**Policy Adopted: February 2022**

**Review Date: February 2025**

**Attendance & Punctuality Policy**



***Providing the roots to grow & the wings to fly.***

**Introduction**

At Henhurst Ridge Primary Academy we are committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We do all we can to encourage children to attend school. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school therefore we strive to make school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendance** | **Description** | **Approx. days lost per year** | **Approx. weeks lost per year** |
| 98-100% | Excellent | 0-4 | Less than 1 |
| 96-98% | Good | 5-9 | 1-2 |
| 95-96% | Satisfactory | 10-13 | 2-3 |
| 90-95% | Unsatisfactory | 14-18 | 3-4 |
| Below 90% | Persistent Absence | More than 19  Equivalent to 38 sessions | More than 4 |

**Responsibilities – Parents and Carers**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. They should:

* ensure that their children arrive at school on time, i.e. 8.45am, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
* instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
* ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children’s school
* impress upon their children the need to attend school regularly
* take an active interest in their children’s school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents’ evenings and other relevant meetings
* work in partnership with their children’s school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
* notify the school by telephone by 9.10 a.m. on the first day and all subsequent days of their child’s absence. Parents should provide an explanation for the absence by stating the exact reason for the absence. Using the term ‘unwell’ is not a sufficient explanation for an absence. The absence can be reported by on the school telephone number 01283 372200. If the school has not been notified of the absence by 9.30am then a text or phone call requesting an explanation will be made. The explanation for absence should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school.
* avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours

**Responsibilities - Academy**

The academy is responsible for:

* Working with parents to help their child develop an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
* Working in partnership with parents to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
* Employing a range of strategies to encourage good attendance
* Discussing with the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer any concerns it may have about the attendance and/or punctuality of any child on the school roll.
* Keeping accurate attendance records for a minimum of three years.

Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For pupils of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Therefore, at Henhurst Ridge Primary Academy, we:

* work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
* have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
* support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
* are sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. We recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. We also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.
* Produce school attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff

The Headteacher is the senior person with overall responsibility for attendance at Henhurst Ridge Primary Academy.

**Attendance Registers**

At Henhurst Ridge Primary Academy we use an electronic registration system within our MIS system. The DfE entry codes are included in Appendix 1, these include the various absence codes which can be entered.

* Registers will be taken at 8.45am each morning. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as being late.
* Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.
* Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted to request an improvement in punctuality.
* The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.
* The school will monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis.
* Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for their child’s absence by the end of the week will be contacted.
* Each half-term, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 90% attendance may be notified.
* Pupils with less than 90% attendance may be discussed with the Attendance team at Staffordshire County Council and appropriate action identified and agreed.

**Absence**

**Authorised Absence**

Only the academy can authorise absence. Parents do not have this authority. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the academy does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be authorised by the school. 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. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised. Legitimate reasons for a child to be absent from school, and which will be authorised by the school, include:

* the child’s illness
* the child is attending a medical/dental appointment
* the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s parent(s) belongs
* a close family bereavement
* the child is attending an off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition, e.g. speech therapy
* the child is attending an ***exceptional*** special occasion (the school will judge whether the occasion is exceptional) and leave of absence has been granted by the school
* leave of absence has been granted by the school

**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, an absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without what the school considers to be a good reason, even if the parent supports the absence. Reasons for absence being unauthorised include:

* no explanation has been received by the school
* the school is not satisfied with the explanation
* the child is more than 10 minutes late for school and does not have a satisfactory explanation for the lateness (the school will judge whether the explanation is satisfactory)
* the child is absent due to an unexceptional special occasion, e.g. a birthday, collecting friends/relatives from an airport or having a day out with friends/relatives who are visiting the UK
* the child’s parent or sibling is unwell
* the child is on a holiday that has not been authorised by the school

**Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term time**

Holidays Changes to legislation in 2013 made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional*** circumstances.

Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

Parents who wish to request exceptional leave of absence should do so on the ‘Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence’ form (see Appendix 2) which is available on the academy website as well as from the school office.

To have a week’s winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, **does not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

**All requests for leave during term time should be made in writing and addressed to the Headteacher**. The Headteacher will consider the request, and respond in writing, either refusing or granting authorised leave.

**Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments**

If a child is off for 5 or more days due to illness, then medical evidence must be provided. Without evidence the absence will be unauthorised.

