 20 consecutive school days, a child may be deleted from the register.

Holidays

Changes to legislation which came into force on 1st September 2013 mean that the Head Teacher no longer has the authority to authorise up to 10 days absence for a family holiday. The head teacher may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The duration of any leave of absence authorised is to be determined by the Head Teacher.

Should a child be removed from school for a leave of absence lasting more than three weeks then the child's name may be removed from the school roll. This will necessitate the parent/carer having to apply for a place at the school when the absence ends.

Truancy

All the staff at Heckmondwike Primary School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher is notified, who then contacts the parent, either by phone, or by home visiting if possible, and the Educational Social Worker. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Head Teacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

Penalty Notices

When leave is taken without permission from the school, the absence is unauthorised and a penalty notice may be issued. The Penalty Notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 28 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 42 days. Repeated unauthorised term time holidays may result in a prosecution.

Monitoring Procedures

1. The Head Teacher will have overall responsibility for monitoring Attendance Registers.

2. The Senior Management Team will monitor Attendance Registers half-termly, reporting any concerns to the Head Teacher.
3. The School Governors will receive a copy of the termly authorised and unauthorised attendance figures for each class.
4. The E.S.W. will visit the school each fortnight to monitor the Attendance Policy and marking of registers.
5. Termly and annual attendance figures will be sent to the DfEE and LEA, as part of the national and local monitoring of attendance.

Referral to Education Social Work Service

One of the main objectives of the Educational Social Worker is to maintain and improve regular school attendance. Educational Social Workers monitor school attendance registers, hold regular consultations with the school staff responsible for attendance and obtain referrals from school.

Education Social Workers may follow up referrals by:

- Communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) by letter or phone
- Seeing a pupil in school
- Arranging a number of home visits
- Liaison/referral to other professionals/agencies

The outcome of any intervention is communicated back to school.

Revised:	December 2016
Next Revision Date:	December 2017

Appendix 1

Code	Description
-	-- Attendance Not Required
*	* - Not Yet Marked
/	/ - Present
B	B - Educated off site (NOT Dual reg.)
C	C - Other Authorised Circumstances
D	D - Dual registration (attend elsewhere)
E	E - Excluded (no alternative provision)
F	F - Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	G - Family holiday (NOT agreed)
H	H - Family holiday (agreed)
I	I - Illness (NOT medical or dental)
J	J - Interview
L	L - Late (before registers closed)
M	M - Medical/Dental appointments
N	N - No reason yet provided for absence
O	O - Unauthorised absence
P	P - Approved sporting activity
R	R - Religious observance
S	S - Study leave
T	T - Traveller absence
U	U - Late (after registers closed)
V	V - Educational visit or trip
W	W - Work experience
X	X - Non-compulsory school age absence
Y	Y - Enforced/Partial Closure
Z	Z - Pupil not on roll

Appendix 2

Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- Heckmondwike Primary School will work to provide an environment in which children feel valued and welcome, that children feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all children. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to children's needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, correlate attendance with achievement, set targets, and support and inform policy/practice.
- Attendance awards for individual children:
 1. annual - 100% attendance - £5 Voucher
- Attendance awards for classes of children:
 1. weekly - best class attendance – recognised in assembly
 2. half termly – class reward e.g. party
- Children whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement.
- Parents will be reminded regularly via Newsletters, School Prospectus, Parents' Evenings etc of the importance of excellent attendance.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be given suitable support upon their return.
- The Head Teacher will make an annual report to the school's Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies eg Education Access, Educational Psychological Service, Social Services etc when this may serve to support and assist children who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Head Teacher or Community Worker will have regular meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer (fortnightly) in order to identify and support those children who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Appendix 3

Procedures for Following Up Absence

It is acknowledged that an early response to developing patterns of absence can be most effective. The circumstances of the individual child or group of children must determine the nature of communication regarding attendance. At Heckmondwike Primary School we will be particularly sensitive to issue of linguistic differences in matters of communication, and of cultural differences in perception regarding attendance.

- If a child is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parents that day by telephone (First Day Absence Initiative).*
- Discussion with older child/siblings.*
- If a child is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Head Teacher will write to the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school.*
- If a child is persistently absent, or late, and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer during their consultation visit.
- Notes from parents will be initialled by the Class Teacher and kept in the child's file. All telephone messages regarding absences/lateness are to be recorded in the appropriate book.

**Using translation/interpreter if necessary and where possible.*

Appendix

Staff Attendance

1. All staff must notify the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher of illness, as soon as they know that they will not be able to attend work.
For teaching staff this means contacting the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher by telephone at his/her home address the night before, or before 7.30am on the morning they become unfit for work.
For non-teaching staff the school should be contacted as early as possible, certainly before 8.30am.
2. All staff must let the school know how long they will be off work for, and when they will be able to return to work. Staff must notify the school by 3.30pm on the day prior to their return that they will
This is most important, as all staff absence must be accounted for and reported to the LEA, so that staff are paid correctly. Absence without notification could result in unpaid leave of absence.
3. Staff are able to self-certificate absence for the first week, thereafter a letter from the G.P. must be sent in to the school.
4. Permission from the Head Teacher must be obtained beforehand to seek time off work for visits to the Dentist, Doctor, Hospital etc.
Unless an emergency, all appointments should be made outside school hours, or during school holidays.
5. All leave of absence must be approved in advance by the Head Teacher and/or School Governors.
6. All staff must be punctual, and be on site at Heckmondwike Primary School, ready to begin work, at the appropriate time.
7. Teaching staff must be at school by 8.30am, at the latest.