



Attendance Policy

Adopted: October 2019

To be Reviewed : October 2021

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Every day missed from school is a lost opportunity”.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At HPS we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness or medical
- dental appointments/treatment (where appointments cannot be made outside school time)
- days of religious observance
- exclusion
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents employment
- family bereavement
- involvement in a public performance
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)
- education off-site approved by the school
- approved educational activity (visits, residential trips)

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, family time, sleeping etc)
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances)
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- arrive after register has closed

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. HPS expects parents/carers to ensure that children are in class by 8.55 am. The morning register closes at 9.30 so pupils arriving between 8.55 and 9.30 will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. However, pupils arriving after the register has closed will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning

Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees
- facilitate and encourage early intervention
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc); match attendance trends with attainment trends
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- report attendance matters to parents/carers

First Day Response

All parent/carers should notify school on the first morning of absence. As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at HPS we:

- have clear procedures - registers close at 9.30 am and 1.30 pm
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality;
- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body are kept informed on attendance and punctuality figures.

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. For example:

- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement

- Religious festival

Any applications for leave of absence must be made to the Head Teacher in advance using the 'Leave of Absence' form. The Head Teacher will consider the request and let parent/carers know in writing the outcome.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

If parent/carers take their child on holiday during term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence – this is the same as truancy and you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice being applied.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY

As a parent or carer you are strongly urged to avoid leave of absence from school during term time. Should this be absolutely unavoidable then you should request a form from the office and return it prior to the absence.

The government implemented new legislation which came into effect in September 2013 which means that Schools may only authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. A parent or carer does not have any right to leave of absence during term time and, if your request is refused, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This could result in legal action being taken or a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60, per child, per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120, per child, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom a notice is served fail to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time, he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrate's court where, on conviction, a sentence of a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the terms of the County Council's local Code of Conduct, a copy of which is retained by the school.

Should leave of absence be taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This will appear both in the school register and in your child's report. Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Office and possible legal proceedings.