

<p>HYNDBURN PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY</p>
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. 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.

## 2. WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of other children in the same class. 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 which may result in prosecution.

## 3. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents / carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Give you details on attendance by informing you by letter each half term of your child's attendance. We will send out the following letters:
  - GREEN paper – if your child's attendance is at 97.0% or above.
  - AMBER paper – if your child's attendance is at 93.0% – 96.9%.
  - RED paper – if your child's attendance is below 92.9%.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through individual, class and team competitions, certificates and outings / events;
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery and reception, and before leaving for high school;
- Continue to further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents / carers, pupils, staff and governors; and
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

#### 4. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

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.

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 using sanctions and / or legal proceedings. Types of unauthorised absence include:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have not 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 agreed; and
- Holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the headteacher

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents / carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. If your child is reluctant to come into school, please come in and talk to us about it; together we will find a way to resolve matters.

#### 5. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling (reduced threshold from September 2015) across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' / carers' 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. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and all PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance Team. Attendance contracts may be issued to parents of children who miss 10% or more schooling across the school year.

#### 6. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by telephone, in person, or by sending in a note or message.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and / or the assistant

headteacher if absences persist; and

- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Team linked with school if attendance moves below 90% as per Local Authority protocol.

## 7. TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents / carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please 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. Contact details will be checked annually.

## 8. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND / OR PUNCTUALITY

Parents / carers 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. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents / carers in improving their child's attendance and / or punctuality. This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents / carers, pupils, pastoral staff and the assistant headteacher;
- Attendance contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and / or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority Attendance Team); and
- Penalty notices.

## 9. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE OFFICER AND TEAM

If difficulties cannot be resolved using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Team of 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 unauthorised absences persist, the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

## 10. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. 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, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being just ten minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

### How we manage lateness

- The school day starts at **8:55am** and we expect your child to be **in class** at that time;
- Registers are marked by **9:05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that

- time;
- At **9:30am** the registers will be closed;
  - Afternoon registration will be at **12:50pm** (Juniors / Key Stage 2) and **1:00pm** (Infants / Key Stage 1 and Reception); and
  - Registers will close **10 minutes** later.
  - The **morning** nursery sessions starts at **8.45am** until **11.45am**.
  - The **afternoon** nursery session starts at **12.15pm** until **15.15pm**.

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 assistant headteacher and / or a member of the pastoral support team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## 11. HOLIDAYS / EXTENDED LEAVE / LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents / carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. 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. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Following amendments by the Government to the 2006 regulations, from September 2013 no leave of absence will be granted.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice, implemented by the Local Authority Attendance Team.

## 12. RELIGIOUS ABSENCE

The school will authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than three days in any one academic year.

## 13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATTENDANCE MATTERS AT HYNDBURN PARK

### Parents / carers

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually;
- Contact school on the first day of absence;
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance using the form;
- Attend meetings in school; and
- Participate in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies.

### Children

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime;
- Attend school / registration punctually;
- Speak to parents / carers or a teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance; and
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies.

### Mrs Hardwick - School Attendance Lead

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities; and
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

### Mrs Armstrong and Mrs Vickery – Learning Mentors

- First day response: Contact parents / carers if a reason for absence has not been provided;
- Input and update the attendance registers;
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups;
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents / carers; and
- Work with children and parents / carers to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using Attendance Contracts where appropriate.

### All School Staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- See pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff; and
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.

### Governors

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly;
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy.

## 14. SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** 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 Lancashire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in the newsletters / on the school website and we ask for your full support.

## **15. SUMMARY**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents / carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents / carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents / carers and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Joanne Hardwick  
Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion Manager

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Saiqa Tabsim February 2011

May 2012

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July 2014

July 2015

Joanne Hardwick September 2016

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