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Hayes School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Hayes Primary School aims to work together with parents/carers in order to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils. At Hayes Primary school pupils' learning is at the heart of everything we do, but children cannot learn if they are absent. Absence from school has a proven negative effect on individual pupil progress, attainment, class learning and attitudes to school.

Effective schools must convey a positive attitude for regular attendance to parents / carers, pupils and teachers. Hayes primary school is proactive in promoting regular attendance and punctuality ensuring that pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Purposes

This document defines the policies and procedures implementation of which will help to achieve the following objectives:

1. To have clear, relevant guidelines for keeping registers which are carefully and routinely carried out by staff.
2. To ensure that good attendance has a high priority with pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and teachers.
3. To demonstrate clearly stated procedures for swift follow-up when there is a concern about an absence.
4. To understand the action that can be taken by the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Service to ensure good attendance.
5. To improve attendance and punctuality.
6. To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence .
7. To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
8. To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school .
9. To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.



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Rights, responsibilities and roles

School

1. All relevant staff will understand and apply the school's registration process.
2. All registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, and returned to the school office promptly.

NB: Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable as they provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a Court of Law.

3. The school will ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parent(s)/carer(s) through a variety of media: the school's website, newsletters, and school prospectus and parents meetings.
4. All absenteeism and lateness will be recorded accurately and monitored.
5. All pupils' with attendance below 95% will be monitored on a fortnightly basis by the school, in order to identify persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees.
6. The school will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities.
7. The school will annually review its Attendance Policy and associated procedures in consultation with the Local Authorities Attendance Improvement Service.

Parent(s)/carer(s)

1. Parent(s)/carer(s) have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfill this duty may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.
2. Parent(s)/carer(s) are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
3. Parent(s)/carer(s) are responsible for immediately informing the school at which their child is registered of the reason for any absence by phone call or where possible, in person on the first morning of any absence and thereafter.
4. Parent(s)/carer(s) should not take their child on holiday in term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a Penalty Notice being



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issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the school's prior written permission.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

All absences must be explained by parent(s)/carer(s). The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences may be as follows:

- Illness (1)
- Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement
- Days of religious observance
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (2)

This list is not exhaustive.

(1) Illness

Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for 5 days or more due to illness OR where a child's attendance is below 95% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised.

(2) Unavoidable medical/dental appointments

All routine (non emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a child need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school recording the absence as unauthorised.

Holidays in term time/ Leave of absence

Legislation

From the 1st September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006¹ came into force.

These amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.



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Requesting the absence

All requests for a child to be absent from School during term time must be made in writing at least a half term in advance of the proposed absence by completing the absence request form obtainable from Reception.

The Headteacher or person with delegated responsibility will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis, and will only do so where there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Where a decision is made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, the school will write to the parent(s)/carer(s), notifying them of that decision.

The school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice to the parent(s)/carer(s) for the unauthorised absence.

If no absence request is made

If a child is absent from School during term time and no prior absence request has been made, the School will write to the parent(s)/carer(s) to inform them that the absence has not been authorised and that a Penalty Notice may be issued

If the parent(s)/carer(s) can demonstrate that the child's absence during this time was due to an **exceptional circumstance** and that an absence request could not have been made in advance of the said absence, then a Penalty Notice will not be issued.

Please be aware:

Parent(s)/carer(s) who take their child out of school without prior written authorisation from the school may be subject to a £60 penalty notice per child, per parent from the Local Authority.

Parent(s)/carer(s) must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Nonpayment of the penalty within those timescales may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

First day reporting

- Parent(s)/carer(s) are reminded of the first day contact procedure at the beginning of each term, via the school newsletter and school website, as a school our target is 97% we will keep you informed of current whole school attendance percentage.



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- On the first day of absence the parent/carer should ring school before 9am to inform the office that their child will be absent from school and give a reason for that absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is to be requested.
- Between 09:30am - 10:30am attendance/administrative staff will phone parents/carers of any pupil whose absence is unexplained.
- If a child remains absent without any notification as to why, the school will call any other contacts that have been provided, including grandparents and work. Where the student's absence remains unexplained, Mrs. Torpey and Caroline Farmer will undertake a home visit.
- Immediately after registration, the member of staff taking the registration must send their registers to the appropriate office in order that where necessary; any absenteeism can be followed up by admin staff.
- If any member of staff is concerned about an absence they will liaise with the admin staff to clarify any reasons or knowledge for the absence. If still concerned they will relay to the Headteacher, DSL or Attendance Officer.
- School will inform the Attendance Improvement Service within 10 school days of a child's continued absence from school and a Children Missing from Education (CME) referral will be made to the Attendance Improvement Service.

If the child is subject to a child protection plan or if the school has particular safeguarding concerns, the school will immediately notify the Social Worker, Support Worker or the Safeguarding Hub.

Lateness

There are two negative results caused by children who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the child which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Children need to be in class ready for the register which will be taken promptly at 8.55am. School gates will be locked promptly at 9am (allowing parents to leave the premises, in case they are paying for school meals etc). Pupils who



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arrive after 9am are considered 'Late' (L) and will be required to enter the school via reception to sign in and record the reason for their late arrival.

- Children who arrive after 09:10am should be considered as 'Late (after registers close)' (U).
- Registration staff will record the appropriate late mark in the registers and these will be entered into the computerised attendance programme.
- Late gates will be implemented on a regular basis.
- All pupils' attendance records will be checked every half term for lates before registers close (L) and lates after registers close (U).
- Where either/or these late arrivals cumulate to 5 or more in a half term the school will write to parent(s)/carer(s) of the pupil in question to discuss any support needs and ways of accessing support.
- Our family support worker/Attendance Officer will monitor children who are persistently late. She will offer appropriate support where appropriate.

Persistent lateness will not be tolerated and further action may be taken if this occurs. We may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice in extreme cases.

Attendance letters

Where a child's attendance falls below 95%, the following actions should be taken:

Attendance letter 1 will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% (where no medical reason can be found).

Attendance letter 2 will be sent 2 weeks after letter 1 or later in the same academic year if attendance has not improved, inviting parent(s)/carer(s) into a meeting with Hayes Parenting and Pastoral Support Worker.

Attendance letter 3 will be sent if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend the meeting and/or there is still no improvement following letters 1 and 2, inviting parent(s)/carer(s) into a meeting with the SENCO and Assistant Headteacher.

If, at any time, a child has 20 in 200 school days or more unauthorised absences equating to 10% within a 6 months period, the school should attend a legal consultation with the Local Authority to consider legal options available. Legal options include: Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, School Attendance Orders and Prosecution. Please see the Local Authority website for further details.



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Next review due:	September 2017
Committee responsible:	Personnel
Community Owner	D Torpey
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Version	Approved by	Date approval	Key change
V3	MHanbury, DTorpey C Farmer	20.7.16	Late gates and persistent lateness
V4	Governors	15.12.16	First day response to absence