

Hillside Primary School



Attendance Policy 2020/21

Signed by:

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date: September 2020

Next review date: Autumn Term 2021

HILLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

“Developing the Individual”

ATTENDANCE POLICY – 2020/21

Vision Statement

Our school is committed to providing a stimulating and enjoyable education experience for all pupils. We, therefore, believe that if pupils are to benefit from the education we offer, good attendance is crucial. We will actively promote, encourage and celebrate full and/or improved attendance. Parents have a vital role to play in this, and we will establish strong home-school links and communications with them.

Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Targets

Our attendance rate for 2019/20 will not be used to set the target for 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 lockdown and school closure. We will therefore set our 2020/21 target at 97% - the figure previously set for 2019/20. This means that our overall attendance in terms of authorised and unauthorised improvement target is to improve by 0.1% from the last recorded full year's attendance in 2018/19.

Responsibilities and Processes, Parents and Carers Responsibilities

School commences at 9.00 a.m., but pupils are allowed into school from 8.50 a.m. The School cannot accept any responsibility for a child's safety and welfare before this time.

School closes at 3.10 p.m. Nursery and 3.15 p.m. all other classes. Parents/carers must ensure that their child is collected on time.

In our school prospectus and guidelines, we ask parents to contact school on the first day of a child's absence to inform us of the cause. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending school, parents/carers should notify school before 9.30am on the first day of absence or as soon as is reasonably practicable, by telephone message or in person and confirm in writing when their child next attends school. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. Registration closes at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as 'late after registration closed' and will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session.

Attendance issues will be raised with parents through letters, newsletters, parents' evenings, Prospectus or, in more serious cases, via the Education Welfare Service. Penalty Notices (fines) may be issued to parents/carers by the Education Welfare Services regarding poor school attendance (unauthorised absence).

School Register Procedures

1. The Class Teacher must ensure that school attendance registers are promptly marked at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If there is a discrepancy (e.g. if a child fails to return for the afternoon session), inform the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher immediately. Registration closes at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as 'late after registration closed' and will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session.
2. Please make sure that the correct symbols are used when marking registers.
3. Absence Reports will be put into class registers weekly. The class teacher must complete the reports and return them to the school office via the attendance register folder.
4. Children returning to school after a period of absence are required to bring a note explaining the reasons for their non-attendance. A telephone call or a personal visit from a parent or other responsible adult will be acceptable. If no such explanation is forthcoming the office staff must be informed within two days and will then take steps to contact the parents.

Attendance information from the registers is recorded weekly onto the computerised administration system (SIMS.net). Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the appropriate Governing Body of attendance and punctuality trends. The information will enable Governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary.

The Headteacher in liaison with the office staff and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory.

We maintain a close working relationship with the Education Welfare Service via the EWO. Regular meetings take place and various strategies are considered. In cases where no improvements have been

affected by internal action, the school will request the EWO make a home visit or hold an attendance clinic.

Definitions:

- **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

- **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

In all cases the parents/carer should write a note or telephone school to explain the absence regardless of whether the absence is due to unauthorised circumstances.

Holidays in Term Time

In light of the new regulations and amendments to school attendance set by the Department for Education, the school will no longer authorise any holiday absence with effect from 1st September 2013.

The DfE website states:

'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than 10 days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'.

This change in regulations means that Headteachers/Governing Bodies no longer have the discretion to authorise absence from school for family holidays and can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstance.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received from the parent/carer by telephone, note or by showing the medical appointment card. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible.

Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

Days of Religious Observance

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event.

Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day

Exit from the school during school hours is only through the main entrance. The absence is recorded in a book with the reason, time and whether the child is returning to school. Children will not be allowed to leave during school hours unless accompanied by an authorised adult. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify the school, in advance, of the name of the person who will be collecting the child.

Parents

Parents will be promptly informed over any concerns regarding attendance and given the opportunity to discuss these matters with an appropriate member of staff.

Pupils

Pupils should be aware of the importance of sustaining their attendance and punctuality at the highest possible level. This will be encouraged through positive strategies including our own incentive schemes.

School Staff

School staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff and should be treated as a priority by all. As a school we employ a range of strategies to encourage regular attendance and punctuality, liaising with parents.

Strategies

As a school we are committed to providing incentives to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Class Attendance Winners are announced weekly during Celebration Assembly:

- **'Attendance Archie' Teddy Bear – Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1**

This is awarded to the class with the best attendance in FS/KS1 for the previous week

- **Class Attendance Cup- Key Stage 2**

This is awarded to the class with the best attendance in KS2

- All children who attend for a full **term** will have their name put into a box and a winning name will be drawn from the box each term. This will usually be tickets for the cinema or free admission to other local attractions.

- All children with 100% attendance for the **whole year** will receive a certificate during the end of year Celebration Assembly. In addition, those pupils will have the opportunity of winning a bicycle to the value of £150 via a draw from the names of the eligible pupils. If no-one achieves 100% attendance then no-one wins the bicycle.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.