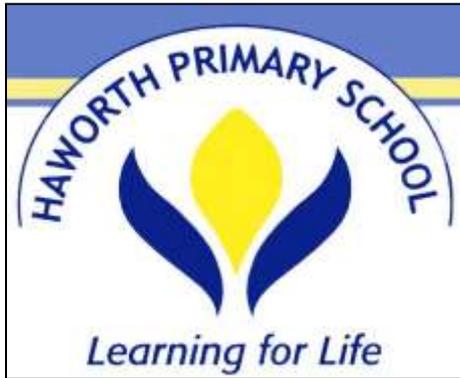


# Haworth Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Approved by Goves on	Comments
Issue 1	Helen Thompson			
Issue 2	Helen Thompson			
Issue 3	Caron Stone	April 2017		

# HAWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Overview:

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it, the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places pupils at risk, and in some cases, can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. *(Extract from Department of Education Booklet 'School Attendance')*

## Mission Statement:

Our school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and, equally importantly, punctually.

The school will maintain an effective system for recording attendance and absence and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

## Aims:

1. To maintain and improve the overall percentage of pupils attending school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
3. To provide support, guidance and advice to parents/carers and pupils.
4. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
5. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other agencies and services.

## Guidelines:

*It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence from school.*

**At Haworth Primary School parents/carers are expected to contact the school office (01535 642309) on the first day of absence, preferably before school and otherwise by 10.00am** giving as much information as is available at that time. If the absence is prolonged, interim information would be required by the school.

On their return to school, if the absence has been for more than one day children should bring a letter from their parents/carers confirming the reason for the absence and giving any other appropriate information.

In the event of no contact having been made regarding a child's absence, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. If unexplained absence continues, or the school is concerned regarding irregular attendance, a referral will be made to the Education Social Work Service.

### **Registration:**

Under Regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations, all schools must keep an attendance register in which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Regulations also require registers to state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

At Haworth Primary School the registration period is as follows:

Morning: 8.55 am until 9.10 am      Afternoon: 1.00 pm until 1.05 pm

Children are expected to be in the school grounds by 8.50 am to start school at 8.55 am when the school bell is rung. Arrival after this time and before 9.10 am will be deemed as 'late/present'; arrival after 9.10 am will be determined as 'late/absent' and will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

### **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence:**

Within the context of the law, only the school can approve absence.

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is a fairly recent issue and to help parents/carers distinguish between the two the following guidelines are included. If after reading these guidelines you are still in doubt, please contact the Headteacher.

- Illness, medical and dental appointments: if the school is satisfied that a pupil is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Repeated absence for illness without a General Practitioner's assistance being sought could result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- It is preferable for children to attend dental or doctor's appointments out of school hours. Parents/carers usually have a degree of choice over this. Unavoidable leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents/carers (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card. However, this should be seen as a last resort. A book is maintained by the school office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving the site and those returning to school during the school day.
- Religious festivals: up to two day's absence will be authorised for children to celebrate special religious festivals with their families.
- Lateness: the school policy is to encourage punctuality but also actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons and make the start of the day very disruptive for the child. If a child is late a "late mark" will be recorded – late is after 8.55 am. If a child arrives at school after the registration period has ended (9.10 am), the absence will be classed as unauthorised.

***For reasons of health and safety, all children arriving late will be required to enter school by the main entrance.***

- Special occasions: it is for schools to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not; much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally the rule is that only truly exceptional occasions should be sanctioned through authorised absence following discussion with the Headteacher.

- Family bereavement: the death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events for immediate family and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

### **Family Holidays/Extended Leave:**

#### ***The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 state that:-***

Schools have a discretionary power to grant a pupil time off school during the term. However, schools are not restricted to grant time off in those circumstances; they can also do so if they believe there are extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify the leave. For example, children who fall within the groups at particular risk may have needs that require the school to grant time off.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent(s), carer(s) or corporate parent that the pupil normally resides with on the 'Leave of Absence Request form' available from the school office.

Following changes to the Pupil Registration Regulation in September 2013 Headteacher's will only grant leave of absence for family holidays in exceptional circumstances.

Leave of absence for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.

Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s) or carer(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the holiday is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s) or carer(s) not the school.

### **Excessive Holiday Leave or Other Unauthorised Absence During Term Time:**

If a child does not return from holiday on the agreed date, any further absence is also classed as unauthorised. If the child has not returned to school ten school days after the agreed return date, the child can legitimately be removed from the school roll.

Our school works closely with the Education Social Work Service in order to maintain and improve our attendance. In order to provide a deterrent to a pattern of unauthorised absence developing, Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued. It is envisaged that the use of Fixed Penalty Notices may be used to discourage parents/carers from taking holiday leave during term time or for taking holiday leave without the permission of the Headteacher.

Where a child has failed to return to school five school days (ten sessions) after the agreed return date, a referral is made to the Education Social Work Service where a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter will be issued with immediate effect. Any further unauthorised absence will subsequently incur a Fixed Penalty fine.

In addition, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where a pupil is identified as having ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a six-week period (thirty school days). This would include lateness after the register is closed at the beginning of the morning and/or afternoon sessions, as this is deemed as truancy and classed as an unauthorised absence.

### **Problems and Reluctant Attenders:**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems a child may have regarding attendance at school. This approach is almost always

successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Social Worker who is linked to our school.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the Education Social Worker themselves to ask for advice or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The contact number is available from the school office or may be found on the Education Bradford website.

**Evaluation and Review:**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the school's Leadership Team, who will report to the Governing Body. Attendance targets will be set and reviewed annually, in conjunction with the school's link Education Social Worker.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier, if necessary.



Signed ..... 1 November 2015  
Chair of Governors