A parent/carer should phone the school to inform the school office on the first day of absence for illness. A note should be supplied upon return. If no note is received, one reminder will be sent. If no note is forthcoming within a week following the reminder, the absence is likely to be categorised as unauthorised.

All letters explaining absence should be passed to the office. These will be entered onto the system. In the event of no reason for absence being given or received on the first day of absence, a telephone call will be made to the family. If this should be unsuccessful, it will be followed by a letter.

Advance notice of medical/dental appointments should be given wherever possible, preferably in writing. Students leaving/returning to the premises in session time must report to the school office where such movements are recorded for safety reasons. Where possible medical appointments should be made out of school time.

**Fixed Penalty Notices**

If a pupil has at least 20 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence (including irregular attendance and/or term-time holidays) in the current and/or previous term, including holidays where permission has been denied, the Headteacher can apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child. If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

The Local Authority retains the revenue from penalties in order to finance the scheme and any subsequent prosecutions.

The academy may ask parents to provide medical confirmation (from a GP or other medical professional) of their child’s absence from school if they are at risk of having legal action taken against them for their child’s non-attendance. Parents will be responsible for any costs incurred.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued as a last resort when the school feels it has exhausted all other strategies to assist the child to attend school regularly.

**Appendix 1**

**ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CODE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **MEANING** |
|  |  |  |
| **/** | Present | Present |
| **X08** | Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school | Authorised absence |
| **D** | Dual registered at another educational establishment | Not expected to attend this session |
| **B** | Educated off site | Approved Education Activity |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **E** | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| **H** | Holiday authorised by the school | Authorised absence |
| **G** | Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| **X07** | Government attendance restrictions | Authorised absence |
| **I/I01** | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| **I02** | Confirmed case of COVID-19 | Authorised absence |
| **J** | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| **U** | Late and arrived after the registers closed | Unauthorised absence |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **X09** | NHS test and trace required self-isolation | Authorised absence |
| **X01** | Non-compulsory school aged pupil not required to be in school | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **X** | Not required (Non-compulsory school age) OR Covid-19 related | Authorised absence |
| **C** | Other authorised absence | Authorised absence |
| **?** | Presumed absent |  |
| **Z** | Pupil not on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **X05** | Quarantine requirement | Authorised absence |
| **R** | Day set aside exclusively for religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **#** | School closed to all pupils (Planned) | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **X02** | Self-isolating COVID-19 symptoms | Authorised absence |
| **X06** | Shielding | Authorised absence |
| **P** | Sporting activity approved | Approved Education Activity |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence for occupational reasons | Authorised absence |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |

**Appendix 2**



**REQUEST FOR LEAVE DURING TERM TIME FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken during term time adversely affect your child’s learning.

**I/We request exceptional leave of absence from the academy for**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Child’s name** | **Child’s class** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

For the dates \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(inclusive)

**The exceptional circumstances for this request are** (please give as much detail as possible and/or attach supporting evidence):

Your name/s (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that permission may be refused and that absence may be counted as an authorised absence which could result in my child’s place being removed from the school roll. I am also aware that fines could be issued relating to this leave of absence.

**----------------------------------------------------------------------**

**ACADEMY USE ONLY**

Request received on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Authorised: Not Authorised:

Reason:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3: Henhurst Ridge Flow Chart for Attendance Letters/Interventions**

Attendance falls below school target of 96% and is either unauthorised or the reasons provided are questionable.

First day calling to be carried out. This process includes the sending out, when required, of Letter 1. This letter requests that parents provide additional information to support the absence of their child.

Attendance Officer (AO) to send Stage1 letter, outlining concern and action of monitoring to parent

Monitor for 2 weeks

Reason for absence is authorised and/or attendance has improved

Attendance further falls. Stage 2 letter sent: arranging meeting with AO

Where attendance falls below 90% (PA), the LA may become involved in the case.

Action plan created and agree to monitor for further x2 weeks

Well done letter sent out

*Did attendance improve?*

No further action required at this time

Attendance Lead to alert HT / SLT that a parental meeting will be required and agree a date and time.

No

Yes

Stage 3 letter regarding monitoring attendance and requesting a meeting with the Head teacher / SLT

Well done letter sent out

No further action required at this time

Where attendance falls below 90% (PA), the LA may become involved in the case.

2 weeks of monitoring to take place

*Did attendance improve?*

No

Yes

Well done letter sent out

Stage 4 Letter sent out.

EWW involvement

Possible referral made for statutory action

Ongoing monitoring to take place

Ongoing monitoring to take place

**Appendix 4: Stage 1 letter to parents**



Child’s Name

Dear Parent’s Name

Since the start of the school year, your child’s attendance is Figure%.

This may be due to your child being absent from school for a number of authorised as well as unauthorised reasons: sickness, medical or holiday, but low attendance means that your child is missing out on a vital part of their education and school life.

The national overall target for attendance is 96% for each child.

We are keen to support you in raising your child’s attendance in order that they gain the very best opportunity for learning.

We will be monitoring Child’s Name attendance over the next two weeks to see an improvement.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hopkins

Head teacher

**Appendix 5: Stage 2 letter to parents**



DATE

CHILD’s NAME

Dear PARENT’S NAME

We have previously made you aware of your child’s low attendance and we haven’t seen a significant increase.  Your child’s attendance is currently at figure %.

We do understand this may be due to your child being absent from school for a number of authorised as well as unauthorised reasons; sickness, medical or family holiday but low attendance means that your child is missing out on a vital part of their education and school life.

The national overall target for attendance is 96% for each child.

We are keen to support you in raising your child’s attendance. You will now need to provide medical evidence for any further illnesses, if no evidence is received this could lead to your child being marked with an unauthorised absence. Medical evidence could be a signed and dated appointment card or letter, a signed and dated pharmacist card or a dated prescription.

Please contact me if you have any questions. The school family Liaison Officer will be in contact shortly to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hopkins

Head teacher

**Appendix 6: Record of Attendance Meeting and Action Plan**

**Record of Attendance Meeting and Action Plan**

***Name of Child:***

***Class:***

***Date:***

***Current Attendance –***

***Lates:***

**Present :**

**Issue:**

**Parent View:**

.

**Barrier to attending school/ punctuality**

**How can we as a school support?**

**Actions:**

***Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:***

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

If parents do not carry out this responsibility, they may be prosecuted. Depending on the offence, the maximum fine per parent, per child is £1000 or £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

**Signature:** Parent……………………… School………………………………..

***Follow up Meeting Date***

**Review Attendance %**

**Action –**

Circle appropriate

DH regular monitoring

Monitor weekly

LA Notification

Referral – CP – SS

Referral – Contact EWO

Home visits

Timeframe

**Appendix 7: Stage 3 letter to parents**



DATE

Stage 3 Attendance – CHILD’s NAME

Dear PARENT’S NAME,

We have made you aware of your child’s low attendance on a number of occasions, yet we are still not seeing a significant increase. Your child’s attendance is currently at figure %.

The national overall target for attendance is 96% for each child.

An important meeting has been scheduled with the Headteacher. This meeting is to discuss raising your child’s attendance in order to prevent any statutory action being taken.

As of DATE we must receive any medical evidence of your child’s absence for us to consider whether the absence is authorise or unauthorised.

Please contact me if you have any questions or can’t attend for any reason.

Date:

Time:

Meeting with: Mrs Hopkins

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hopkins

Headteacher

**Appendix 8: Failure to attend clinic letter**



DATE

Dear PARENT’S NAME,

You were invited to attend a Stage NUMBER attendance meeting recently. Unfortunately, you were not able to/did not attend this important meeting to discuss our concerns around your child’s attendance.

**IF MISSED STAGE 2**

Attendance will be closely monitored for the next 2 weeks. If we do not see a significant improvement you will be invited to attend a Stage 3 attendance clinic with Mrs Hopkins where she will discuss next steps within the Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct and penalty notices. Please ensure to contact us if you have any concerns or if there is anything to further support you in raising your child’s attendance.

**IF MISSED STAGE 3**

If we do not see an immediate improvement in attendance please note we will be contacting the Education Welfare Worker in order to further support the school in raising your child’s attendance.

Please note all further absences will be unauthorised unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided. Please find attached the Staffordshire Code of Conduct.

We would welcome the opportunity to rearrange the attendance clinic at a time to suit you to discuss any concerns and barriers preventing your child from attending school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hopkins

Headteacher