

Values:

‘Central to raising standards in education ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated- pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.’

School Attendance: Statutory Guidance and department advice, DFE Aug 2013

Heronshaw expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- National attendance is 96%.

Overall Aims

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure that good school attendance is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up to date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify cause of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:**The Legal Framework:**

There are legal obligations on:

- ☒ The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- ☒ The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- ☒ The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Head Teacher:

- ☒ To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- ☒ To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Milton Keynes Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To hold attendance panels for persistent poor attendance and punctuality alongside the governing body.

School Parent Liaison Co-Ordinator and office manager:

- ☒ To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- ☒ To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.

- ☐ The SPLC and OM to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- ☐ To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- ☐ Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- ☐ To revise and amend the policy, as required.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of absence if no reason has been received. If contact number 1 is unsuccessful the list will be worked down and the parent/carer will be expected to contact the school explaining why their child is absent. If contact cannot be made via the telephone a home visit will be made. If no-one is at home a decision will be made about whether we think the child is at risk and the police may then be contacted and a welfare visit may be requested.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for classes.
 - ☐ To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
 - ☐ To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
 - ☐ To produce a half termly grid showing attendance levels and action taken for HT/SMT/SLT to analyse.
 - ☐ To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
 - ☐ To contact parents/carers by letter, following 3 instances of lateness.
 - ☐ To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
 - ☐ To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
 - ☐ To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
 - ☐ To lead the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
 - ☐ To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
 - ☐ Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- ☐ To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- ☐ Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day.
- ☐ To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- ☐ To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- ☐ Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- ☐ Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- ☐ If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- ☐ Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- ☐ **To promptly inform the HT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.**
- ☐ To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache,**

stomachaches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. If pupils have moved to the school from another country and are under health care professionals they must transfer this care to providers in this country. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible. School can administer any medication, parents need to check this in with the office and fill out the appropriate form.**

Families can have an authorised absence if the school believes that the reason given for being absent isn't strong enough. For example if the illness is such that the child can attend school, if they are absent for their birthday, to go shopping, for a haircut or other similar reasons. If the child is missing school due to a family holiday the school will unauthorise the absence.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- ☐ **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.**
- ☐ Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- ☐ Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- ☐ Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- ☐ Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- ☐ Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

- To issue fines in line with Milton Keynes council fining process

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- ☐ To ensure good attendance and punctuality is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- ☐ To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

The class teacher will reward children in their class who have achieved 100% attendance for the previous week. The class with highest attendance for the previous week is celebrated in assembly.

Half Term School Newsletter

Each half term, the school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target

and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is available every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.15 am, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by three members of staff.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT, to ensure this.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance at 100%. The SPLC and the School Administrator organise the end of term attendance incentives and then liaise with the HT.

Attendance Certificate

Children with 96%+attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Head Teacher and SPLC, which they can take home and keep. Certificates are presented each term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

Sharing attendance data

Classes are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. They will be told which class has achieved the highest attendance in weekly assemblies.

This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Parent/teacher consultation evenings

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. If it is an ongoing issue it is referred to the parent/school liaison co-ordinator for support, if it still presents as a problem then it is referred to the attendance panel made up of the head teacher and governors .

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded daily. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Children arriving after the register will need to sign in via the late book.

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:00am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and return the register to the office.

From 9.00 am the school playground gates are closed. Any children arriving after this time are in the 'Children Arriving Late' folder. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late.

If a child arrives late between 9am and 9.15am they will be recorded as late, after 9.15am they will be recorded as late after the register has closed, code U. If 10 Us are reached in a 12 week period a letter is issued warning they are at risk of a FPN, if any more Us are recorded the FPN can be issued.

The officer manager or SPLC then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked in the register and then begins first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be within the first 5 minutes of returning to class.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality terms. Any children falling below 96% will receive a letter, if a child's attendance is of concern to us due to a sudden drop, lack of improvement or being below 90% then the parents will be contacted by the School/parent liaison coordinator initially, and this may be then passed to the attendance panel if attendance / punctuality proceed to be a problem.

Punctuality Folder

The office manager and school parent liaison coordinator monitor the punctuality folder regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the attendance panel who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The office manager and SPLC follow this system:

- ☐ Phone parents' contact number(s), records parents responses.
- ☐ Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response
- ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first day absence book and this is filed in the absence folder. If the reason is not authorised by the head then it is recorded as unauthorised.

The OM/SPLC must establish a reason for every absence. If a parent cannot be contacted the next contact on the list will be phoned until someone has been spoken to. If every person on the list has been called and there is no answer from anyone a home visit is made by school. If there is no answer at the family home a decision will be made about calling the police to request a welfare visit. If we have made contact with someone who is not the parent we will ask them to try to contact a parent and ask them to phone us. We will continue to try to make contact with a parent and make a home visit if necessary.

No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the OM/SPLC has not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

Attendance Meetings

The OM/SPLC monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 96% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality:

The following tables show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance at Heronshaw School:

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents/carers	
Parents inform the school by 8.45 am, if their child is absent that day	Parents/carers	Office/Support staff update registration codes
Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception	Office manager in charge of late registration	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark

Teachers record attendance using the schools register. This is done at 8.55 am and 1.10 pm. Complete attendance/punctuality record – as required. Send to the office by 9.10 am	Teachers/Supply staff Teacher/TA	Staff use a paper register. Teacher takes responsibility for promptly informing OM/SPLC of concerns.
1st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child’s unexplained absence for that day SPLC informed of attendance/punctuality	OM/SPLC SPLC	OM/SPLC updates attendance codes

issues – parents contacted, if required		
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Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group and school	SPLC	Entered into Attendance Overview spread sheet to allow for monitoring and analysis
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Celebration Assembly, displayed on the School Attendance Boards	SPLC/OM	Parents are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality.
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence	OM/SPLC	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

Half termly and termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	SPLC/OM	
Assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality and share term’s data and progress	SPLC/OM	
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	SPLC/OM	
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families, at parents’ evenings	Class teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families

Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	SPLC	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for pupils and families.	SPLC/OM	
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	SPLC/OM and HT	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate
Attendance panel meets to review cases and makes contact to meet parents.	HT and Governors	Possible fining and clear guidelines on procedures to follow.

Extended Holidays

In line with Milton Keynes Local Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- A visit to another school which the child will be joining soon
- Taking the entrance exams for another school
- Sitting an award-bearing music exam or attending a residential visit organised by the Milton Keynes Music Centre
- The child taking part in an exceptional sporting event
- Taking part in a theatre performance licensed by a Local Authority
- Attending the wedding of the child's parent(s)
- Attending the funeral of a close family member (parent, grandparent, brother or sister)
- A religious observance
- Compassionate leave.

Authorisation for these events is at the discretion of the headteacher; it is not guaranteed. The main deciding factor will be the child's attendance percentage and punctuality record.

In addition, absences when the child is sick or has a medical or dental appointment will be authorised - but not if the medical or dental issue relates to another member of the family.

In the case of frequent medical appointments, it is likely that parents will be asked to take a Medical Record Form to be signed by the doctor.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please inform the school in writing,. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60 per child, per parent.

- ☐ If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120 per child, per parent.
- ☐ If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- ☐ penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- ☐ Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Date agreed by the Governing Body:

Signed: (Chair of the Governing Body)

Policy to be reviewed in January 2020