



HAWTHORN PARK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Where Care and Learning Count

Headteacher: Mrs Jeni Houghton



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019

Section 1

RATIONALE

At Hawthorn Park we believe that for a child to achieve their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good school attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between educational achievement and absence levels.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to maintain.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders find transition points easier to manage.

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parent/s and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletter, website, letters home and the School Prospectus.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance amongst the school community.

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Set attendance targets for the whole school, form group and individual pupils and ensure that these are well publicised.
- We will rigorously monitor attendance and punctuality.
- We contact parents as soon as we become aware of concerns regarding a child's attendance and endeavour to work together to improve attendance and punctuality.

Section 2

Operating the policy

Responsibilities;

The Head Teacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The day to day management of this duty is delegated to the school's Deputy Head Teacher, Parent Support Worker and Attendance Team.

They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed and will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep these to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Head teacher.

Classroom Staff will;

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leads on matters of absence and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Work with parents to support their children's attendance and punctuality.

Students (with the support of their parents/carers) will;

- Attend every day unless they are too ill to be in school or have an unavoidable reason for absence.
- Arrive at school on time and fully equipped for lessons.
- Get to registration and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Parents

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 7 Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

A 'parent' is defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and is defined as follows;

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned and unavoidable absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, text message or email on the first and subsequent days of absence.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3

Recording attendance

Attendance will be recorded by electronic registration at the beginning of the school day at 8.45am and again at the beginning of the afternoon teaching session.

Punctuality

The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.45am and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Morning registration is at 8.45am
- Any child arriving in school after 8.45am will be marked as late (this will be coded as an L on the register)
- To support parents in ensuring their child's punctuality the school gates and classrooms will be open from 8.30am
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration (from 9.15am) will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with the Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Evidence of this appointment i.e hospital letter will be required for the absence to be coded as *M*. Where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who consistently late arrive late to school are having their own learning disrupted and disrupting the learning of others. Ongoing and repeated absent lates (*U* code) are

unauthorised absences and **maybe be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 for further detail). Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12 week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

Please collect your child **promptly** at the end of the school day. It is the responsibility of the parent to book the child into After-School club through the website: www.premier-education.com. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies including both the Police and Children's Social Care

Section 4

Absence

A child not arriving at school where the parents have not informed the school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, explaining the reason for absence.
- Once a child's attendance figure falls below 93% a letter will be sent to their parents/carers and medical evidence will be required before any further absence can be authorised and coded at illness

If your child is absent we will;

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- If no contact is made members of staff will visit your home to check to ensure the safety of your child.
- Once absence falls below 93% we will inform you by letter and ask you to provide medical evidence for any further absence.
- If your child's attendance continues to fall we will invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and Parent Support Worker. We will endeavour to work with parents and families to support an improvement in attendance and punctuality. This may involve identifying and referring to other outside agencies for individual and family support.
- A time frame will be agreed to monitor improvement in attendance and punctuality, and targets for improvement will be set.
- If after the above interventions there has not been an improvement in attendance and if absence is unauthorised and doesn't meet school expectation we will refer the matter to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service. (See Section 6)
- This can also include asking Central Bedfordshire Council to issue a fixed penalty fine if your child has 10 sessions of absence in a 12 week period. (See section 6).
- Our Parent Support Worker and Attendance Team will meet termly with the Attendance Officer from Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss any concerns regarding individual children, offer support and oversee the school is implementing the correct procedures.

Third day absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers (either by phone, text message, email or home visit), after three days of absence the school will consider implementing the *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, and wider family.

Ten days absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is missing education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number and home address. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated in September 2013:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that Head Teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining **exceptional** are **rare, significant, or unavoidable**, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as **exceptional** will vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, **no legal entitlement for time off in school term-time to go on holiday and holidays will not be authorised**. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to put the request in writing to the Head Teacher in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and a penalty notice or other legal action in accordance with the code (see section 6) will be issued. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5

Triggers for letters home/interventions regarding low attendance and the issuing of penalty notices.

The issuing of letters and penalty notices for poor attendance/punctuality will take place when certain triggers are hit with your child's attendance. Before the issuing of any formal letters and notices, discussions will take place between the Deputy Head, Parent Support Worker and Attendance Officer. Factors such as the number of separate days missed (for example one bout of illness which may hit a trigger may not necessarily require a formal letter being sent out), the prior attendance history of the child and the engagement of the parents to support attendance will make up the basis of the discussions.

