

# HAWKESBURY CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy



### Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable; permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

### Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those attending the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.

### Statutory Framework

**Under Section 7 of the 1966 Education Act, parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.**

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter / message will the school consider authorising an absence. Previous attendance for the child will be taken into consideration when reaching a decision to authorise an absence. **The school will not authorise an absence for a child, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the absence has been approved in advance.**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED.

### Absence

#### **Authorised absence**

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil is away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes e.g. a day of religious observance. A family bereavement, the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or special off-site tuition.
- All absence starts as unauthorised until a reason is given and accepted by the school.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- Attendance is below 90% for the current academic year or there have been two or more broken weeks during that term.
- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which no permission has been given, e.g. the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings; the pupil is shopping during school hours; the pupil is on a family

holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

### **Holidays during term time**

Holidays during term time are not allowed unless there are exceptional circumstances as they disrupt a child's education and impair progress. They can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and application should be made in advance. Each request will be treated on an individual basis and parents/carers will be asked to complete a Request for Leave of Absence form given during the meeting with the Headteacher.

### **Penalty Notices**

If a child's absence causes continual concern and parents / carers have done little to improve the absence the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice; and £120 if paid within 42 days of receipt of the notice.

### **Other Absences**

Other absences from school during term time will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made on whether to authorise the absence. To make an application parents or carers must make an appointment to see the Headteacher, prior to the absence.

### **Lateness**

- Pupils who arrive after the register has been called at 8.35 or 1.05 will be considered as late.
- Pupils who arrive after registers have closed must report to the office and be entered in the School Late Book.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.15 and 1.30 will be officially absent for the whole morning or afternoon session. This will be considered unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given.
- Action to address lateness will be taken. A letter will be sent to parents and carers of children who are late on a regular basis.

### **Illness**

- Parents / carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of the absence to provide a reason for the absence preferably before 8.30am indicating the type of illness.
- Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents / carers by telephone on the first day of absence.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

- Absence from school due to a medical appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents / carers are requested to inform the class teacher in advance of the appointment, in writing if possible.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments, where possible, out of school hours.

### **Reporting to Parents, Carers and the Local Authority**

All absences both authorised, unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parent / carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

### **Attendance Which is Causing Concern**

We will contact parents by letter using the sample letters at Appendix A, B and C if the following criteria is met:

- Their child's attendance falls below 90% from February onwards
- Their child has 3 or more broken weeks in a small term
- There is a regular pattern of absence
- If their child is regularly late

If a child is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Any child whose attendance drops below 90% without good reason or who has more than 5 broken weeks for two or more terms each year will be asked to attend an Attendance meeting with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss support strategies which can be implemented to improve the attendance of the individual pupil. An action plan will be written to record agreed actions to improve the child's attendance.

If following the meeting, attendance does not improve, the Headteacher with the support of the Education Welfare Officer may call the parents to attend an Attendance Panel meeting and the South Glos Educational Welfare Support procedures may be implemented.

### **Promoting attendance**

- Children with 100% attendance at the end of the year will be sent praise letters from the Headteacher. The letters in appendices A, B and C will be used for pupils with poor attendance.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters) of the importance of good attendance.
- Appendix D lists people who have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality :

Agreed at the Full Governing Body meeting 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Agenda Item 8

Signed: ..... Chair of Governors

Review Date: Autumn 2019

Equalities Impact Assessment: Completed



**Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School**  
Hawkesbury Upton, Badminton, South Glos GL9 1AU  
Telephone 01454 238629



Acting Headteacher: Mr E Riddington

E-mail: enquiries@hawkesbury.org.uk

---

To Parent / Carer of (*child's name*)

Dear Parent / Carer

**Attendance for (*name and date of birth of child*)**

I am writing to inform you that, according to our records, (*Child's name*) has (*number of*) broken weeks of attendance this year during the period (*date*). A broken week is defined as being absent for one or more sessions in a week, Monday to Friday.

It may well be that this has been due to genuine illness or other reasons, and I would not wish to alarm you, but I thought it was important to bring this to your attention as research shows that this kind of attendance pattern can have serious implications for your child's progress and achievement over time. If you have sent in notes to school explaining the absences you do not need to do this again – this letter is purely for your information.

Although we would never wish you to send your child to school when they are obviously ill, we would like you to consider the impact that regular absences from school might have on their sense of achievement, inclusion and on their progress.

Under new Local Authority guidelines I would like to indicate that, should (*Child's name*) attendance not improve, for non-genuine medical reasons, then you are likely to be invited to a meeting with myself to discuss this and look at how we can improve (*child's name*) attendance.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Ed Riddington  
Acting Headteacher

**Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School**  
Hawkesbury Upton, Badminton, South Glos GL9 1AU  
Telephone 01454 238629



Acting Headteacher: Mr E Riddington

E-mail: [enquiries@hawkesbury.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hawkesbury.org.uk)

---

To Parent/Carer of (*child's name*)

Dear Parent/Carer

**Attendance for (*Child's Name*)**

I am writing to inform you that, according to our records, (*child's name*) has below 90% attendance during the past year (*dates*).

It may well be that this has been due to genuine illness or other reasons, and I would not wish to alarm you, but I thought it was important to bring this to your attention as research shows that this kind of attendance pattern can have serious implications for your child's progress and achievement over time. If you have sent in notes to school explaining the absences you do not need to do this again – this letter is purely for your information.

Although we would never wish you to send your child to school when they are obviously ill, we would like you to consider the impact that regular absences from school might have on their sense of achievement, inclusion and on their progress.

Under new Local Authority guidelines I would like to indicate that, should (*child's name*) attendance not improve, for non-genuine medical reasons, then you are likely to be invited to a meeting with myself to discuss this and look at how we can improve (*child's name*) attendance.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Ed Riddington  
Acting Headteacher

**Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School**  
Hawkesbury Upton, Badminton, South Glos GL9 1AU  
Telephone 01454 238629



Acting Headteacher: Mr E Riddington

E-mail: [enquiries@hawkesbury.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hawkesbury.org.uk)

---

To Parent/Carer of (*child's name*)

Dear Parent/Carer

**Attendance for (*name*)**

I am writing to inform you that, according to our records, (*Child's name*) has (*number of*) late arrivals this year during period (*date*). A late is defined as arriving after the register has been called at 8.35 or 1.05.

It may well be that this has been due to genuine reasons, and I would not wish to alarm you, but I thought it was important to bring this to your attention as research shows that this kind of attendance pattern can have serious implications for your child's progress and achievement over time. If you have sent in notes to school explaining the lates you do not need to do this again – this letter is purely for your information.

We would like you to consider the impact that regular lates from school might have on their sense of achievement, inclusion and on their progress.

Under new Local Authority guidelines I would like to indicate that, should (*Child's name*) attendance not improve, for non-genuine medical reasons, then you are likely to be invited to a meeting with myself to discuss this and look at how we can improve (*child's name*) attendance.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Ed Riddington  
Acting Headteacher

### Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

#### Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

#### Headteacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the office staff or teachers as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To coordinate with the Educational Welfare Office regarding providing work/education for children who are absent for sustained periods of time.

#### Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on SIMs or the appropriate recording sheet.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

#### School Business Manager/Administrative Assistant

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns, in conjunction with the Headteacher, for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

#### Education Welfare Officer

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

#### Administration

- The School uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.