

Hallaton C of E Primary is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with our families to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

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

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important**

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you information on attendance
- Provide you with reports on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is.

### **Understanding types of absence**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine 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 "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, 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. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the Educational Welfare system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary.

### **Absence Procedures**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by email, phone call or a message on the answerphone.
- Or, you can call into school and speak to a member of staff.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.

### **Telephone numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

## **The Education Welfare Officer**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your 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.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 9.00a.m. and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9.10a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.10a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your 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 you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

## **Holidays In Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time.

### **Changes to the Authorisation of Term Time Holiday – from Sept 13**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the reference **in law** to Headteachers being able (at their discretion) to agree up to ten days of leave of absence **will be removed.**

Instead, the legal reference will be amended and will mean that schools **should not authorise** leave of absence unless \_

- The Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application **AND**
- An application has been made in advance by the parent/carer

Penalty Notices will be issued from Leicestershire County Council for parents who take their children on holiday in term time. Penalty Notice charges are –

- £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and
- £120 if paid within 28 days.

***Please be aware that the local authority can issue the penalty if the school obtains evidence that an unauthorised holiday has been taken.***

As a result of this change in law the Governors of Hallaton C of E Primary School have amended this policy. From September 2013 **NO** holiday will be authorised unless the Headteacher considers the request to be an exceptional circumstance.

If you wish the Headteacher and Chair of Governors to consider your request the following actions should be taken –

- Request form to be collected from the school office.
- Forms **MUST** be completed and returned at before the first day requested.
- If the form is not returned prior to the absence then the leave will automatically be unauthorised.

The Headteacher will look at each request individually. Previous holidays, attendance and the child's class work will all be taken into account when making the final decision.

### School Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2014/2015 is 100%

Our target is aspirational because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the country.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

### The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence

<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.