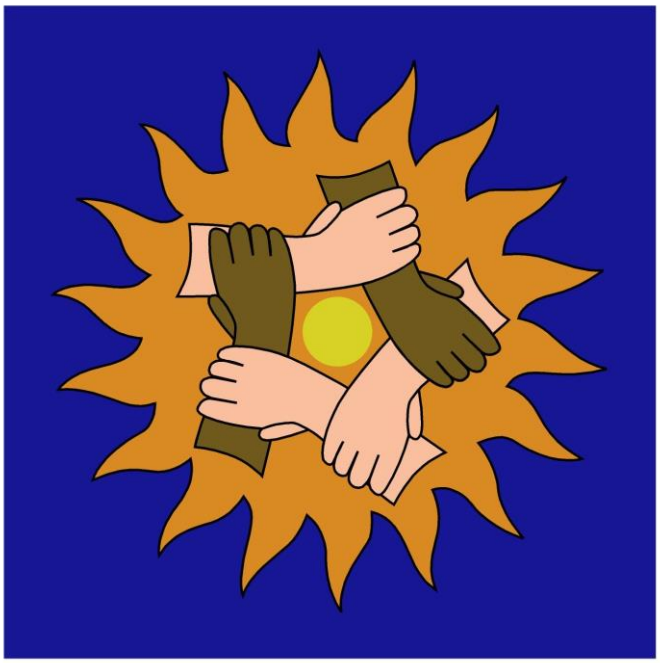
"Together we can achieve more"

Highfield Primary School



Attendance Policy 2016

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.
EDUCATION ACT 1996

RATIONALE

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential components of a child's education. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within the school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance allows. However, there will be times when religious requirements and family circumstances demand a sensitivity and acknowledgement that adaptations need to be made. In some cases children's lateness and absence may be being condoned at home or be out of the child's control. In these cases it is essential that the child is not made to feel guilty or inadequate.

School staff should set an example and ensure that wherever possible they arrive at lessons on time and demonstrate the value given to time in school. They should also demonstrate an understanding of the individual's personal circumstances whilst encouraging and expecting children to arrive on time and ready for work. Good personal organisation and time-keeping should be part of the school ethos.

AIMS

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school to at least 96%
- To encourage prompt arrival at school
- To encourage regular attendance
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties
- To respect and appreciate that variation in lifestyle and religious background may place different demands upon children and their families

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals have.

Reminder : We will not be authorising any term-time absences unless there are exceptional circumstances

Amendment to Highfield Attendance Policy Sept 2013:

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** used to 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.

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

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Authorising an extended period of absence, including family holidays
- Reporting to the Governing Body on attendance statistics/issues.

Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer

- Overall monitoring of school attendance and advising the Headteacher
- Monitoring trends in authorised, unauthorised and lateness including keeping details of persistent absentees.
- Liaising with other professionals, including school's SENCo/Learning Mentor, to determine the potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Overall preparation and implementation of the Attendance Policy
- Promotion of attendance issues/celebrations during assemblies
- Monitoring and distribution of whole class certificates for best attendance

Attendance Officer

- Arranging regular meetings and attendance assemblies/interventions with the EWO
- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases
- Submitting PA details to LA as required
- Printing out certificates and awards for children with 100% attendance and punctuality (termly) and end of year 100% attendance and best class attendance weekly and annually
- Certificates and awards for most improved attenders Attendance concerns to class teachers and phase leaders in September and before parent/carer consultation evenings
- Collating attendance percentages and completing and returning half-termly and whole year LA attendance data submissions
- Processing and following up holiday forms by putting code in registers
- Updating any whole school display / rewards for best class attendance on a weekly basis

Phase Leader

- Keeping an overview of classes' and individuals' attendance in their phase, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, (PAs) anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/guardians
- Working in partnership with the Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher to monitor and track attendance, send letters and meet with families.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Setting an example by arriving promptly at lessons and adhering to the school's playtimes and lunchtimes, promptly picking up pupils from the playground
- Completing the register accurately and according to the procedures set out in the Attendance Register guidance below.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/guardians
- Informing the Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them, using attendance monitoring forms
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of Attendance Officer/office staff)
- Discussing attendance issues at parent/guardian consultation evenings. Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from LA EWO meetings are carried out
- Liaising with and discussing with parents/carers, issues relating to attendance

Administration Staff

Office staff are responsible for:

- First day calling /texting if needed and registering late arrivals
- Following up specific requests from the Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher for information about individuals
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised
- Informing the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer on a formal and an informal basis of pattern of attendance , using attendance monitoring forms as appropriate

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Ensuring that they are aware of the Attendance Policy of the school
- Notifying the school regarding absence, preferably on the first day informing us of symptoms/reason for absence
- Where possible, arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours
- Holidays during term time should be avoided unless classed as "Special Circumstances", and are at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Ensuring that their children arrive punctually for school, and collecting them on time at the end of the school day

REGISTERS

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration – amendments) Regulations 1997, we are required to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and the afternoon session pupils are marked present or absent.
- Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved education activity. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent, the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/symbol should be place against each pupil's name – gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, staff need to follow the set of symbols listed on our online register on Scholarpack and in Appendix 1.
- Entries in registers should be marked as present or left blank by the teacher. The Attendance Officer/ Admin Staff will then fill in any gaps from messages they have received regarding absences.

Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register:

- In the case of a pupil who has been continually absent from school for a period of not less than four weeks and both the school and the EWO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.
- Notification has been given that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school
- That the child has been registered at another school.

Guidance for staff

- Staff are to start registering all children at 8.55 am, and at the start of the afternoon sessions.
- Mark all children present on online register on Scholarpack.
- Absences will be recorded in the register.
- Registers **MUST** be completed and sent by 9.15 am.
- An adult needs to authorise absences. Please do not accept explanations from children.
- Parents are expected to contact the school on the **first** day of absence.
- There will be a first day of absence text/ phone call from the office for those families who have not contacted the school.
- Please check reasons for absence. If a child is absent on a regular basis, with no real explanation given, please alert the Deputy Headteacher.
- If you have any concerns at all about attendance, please alert the Deputy Headteacher.
- Holidays, of any duration during term time, **must** be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Any absence for other reasons, e.g. taking part in sports, music examinations etc must be authorised.

Marking

- Registers should be marked with a diagonal line if a child is present.
- Registers should be completed by 9.15.
- The number of pupils present for the morning and afternoon sessions should be recorded by the class teacher.
- If a child arrives after 9.10 they will be marked as late (L). There name will be written at the bottom of the printed registers. This is most important in the event of a fire etc. After 9.30 lateness is classed as an unauthorised absence.
- Note which absences are authorised and unauthorised. Write the reason, if known, in the 'notes' section. If a child is absent due to headlice, please put 'unwell' (symbol – I)

Authorised Absences

Authorised absence is as follows:

- Child is prevented from attending by sickness or any unavoidable cause
- Religious observance as defined by the religious body to which child belongs
- Participation in approved public performance
- Situations where a school would reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave
- All other absences are **unauthorised.**
- Parents should complete a 'Request for Exceptional Absence Form' (available from the office) if they wish to take their child out of school during the academic year.

If you have any concerns with regard to attendance, please alert the Attendance Officer or the Deputy Headteacher so that it can be followed up.

FOLLOWING UP ATTENDANCE ISSUES – PROCEDURES

School procedures in cases for intervention.
Although a range of strategies and actions will be taken on an informal basis, a formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained.

- If no reason has been given for the absence a text or phone call will be made by Attendance officer
- Discussion on an informal basis with the child/parent and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from the school drawing attention to the child's attendance. Parents are invited to the school offering them the opportunity to meet with the Phase Leader, Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher and/or the EWO to discuss the pattern of attendance
- If the parents do not attend the meeting, the next stage is for an **approach to be made by the EWO** either by letter or through a visit
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the Local Authority's attendance policy

EWO meetings
The Attendance Officer and the Deputy Headteacher meets the EWO regularly to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individuals (particularly PAs). Prior to the meeting the following information is collected:

- Attendance record for any child with less than 93% attendance
- Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- Attendance records for PAs (those with 90% or less attendance).
- Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate. Decisions taken are recorded on the attendance monitoring sheet.

Following the meeting with the EWO, Phase leaders and class teachers are notified of the outcome and agreed actions are discussed, and followed up as appropriate.

At all times we believe that a positive approach which aims for co-operation is essential if improvements in attendance are to be sustained.

ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at Highfield Primary School arrive on time and every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly. In order to do this we:

- Award a certificate for the class with the best attendance on a weekly basis
- Update any attendance displays celebrating the class's best attendance
- Publish 100% weekly attendance of classes in parent/carer newsletter
- Award termly certificates to individual children with 100% attendance and punctuality
- Award certificates and prizes to children with 100% attendance and punctuality for the whole year, and publish names in parent/carer newsletter
- Award certificate and prize to the class with the best attendance for the whole year
- Award certificate to the child with the most improved attendance termly

MONITORING

The Headteacher will report on attendance to the Governing Body in the 'Headteacher's Report'.

REVIEW

This policy is due for review during the Autumn term 2017. Its success should be judged by answers to the following questions:

- Have we reached our attendance target of 96%
- Has the number of PAs decreased?
- Has our lateness % decreased?
- Are the majority of absences authorised?
- Is everyone aware of the procedures to be followed?
- Is monitoring used effectively to follow-up and improve attendance and lateness of individuals children
- Do class teachers and children have high expectations of themselves and others regarding punctuality and good attendance?
- Are forms and records regularly completed?