



**West Horndon
Primary School**

School Policies

Attendance Policy

Staff consultation:

Adopted by Governors: 8th February 2017

Due for Review: February 2021

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs. Hilda', written over a large, faint circular watermark.

Date: 08.02.2017



Attendance Policy

West Horndon Primary School

Attendance is a key factor in the achievement of a child at school. Good attendance at school is important for a child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. The school aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Head Teacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

School

- **Type of registration system used –**
We use paper registration forms that are then data inputted onto the Schools Information Management System.
- **Start and close of registration –am and pm**
(At what point does a late become an unauthorised absence?) – Registration starts: 08:45 and Closes 08:55. Pupils arriving after this time will receive a late mark unless Parents have contacted school office to advise that their child has an appointment, in which case they will be given a medical appointment mark, parents should supply the school office with a letter/appointment card.
- **Is first day contact operated (how/when?) –**
If a child is not marked on the register, the school office will contact the parent if we have had no communication by 09:30am. This will then be recorded on a First Day Calling sheet.
- **Role in applying for Leave of Absence in term time –**
Absences taken during term time should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing, it is at the Headteachers discretion as whether it is deemed as 'exceptional circumstances'. The office will then issue the parents with a letter.
- **Sanctions for internal truancy –**
In accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- **How does school address poor attendance prior to referral to EWS –**
The Headteacher regularly reviews attendance data. Pupil attendance is considered as a factor by all teachers when attending termly pupil progress meetings.

At the end of each term the headteacher reviews all pupil attendance and a letter is sent to the parents of any pupil with attendance of less than 90% (except when the headteacher is already aware of exceptional circumstances)

that have affected attendance e.g. extended medical treatment) See Appendix A for sample letter).

If a child continues to have poor attendance over a period of more than one term the Headteacher may refer the case to the educational welfare service.

- **Arrangements for re-integration following periods of absence –**
The Headteacher or a member of the Senior Management Team will invite the parents/carers to attend a reintegration meeting.

Parents/carers

- **Outline procedures for parents if their child is absent –**
If your child is absent from school, you need to inform the school by telephone as soon as is possible using the telephone absence line (01277 811741 option 1), where a message can be left.
- **Role in applying for holidays and other term time absence in ‘exceptional circumstances’ –**
Requests for absence taken during term time should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing. Alternatively parents can arrange a meeting with the head teacher via the school office. It is at the Headteachers discretion to approve this absence and to decide whether the request is made in *exceptional circumstances*. There is no right to any absence or holiday during term time. Following the request the school office will then issue the parents with a letter indicating whether the proposed absence has been agreed or declined.

In evaluating the request for absence the headteacher will consider the following criteria:

- The pupil's attendance record for the previous and current academic year.
- The reasons and nature of previous absence.
- The pupil's progress and attainment.
- Whether the pupil is accessing any in school intervention programmes
- Family circumstances and history.
- The timing of the requested absence.
- The number of previous request made.

If the holidays are taken without school approval the headteacher will ask the Local Authority to pursue issuing penalty notices wherever possible.

- **Expectation to work with school and/or EWS to resolve any attendance issues –**
Parents are required to co-operate with the school and/or the Education Welfare System to resolve any attendance issues.

Pupils

- **Expectation that they attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons –**
Pupils are expected to attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons.
- **How do they register, by what time?-**
Teachers take the register in the classroom at 08:55am.
- **Procedure for late arrival –**
If you arrive late for school you will need to report to the office in the first instance. If you are consistently late, the Headteacher may request a meeting with your parents to discuss this issue.

EWS

- Works within 4 quadrant based Area Attendance Teams to reduce persistent absence, improve overall attendance and give advice and support to children, families and schools.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

The school may refer a pupil to EWS where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The EWS will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Attendance Targets

Each school has an annual attendance target set by governors. The target for West Horndon Primary School is 96%. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

Appendix A

Sample letter sent to parents of child whos attendance give cause for concern.

Dear

We have just conducted our termly review of attendance data and I am writing to all parents of pupils who have an attendance of less than 90% this term.

I regret to inform you that xxxxxxx's attendance is xx%. I am sure you will appreciate the need to bring this figure to your attention.

Even a 10% absence rate would equate to a whole days absence every two weeks. This would, as I am sure you will agree, have a detrimental effect on your child's education and progress.

The School Governors set an annual attendance target for the school which I am required to ensure is met. Additionally, both OFSTED and the Educational Welfare Service closely monitor pupil attendance and I may be required to provide details of your child's attendance rate in the future.

I trust that you will make every effort to ensure your child attends school wherever possible during the remainder of the school year.

We do understand that children cannot help being unwell, but I need to inform you that I will not be able to authorise any requests for absence until xxxx's average attendance is above 90%.

Please find attached a summary of the records we hold for your child's attendance this year. Please contact Mrs Curtis via the school office in the first instance if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Mr M O'Grady
Headteacher