



# ATTENDANCE POLICY



At Hester's Way Primary School, we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer, maximising opportunities for learning.

We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can. This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

Poor attendance and late arrival at school can add up to many missed days out of education. This can have a negative effect on your child's learning, attitude to learning and self-esteem.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment where children and families feel wanted and secure. School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

We will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledged the efforts of the pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping. We will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and families who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Let the school know, by telephoning the school office before 9.00 a.m., on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not medical.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School will:

- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Inform parents about attendance via newsletters and give general information about attendance; publish attendance on school displays.
- Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head teacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.

- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data; respond to this to address areas of development and celebrate successes.
- Oversee attendance procedures.

Governors will:

- With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Set targets for attendance.
- Report on attendance statistics annually to parents.

## **SCHOOL TIMES**

We expect pupils to be at school for the start of morning registration at 8.50 am, at which time we open the classroom doors. The gate is locked at 8.55 am. Lunchtime is between 12.15 and 13.00. School finishes at 15.00.

## **REGISTRATION**

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Pupils arriving during registration will be marked late.

Pupils arriving after the registration period is over will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark.

The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the front of the register/Appendix A/in the Attendance Guide.

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the LA and DfE. Only school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

## **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Is when a pupil:

- Is absent with the prior permission of the school;
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment;
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance;
- Has suffered a family bereavement;
- Has been excluded;
- Of Traveller parents is travelling in connection with their work.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Is when:

- A pupil is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered;
- A pupil arrives after the registration period has closed without an acceptable reason;
- A pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period not previously agreed with the head teacher.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

## **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

"Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less well prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which together we must avoid." - Gloucestershire County Council.

In line with Government and Local Authority guidance we believe that, unless there are very special reasons, annual family holidays should not be taken in term time.

Special circumstances may include

- the need for a family to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have a minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

If parents/carers still wish to apply for permission from the head teacher a holiday form should be completed by the parent/carer with day-to-day care, well in advance of the proposed dates.

The head teacher will consider the request carefully and will look at previous attendance records, the pupils age and stage of education before notifying parents/carers whether s/he is able to authorise the absence or not.

If the request is refused then the child will be marked as an unauthorised absence and referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice of up to £100, per parent, per child (Section 444 (A) of the Education Act 1996).

## **APPOINTMENTS**

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. Pupils leaving school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

## **FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS**

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons the school medical service will be consulted. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made. We may ask you to record on a medical card appointments.

## **LONGER ABSENCES**

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

After close of registration, registers will be returned to the office and checked. Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.00 a.m. a

phone call/text will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing, in the school office.

### **Missing Children (Link to the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy)**

As a school, we are very aware of the dangers of pupils who may go missing due to a range of reasons. The school follows clear guidelines using the GSCB Protocol:

#### **Vulnerable Pupils**

- The school office has a list of all vulnerable pupils.
- If vulnerable pupils are absent with no call, the schools call the parents by 9.40am.
- The allocated PS worker is informed of the outcome of the call **on all occasions**.
- If no response, the PS worker will inform the family social worker who will decide upon a course of action. If no SW the PST members may visit the home.
- The SW will be asked to update the PST on any outcomes of a call or visit.

#### **All Pupils**

- If no parent calls for an absence, the school will call or text to find out the reason for the absence.
- If there are concerns staff may carry out a home visit.
- Relatives/friends will be contacted regarding the absence.
- The school may contact the police to carry out a 'health check' at the house.

The school will take advice from the LA and follow their guidance.

The safeguarding and child protection policies will be followed if there are any concerns. The Local Authority will be notified when necessary.

Where the register shows 5 separate lates during or after registration marks over 10-week period school will contact you to discuss support and targets. Where the register shows 10 separate late after registration marks over a 10-week period the Local Authority Attendance Officer may consider issuing a fixed penalty notice.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Support Team and then the Head teacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter will be referred to the Attendance Officers at the Local Authority. There may be occasions when the school's LA Attendance Officer will talk to groups of or individual pupils in school.

### **THE LAW**

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers;
- Schools must report to the LA on most pupil absences that are not authorised. Recent Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period particularly when this absence is on account of:
  - (a) Lateness after registration;
  - (b) Term time holidays without permission

- (c) Avoidable absence e.g. visiting relatives, birthday treats, tiredness after a late night etc.

In these instances, the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £50 after only one warning. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

## **STRATEGIES**

To support our attendance policy we:

- Will treat attendance as a priority;
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity –at Parents evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc.
- Always use first day telephone contact;
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance;
- Set attendance targets for the school and for each year group;
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level;
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels;
- Liaise fully with the LA Attendance/Education Welfare Service when necessary;
- Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for pupils where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important.

## **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

- We are addressing Attendance through a Raising Achievement Plan and impacts are measured.
- Our attendance is improving towards that of local comparator schools and the National outcomes.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as LA, Ofsted etc.
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

This policy will be used in conjunction with these policies:

Acceptable User  
Allegations Management  
Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy  
Complaints  
Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy  
Early Help  
E-Safety Policy  
First Aid and Medication  
Health and Safety  
Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part 1 (most up to date version)  
Lettings/Hirers agreement  
Offsite Visits  
SEND Local Offer  
Safeguarding  
Safer Recruitment and staff HR policies  
Safer Working Practice  
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)  
Staff Behaviour - Code of Conduct and Teaching Standards  
Whistle Blowing  
Working Together to Keep Children Safe

This policy was reviewed in December 2019.

It will be reviewed in December 2020.

Ratified by the Governors: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_