

# Holtsmere End Infants and Nursery School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

July 2017

Review date July 2019

At Holtsmere End Infants and Nursery school we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. We promote the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. Regular attendance at school is a key component of the education of the children; the school can only achieve these aims if it works closely with all stakeholders to ensure good attendance. The purpose of our School Attendance Policy is to promote regular school attendance and contribute to learning, achievement and the education of the whole child.

### **We will do this by:**

- creating a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community – children, parents and carers, staff and governors
- improving overall attendance of children, and reducing levels of authorised and unauthorised absence
- giving support and guidance to parents, carers and children
- giving parents carers and children regular information about attendance rewarding classes and children and celebrating attendance which is good or has improved

- rewarding classes with the best attendance each week
- entering all children with 100% in a prize draw on a weekly basis and publishing these results in the weekly school newsletter
- working in partnership with Hertfordshire Attendance Team and other agencies

**The School will:**

- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- ensure that daily records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance
- make contact with parents/carers on the first day of unexplained absence
- keep children, parents and carers informed about whole school/class attendance and punctuality through newsletters, letters to families and certificates etc.
- contact parents concerning poor attendance and/or unsatisfactory punctuality
- not authorise holidays taken during term time in line with Government guidance
- update governors regularly regarding whole, class and individual attendance

**Parents and Carers are expected to:**

- ensure that each child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly and being punctual
- be aware of the attendance policy of the school
- take an active interest in their children's education, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour, and attending parent's evenings and other relevant evenings
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to attendance difficulties
- inform school on the first day of absence explaining the reason for their child's absence from school
- keep regular communication with school staff where there are concerns or difficulties
- keep the school informed of changes in contact details
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours where possible
- avoid booking holidays during term time as leave will normally be declined

- collect children promptly from school as they become upset if they are not collected at the same time as everyone else. Our staff regularly attend meetings after school and are unable to do so if they need to supervise a child who has not been picked up.

### **Children are expected to**

- attend school regularly and punctually
- be ready to learn

### **School hours:**

- doors are opened at 8.30 am for the morning Nursery and children are collected at 11.30 am
- afternoon Nursery starts at 12.20pm and finishes at 3.20pm
- for the Reception classes and KS1 the doors are opened at 8.45am with all children expected to be in school by 9.00am. School finishes at 3.05pm.

### **School holidays**

- Holiday dates are published on the school website
- Newsletters are sent out with reminders of dates of school holidays

### **Lateness**

- Parents and carers telephone if their child will be late for school
- Parents and carers are asked to sign a register in the office, explaining why the child is late for school after the classroom doors are closed at the start of the day.
- The attendance and late book is checked regularly and follow up action may be taken

### **Rewards for good attendance**

- Each week classes with the best attendance receive a certificate in Assembly and is awarded 5 minutes extra playtime.
- Individual children who have excellent attendance are entered into a prize draw each week with an attendance band as a prize.

### **Authorised Absence**

#### **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Medical appointments should be arranged out of school hours when possible.

The school should be informed when an appointment in school hours is unavoidable.

Children should be returned to school after a medical appointment, unless it is very near the end of the school day, or if they are unwell.

## **ILLNESS**

Parents and carers should contact the school by telephone, before 9:30am, on the first day of absence and continue to update the school until the child returns. If you do not telephone the school office, and we are unable to contact you to obtain a reason for your child's absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The school is rarely able to authorise any holidays during term time as a result of Government guidance. In very exceptional circumstances, considered on an individual basis, authorisation will be considered.

The Governors have agreed the following statements about family holidays taken during term time:

- children taken out of school during term time cannot receive the full education which they are entitled to
- children taken out of school during term time receive a poor message about the value of their education
- children taken out of school during September suffer if they are absent when all the arrangements and systems of a new class are being introduced
- children taken out of school during September suffer particularly when friendships have been established in their absence
- governors do not accept savings in costs of holidays as a valid reason for withdrawing children from school during term time
- governors and head teacher are required to consider requests for authorised absences from school.

### **Requests for family holidays during term time**

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration [England] Regulations which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays during term time.

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

- An application form for Leave of absence should be requested from the Office and completed by parents, not less than three weeks before the first day of leave of absence.
- The form asks parents and carers to describe the exceptional circumstances which have led to an application for leave of absence from school during term time.
- The Head teacher will consider the application on an individual basis.
- Parents and carers may be asked to come into school to discuss their request with the Head teacher and member of the Governing body.

**Holidays should not be booked before authorised absence has been agreed by Headteacher.**

### **Poor attendance and lateness**

The Attendance Improvement Officer [AIO] inspects registers every half term, and liaises with the school on a regular basis to give advice and support.

Parents and carers will be contacted about persistent absences or lateness. Parents and carers may be invited to school to discuss problems.

The Head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance.

### **Penalty Notices (see Appendix 1 for more information)**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers schools to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence of pupils of statutory school age.

At Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence, in the current and / or previous term, the head teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

July 2017

Review July 2019

Hertfordshire County Council  
Penalty Notices  
Unauthorised Absence  
(Truancy)  
Hertfordshire Code of Conduct  
February 2016

## **Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)**

### **Introduction**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the
- Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

### **The Law**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

### **Rationale**

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

### **Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued**

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least 15 sessions (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of two separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance
- Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them must comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority. In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police.

Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

© Hertfordshire County Council 4

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Appealing against the issue of penalty notices**

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire’s Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

**Effect of issuing penalty notices**

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

**Payment of penalty notices**

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

**Withdrawal of penalty notices**

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence
- Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority

