

# Hill View Infant School

HILL VIEW INFANT SCHOOL



## **Attendance Policy**

Person responsible: Mrs C. Smith/ Mrs T  
Crompton

Date: January 2018

Review Date: January 2019

## **HILL VIEW INFANT SCHOOL**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Person responsible: Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher**

**Review date: January 2016**

**Next review date: January 2017**

This policy has been compiled in accordance with the Local Authority guidelines and DfE regulations regarding pupil attendance.

#### *Aims and Objectives of the Policy:*

- To ensure there is a robust system of attendance recording and monitoring in place in school;
- To ensure we are an inclusive environment and all children have the opportunity to access mainstream education;
- To ensure safeguarding protocols are upheld and that there is a formal system of tracking children with poor attendance;
- To uphold the Statutory regulations as deemed fit by the City Council and DfE.
- To support initiatives that promote good attendance.

#### *Contents:*

- Registration of Pupils
- Absence Recording and Monitoring
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#### **Registration of Pupils:**

##### **The Statutory Requirements**

Parents, schools and the LA's share legal responsibilities in respect of school attendance. Parents of children of compulsory school age must ensure that they receive an efficient and suitable full-time education (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

All schools (other than independent schools for boarders only) must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, a pupil should be marked present or absent. (Pupils Registration Regulations 1995).

Local Authorities must ensure that parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations as to their children's education including, where necessary, by action through the Courts. (Sections 437-448 Education Act 1996).

Schools are required to collect and publish data on their rates of unauthorised absence for the preceding year. (Education [Pupils Attendance Records] Regulations 1991).

Schools must maintain an admission register/school roll (electronic version as per SIM's database) (Education [Pupil Registration] Regulations 1995). This should be updated annually. A child that is on the Admission register should also be on the Attendance register.

Children's names may be deleted as follows:-

1. When the child 'has been registered' at another school. Children should not be removed from the register on a 'promise' by parents, only when the school is informed by another school that they have actually admitted the child (or after four weeks if they have moved away but no subsequent school has been in contact – see below).
2. When parents have given written notification to the school that they are educating the child 'otherwise' than at school. The school must then inform the LEA's Inclusion & Attendance Team who will advise on exactly when the child's name should be deleted.
3. When the child has stopped attending and no longer 'ordinarily resides' at a place which is a reasonable distance from the current school. This does not give the school power to remove the name of a child who has stopped attending but who is still living at the same address. It only covers children who have physically moved their home address, if there is no contact from any other school.
4. After four weeks continuous absence and 'both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil'. The school cannot act without consultation with the Local Authority first to make a joint decision.
5. At the **end** of the exclusion process regarding permanent exclusion.

Hill View Infant School use the SIMs Attendance package for recording numbers present every day, incorporating the pre-printed, pre-dated Capita Registration Forms.

Class Teachers are responsible for marking the register as soon as possible after 8.55am when school session commences, and close the register at 9:05am. Children entering school after this time will be marked late. Teachers again mark the register at 1.00pm after the lunch break. If the Office receive a call from a parent notifying the school of an absence, this is recorded in the absence log which is available to staff.

- **All pupils present or absent are to be marked with a black horizontal mark (pencil).** This should be recorded if the child is not in school by **9.05am** or **1.05pm:-**
  - **P denotes PRESENT**
  - **A denotes ABSENT**

We encourage punctuality in school therefore registers are closed at the above times unless exceptional circumstances, such as bad weather, result in an extension of this period (at the discretion of the Head Teacher and not to exceed 30 minutes).

### **Arriving late for school**

If a child is late, (i.e. after registration) they will already have been marked absent. They will now be marked present as well. **This double marking denotes late.** The double marking will be completed by the Class Teacher if the register has not yet been sent to the Office. It will be completed by Office Staff if the child comes into school after the register has left the class.

Please note if a child comes in late they should be signed in at the school office where amendments to the register will be completed by the office staff.

### **Collecting late from school**

Children who are collected after 3:00pm from school, or 3:15pm for Nursery will be taken to the school office. They must be collected from here and signed out in a late book. This allows school to monitor and tackle late collections. We understand that emergency situations may occur, in which case a phone call to the office to reassure school that someone is going to collect is vital. Persistence late collection of over 15 minutes per day will accrue child care costs of £8.00. This is the cost of 1 after school session.

For Nursery aged children that are persistently collected late, i.e. after 11:45am, they will be charged the cost of lunchtime session of £3.00.

### **Absence Recording & Monitoring:**

Children may arrive late to school for several reasons, be it after an early medical appointment or if they have genuinely been late through 'sleeping in' etc.

Medical appointments are classed as authorised absence and will be coded as such within the attendance database.

Children arriving late, with no approved reason for their lateness other than the fact that they are genuinely late, will be recorded with an 'L' in the attendance database

If children are persistently late:-

- i) This will be discussed with the school attendance officer- N. Murley. The appropriate action will then be taken. This includes, for persistent lateness a letter to parents.
- ii) A record of the time of arrival will be kept by the Office.
- iii) If the problem persists there will be direct intervention by the Head Teacher, which may involve referral to the Inclusion & Attendance Team- Elaine Matterson.

A Late Registration Record is kept in the Office, and followed up by the Office Staff.

**Registers should always be returned to the office as soon as possible to comply with the emergency procedures in case the building has to be evacuated quickly and children have to be accounted for.**

Children leaving school in school hours must be signed out the premises for the purpose of ensuring an accurate record in case of emergency evacuation. This is done at the office. Only named contacts may collect a child unless we have been advised by the parent otherwise.

To keep our children safe, we request all parents support our systems for informing us of pupil absence.

If parents know a child is poorly and will not be attending school or are going to a medical appointment first thing that morning, parents **MUST** telephone the school office before **9.30am** to inform us of the absence. There is a recorded message service to report your child's absence when you call the school number 01915537665. Please leave a message when promoted on the school number.

It is also important that the names and telephone numbers held in our records for all children are complete and up to date. Update forms are always available from the school office in the event of a change of number etc. and parents are regularly reminded of the procedures in place.

If we still have not heard from either the parent or another nominated carer regarding the reason for absence by the second week contact will be made through the school office

Absence is monitored closely in school to enable us to:

- identify trends and patterns of absence
- identify those children who are persistently late with no good reason
- identify children whose general attendance is very poor. Persistence absenteeism is any attendance under 90%.

Where such cases are identified, the Head teacher will consult the Attendance Officer, Ms N. Murley in monthly attendance meetings. Ms N. Murley will initiate and guide the formal process for contacting parents and flagging the levels of absence/punctuality concerns. In the majority of cases, the pattern will improve but it may be necessary to closely monitor certain children given their family background or historic data.

Where the school feels that the internal monitoring system has not been appropriately acknowledged by a parent/carers and a satisfactory impact on improving attendance or punctuality not achieved, the matter will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Team for investigation. This may involve a home visit by the Inclusion Officer to establish why attendance has deteriorated with a view to providing a framework of further support. In the most serious cases, the local authority Attendance Team may take legal proceedings.

### **Leave of Absence Requests:**

Under regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, schools have discretionary power for leave to be granted for the purpose of **exceptional**

**circumstances.** Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the Governing Body of the school. Only in *exceptional circumstances* may the amount of leave granted exceed (in total) more than two weeks in any school year. Requests for family holidays will be unauthorised.

There is a '*request for leave due to exceptional circumstances during term time*' form that parents should complete prior to leave being requested.

### **Unauthorised Absence:**

The majority of absences from school can be explained easily and the school is proactive in recording and tracking absences. If a child is absent for a period of time for which no reasonable explanation has been derived, we will write to the parent/carer requesting appropriate clarification of the absence. If there is still no reasonable explanation, the absence will be logged as unauthorised against the pupil's record.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices:**

From February 2008, Sunderland Local Authority launched the use of Fixed Penalty Notices to address irregular school attendance. This means that the parents of any pupil absent from school for 10 days (or 20 half days) over an eight-week period, where the absence is unauthorised, will incur a £50 fine. This Penalty may rise to £100 and ultimately a Court summons if the Penalty remains unpaid. Please be aware that the use of a Fixed Penalty Notice will also take effect if your child is absent from school for a holiday, which has not been authorised by the school. The Local Authority is following in the steps of many other local authorities in the country that use Fixed Penalty Notices to prevent poor patterns of unauthorised absence developing. As a school we welcome this new policy, which runs alongside the proactive and positive encouragement and campaigns from the Attendance Team. Penalty Notices will be issued by post to parents' home addresses after possibly just one warning, or in the case of missed exams/tests, without warning. At Hill View Infant School regular and punctual attendance is paramount as it has a direct link to achievement and attainment. Whilst we realise that the majority of parents/carers are conscientious and ensure their children make the most from their invaluable school education, as a school we support the Local Authority stance and will notify parents of their intentions to use Fixed Penalty Notices. A copy of the Code of Conduct relating to this legislation is available from the school office on request.

### **Children Missing From Education**

As part of Government legislation there is a statutory requirement on all local authorities to identify children missing from education.

In Sunderland, we are concerned about any child or young person who is missing out on their educational entitlement, as it may not only be their attainment that is at risk, but their safety and welfare too.

We will proactively encourage parents and staff to share any information they may have regarding children that they think or know is missing education, to ensure we can make sure they are safe, and registered at school or an alternative educational setting as soon as possible.

### *Who are children missing from education?*

These are children and young people of compulsory school age (age 5-16) who are not on a school roll: being otherwise educated in alternative provision at home, or in private education, and who have been out of education for a substantial period of time.

### *Why do children go missing from education?*

There are a number of reasons, including:

- they don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system
- they are removed by their parents due to disinterest, problems at school or poor attendance
- they cease to attend due to exclusion, illness or bullying
- they fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- the family move home regularly.

If a member of staff has a concern about a child that they know that may fall into this category, or is approached by a parent who may know of a child in this position, it is important that the Attendance Team are informed as soon as possible. By doing so, we are ensuring the safety and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The more a child misses their education, the more likely those problems are of becoming entrenched. The Head Teacher should be informed in the first instance where such occurrences are identified.

Please read this section in conjunction with the schools 'Prevent Duty' and 'Tackling Extremism Policy'.

### **Attendance Targets and Reporting:**

Statutory Instrument No 2261 (The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007) came into force in September 2007, requiring the Governing Body of every maintained primary and secondary school to set and submit to the Local Authority a target for overall absence for the academic year.

The targets are reviewed annually; the DFE guidance suggest that targets should be realistic but aspirational. The annual school target is the total number of absences, which the Governing Body intends that the pupils at the school will not exceed in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendances by pupils at the school.

The purpose of target setting is to assist the school in:

- reducing levels of absence for children in particular groups
- to reduce levels of absence for a particular reason
- to reduce levels of persistent absence

Hill View Infant School is proactive in setting realistic targets with a view to reducing pupil absence, which in the main fall into the categories of annual family holiday and genuine illness.

Whilst truancy and children missing from education is an extremely rare matter at this school, we will always endeavour to track those children who may meet the criteria of most need and support.

Annual Attendance targets are communicated to parents every year on the school website and School Prospectus and we welcome their support in ensuring good attendance is observed whilst their children are with us.

### **School incentives**

In order to achieve the annual school target we have introduced a number of incentives to encourage improved attendance and punctuality. We celebrate good attendance in school with Alice and Arthur, our attendance alligator mascots. Alice or Arthur visit the class with the best attendance every week, to emphasise the importance of coming to school. Weekly attendance percentages are added to the school website and the current class with the best attendance. Children with 100% attendance receive a certificate at the end of each academic year.

Staff follow guidance as outlined in 'The Absence Code – Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities.'

The Headteacher meets monthly with a shared attendance officer (Ms N Murley, Southmoor Academy) to discuss current concerns and to progress cases where need be.