

Hunwick Primary School



Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

Hunwick Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- ◆ Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- ◆ Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- ◆ Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- ◆ Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- ◆ Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Statements of Expectations

Pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of the pupils:

- ◆ To respect themselves and others
- ◆ To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- ◆ To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- ◆ To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- ◆ To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the Parents;

- ◆ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- ◆ To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- ◆ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- ◆ To work closely with the school and the Attendance Improvement Team (AIT) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- ◆ To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special / exceptional circumstances
- ◆ To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS
- ◆ To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

School

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

What is expected of the School:

- ◆ To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- ◆ To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- ◆ To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- ◆ To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- ◆ To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- ◆ To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- ◆ To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- ◆ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- ◆ To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the AIT
- ◆ To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

Local Authority

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Attendance Improvement Team. (AIT)

The Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The AIT is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

The class teacher will take an electronic register in Sims recording who is present and absent from school at **9.00am**. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will record the time and reason for lateness against the pupil's Sims attendance record. All staff and parents need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes at **9.15am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence. Office staff will check that the absences from that morning and the previous afternoon are recorded onto Sims and all the present pupils marked present. The register is again taken at 12:45pm.

Parents are encouraged to provide a reason for absence verbally by phone on the first day of absence. This will be recorded on Sims. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

- ◆ The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- ◆ The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements
- ◆ The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- ◆ The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a three week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

1 st Day of Absence	1 week after period of absence	2 week after period of absence	3 weeks after period of absence
Parent Contacts school with reason by phone and/or letter School may phone parent to inform them that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.	School sends a letter requesting a reason for absence.	School sends a letter requesting a reason for absence. HT consulted.	Referred to HT re decision on recording of unauthorised absence.

Attendance codes

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Reg Codes	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision ma...)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in e...)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by oth...)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session
@	DO NOT USE	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session

Monitoring

The attendance of all the schools pupils will be reviewed on a weekly basis and school will identify any pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.

A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having poor attendance, or persistent absence, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if there continues to be no improvement a formal referral to the AIT will be made. Evidence of medical appointments may be requested.

Requests for leave of absence

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to complete a holiday request form which will be handed to the Headteacher for authorisation. Amendments to the 2006 DfE regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the ten day threshold. It is made clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that Headteachers are to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. It is unlikely that leave of absence will be authorised if a child's attendance is below 95% without meeting with the Headteacher to discuss reasons for the request and for prior absences. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Official Register

A copy of the electronic register will be printed monthly providing a paper version of the electronically stored information for the previous term. The register will also have an audit trail of changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed. The monthly printouts will be bound together to form a years record and stored for a period of 3 years in a secure location.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- ◆ Class teacher will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- ◆ Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- ◆ Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- ◆ Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.

S Joyce

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