Below are the trigger points in the number of school days missed that may result in a formal letter/penalty notice being sent.

2019-2020

Total school days	97+% Attendance	96% Attendance Trigger 1	93% Attendance Trigger 2	90% Attendance Trigger 3
33	<u>Autumn 1</u> Below 1 day absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 1 day absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 2 days absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 3 days absent
72	<u>Autumn 2</u> Below 2.5 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 2.5 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 5 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 7 days absent
102	<u>Spring 1</u> Below 3 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 3.5 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 7 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 10 days absent
132	<u>Spring 2</u> Below 3 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 5 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 9 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 13 days absent
155	<u>Summer 1</u> Below 4.5 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 6 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 10 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 15 days absent
190	<u>Summer 2</u> Below 5.5 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 8 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 13.5 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 19 days absent

2020-2021

Total school days	97+% Attendance	96% Attendance Trigger 1	93% Attendance Trigger 2	90% Attendance Trigger 3
35	<u>Autumn 1</u> Below 1 days absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 1 day absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 2.5 days absent	<u>Autumn 1</u> 3.5 days absent
69	<u>Autumn 2</u> Below 2 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 2.5 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 4.5 days absent	<u>Autumn 2</u> 6.5 days absent
98	<u>Spring 1</u> Below 2.5 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 3.5 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 6.5 days absent	<u>Spring 1</u> 9.5 days absent
123	<u>Spring 2</u> Below 3 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 4.5 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 8.5 days absent	<u>Spring 2</u> 11.5 days absent
156	<u>Summer 1</u> Below 4.5 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 6 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 10 days absent	<u>Summer 1</u> 15 days absent
190	<u>Summer 2</u> Below 5.5 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 8 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 13.5 days absent	<u>Summer 2</u> 19 days absent

Trigger Actions

Trigger 1

When a pupil's attendance falls below 96% the pupil's class teacher will complete a monitoring document that will support the increase in the pupils attendance. A copy of this document will be sent to parents along with a letter stating the percentage of the pupil's attendance and the number of school days they have missed.

Trigger 2

When a pupil's attendance falls to 93% a letter will be sent home informing parents of their child's attendance and the number of school days missed. Any absence taken from the issuing of this letter will result in them being coded as unauthorised. From here further evidence of any time of will be required. This can be in the form of doctors letters, appointment cards etc.

Trigger 3

When a pupil's attendance falls to 90% a letter will be sent home informing parents that any further days absent from school may result in a penalty notice being issued. Further information on penalty notices can be found in section 6.

Section 6

Legal Measures for failing to ensure regular school attendance (including penalty notices)

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

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

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and*
 - (b) to any special educational needs they may have,*
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and are not attending regularly:

Penalty Notices: The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
Magistrates Court Action under Sec 444 (1) and (1a) of the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notices

Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices states that where a child has had 10 unauthorised absences in a 12 school week period, the school may request a penalty notice be issued. The code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that the

powers for this legal sanction are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty Notices can be issued when

- A pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account DfE guidance to inform its decision-making.
- Where the school believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting.

Parents and carers will be alerted / warned about the possibility of a penalty notice being requested for unauthorised absence, via the school's newsletter, through the leave of absence request form, through contact with their child's class teacher or through the school's attendance policy and website.

If more than one parent has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice. In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple penalty notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination.

Legal Action taken under Section 444 (1) and (1a) Education Act 1996

Where the school has tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absences but the measures taken have been unsuccessful, it can then refer on to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer. If there is either no improvement in the attendance nor satisfactory evidence provided for the absences following their intervention, then it is likely legal action at Magistrates Court will be initiated.

Sanctions available to the court are as follows;

- A fine of up to £2,500.
- A conditional discharge – you will be given a set amount of time in which to improve your child's attendance. Should you fail the Council may bring a further prosecution against you and, if found guilty, you will be sentenced for both offences.
- An absolute discharge – the case is proved but you will not be subject to a penalty, although you will receive a conviction.
- A community order such as unpaid work, curfew or tagging.
- Imprisonment - for up to three months.

Date of Policy- September 2019

Review of Policy- September 2021