# Highfield Hall Primary School



# Attendance Policy

We believe that for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents make sure that their child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how we will achieve this.

**Why regular attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence or lateness can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the class.

Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility, an absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

**The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*’

**Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to legal proceedings, it includes:

* parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
* absences which have never been properly explained
* children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
* shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
* day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If a child is reluctant to attend, we encourage parents to talk to us rather than cover up the absence or to give in to pressure to excuse the child from attending.

### Persistent absenteeism:

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we expect parents’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the P.A. point or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. All P.A. cases are automatically reported to the appropriate authorities.

**Absence procedures:**

**If a child is absent we expect Parents to:**

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence or send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence.

**Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The school day starts at 8.55 and we expect children to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.00 and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent record of lateness parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Educational Welfare Officer to resolve the problem.

**Holidays in term time:**

Taking holidays in term time affects a child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1st September 2013.** These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

In making a decision about whether to grant leave for exceptional circumstances the school will consider each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

It is important that parents understand that leave in term time **cannot** be agreed by the school for the following reasons alone:

* availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
* days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. The school also has the powers to fine parents who take unauthorised holidays in term time. The Governing Body must by law use this sanction when necessary.

**HHPS Autumn 2023**

**Date of next review: Autumn 2024**