

Highfield Primary Attendance Newsletter "Together we can achieve more"



"Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education. (National Audit Office)

At Highfield Primary we will always strive to improve attendance levels to enable our children to reach their academic potential.

We are very pleased that our attendance has been increasing over the last few years: Our target is to be over 96%, and we hope we will reach that by July 2016. Thank you in advance for your support in trying to help us reach this target.

2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015
95.6%	95.7%	95.8%

It will not come as a surprise to anyone to realise there is a clear link between poor attendance and lower academic achievement.

- Developing good habits of attendance and punctuality are key life skills.
- When pupils miss school ... they miss out!
- Good attendance is important in order for children to:



- Achieve their potential.
- Develop a positive attitude towards school and good habits of punctuality and attendance.
- See themselves as an important part of the school community and to value and respect school life.

Schools recognise that this can only be achieved through a close partnership with parents/carers. We understand the need to work together, staff, parents/carers and pupils all need to know what is expected of them and why.

New Government Persistent Absence Threshold.

From September 2015, the Government have reduced the persistent absence (PA) threshold from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Therefore, a pupil is now considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90%.

This change came about because previously to have 85% attendance meant a pupil had to be absent for 56 sessions (28 days) of school.

This is a great deal of schooling to miss and, in the Government's opinion, was setting the level too low. Government research has shown that children who had between 85 - 90% attendance were still not achieving as well as children with higher attendance, so they have decided to change the PA levels to 90%.

The following table shows estimated cumulative absent session thresholds for around 15 per cent and 10 per cent.

	15 per cent	10 per cent	How many days absent ?
Half Term 1	10 or more	7 or more sessions	3 and a half days +
Half Term 1 - 2 (Autumn Term)	22 or more	14 or more sessions	7 days +
Half Term 1 - 3	30 or more	20 or more sessions	10 days +
Half Term 1 -4 Autumn and Spring Term	38 or more	25 or more sessions	12 and a half days +
Half Term 1 -5	46 or more	31 or more sessions	15 and a half days +
Half Term 1 -6 (Full academic year)	56 or more	38 or more sessions	19 days +

What does 90% Attendance Mean?

90% attendance = $\frac{1}{2}$ day missed every week!

- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost!
- Over 7 years at primary school your child will have missed three quarters of a school year!
- What impact might this have on your child's future ...?
- **17 missed schools days** means that in secondary school they could **drop a whole GCSE grade**.
- 8 days absence = 96%.
- 19 days absence = 90%.



Example: If by October half term your child has been absent for 7 sessions, (three and a half days) or by December 18th they have been absent for 14 sessions (7 days) they will be recorded as Persistently Absent. Your child may have been ill or there might have been an unavoidable reason for this absence, but whatever the reason your child has still got less than 90% attendance so they will be then monitored by the school attendance officer.

If their attendance continues to fall you will be contacted by the attendance officer to come in for a meeting to discuss further.

If the absence is due to a number of illnesses, following the meeting with our attendance officer their attendance may be unauthorised. This means that a GP appointment card/ copy of prescription may be needed to verify any future absence.

Absence due to Illness

Please inform the school before **9:30am** on the first day your child is absent from school due to illness.



It is important to keep the school informed if your child is going to be absent as soon as possible at the start of the day. The school has a clear process for you to follow to inform them if your child will not be attending, you can make a call to 0208 360 2149, leave a voice message or email us on our attendance email, attendance@highfield-pri.enfield.sch.uk. Please try and be specific about the reason your child is absent and not just "unwell" or "sick": please try and tell us the nature of the illness and the expected duration of absence from school. This will ensure we have an accurate attendance record for your child. If it becomes clear that your child will be away from school for longer than expected please phone the school to explain this as soon as possible. If your child is absent for longer than 5 days you may be asked to provide evidence of GP appointment card/ prescription.

We do not consider a late night, a cold, cough, headache or tummy ache to be an illness that prevents your child from attending school. Please bring them to school and inform the class teacher that they may be a little tired or under the weather, if they deteriorate during the day we will call you to collect them.

Please ensure the office has up-to-date contact numbers should we need to contact you if your child is unwell at a school. We realise some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances, please only keep your child at home if it is absolutely necessary.

Please make sure any dental and doctor appointments are made out of school time wherever possible. Please bring in the appointment card if your child has to leave during the school day.

Punctuality matters too!

- Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities!
- Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:
- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.



Some Strategies to Improve Punctuality

- Bedtime routines - packing school bag ready for the next day, getting to bed earlier, setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.
- Morning routines - setting the alarm earlier, no television until ready for school (and maybe not even then), having breakfast before leaving home, so no need to call in at the shop, meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with
- Coming to school for breakfast club if available.



If your child is leaving Highfield

If you are moving house or to a new area please complete our leaving Highfield form. We follow strict safeguarding procedures and cannot remove a child from roll until they have a new school place. We need the form completed because we often need to liaise with you, local authorities/and prospective schools to help secure children a new school place.

Request for exceptional absence:

Exceptional absence can only be agreed by the Headteacher. If you think you have an **exceptional reason** for taking your child out of school during term time, please complete our absence request form, **before** you take your child out of school. Please note that leaving school a few days early at the end of the term, or coming back a couple of days late, will all be unauthorised, unless agreed in advance. If as a result of this absence your child's attendance is under 90% their attendance will be monitored and may be referred to our Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve.

Every day counts at Highfield Primary School.

There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments - Highfield term dates are always available on our website and there is a copy for you below.

Highfield Term dates

2015-2016 Academic Year

Autumn term

Thursday 3rd September to Friday 18th December 2015

(Half-term: Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October 2015)

Spring term

Monday 4th January to Thursday 24th March 2016

(Half-term: Monday 15th - Friday 19th February 2016)

Summer term

Monday 11th April to Friday 22nd July 2016

(Half-term: Monday 30th May - Friday 3rd June 2016)

Bank Holidays

25th and 28th December 2015, 1st January 2016, 25th and 28th March 2016, 2nd and 30th May 2016,

Inset days - staff training days 2015-2016 - school closed
Thursday 3rd September 2015, Friday 4th September 2015,
Monday 4th January 2016,
Thursday 21st July 2016, Friday 22nd July 2016