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Attendance Policy

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 achieve their potential. 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.

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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)



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- 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



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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 8.45a.m. We expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9.00a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.00 am 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

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024. A penalty notice will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before OR 10 sessions of unauthorized absence in a 10 week period.

If your child has unauthorised leave or irregular attendance, you will be issued with a Penalty Notice from Leicestershire County Council

First Offence - £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days),

Second Offence - £160 per parent per child when paid within 28 days (no option to pay at £80 level)

Third offence and any further offences – The third time an offence is committed for Term time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent per child.

Good attendance is considered to be 96% or above with no unauthorised absences.

Schools should not authorise leave of absence unless –



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

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 2024 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. (See appendix A)
- 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 is 96%

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.

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CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age or COVID-19 related absence	Not counted in possible attendances
-	All should attend/no mark recorded	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.



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Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the governing body, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by the local Admissions Forum. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our school or in the local area.

Reviewed June 2024

Signed: Claire Stevens
Headteacher

Signed: Ali Rutherford
Chair of Governors



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APPENDIX A

Dear Parent/Carer,

Family holiday during term-time

Requirements of Parents in ensuring pupil attendance at school

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-statistics-guide>

The parent of every child of compulsory school age is required to ensure that the child receives an efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and any special education needs the child may have either by attendance at school or otherwise. If parents choose to register their child at school, the law places a duty on the parents to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

Schools and local authorities can use a range of parental responsibility measures to provide support and/or sanctions to parents when their child's attendance at school becomes a problem. The law gives schools and local authorities powers to offer parenting contracts and obtain parenting orders in relation to attendance. In addition, schools and local authorities can issue penalty notices to parents for failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school or local authorities can decide to prosecute.

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

If your child has unauthorised leave or irregular attendance, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice

First Offence - £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days),

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Any requests for unavoidable absence during term time should be made on the attached **form IN ADVANCE**.

We understand that on occasions there are extenuating circumstances, but are bound by national regulations and hope you will support the school in this matter, as we are all concerned to see children fulfil their potential at school. I am sure you will agree that this can best be achieved by avoiding unnecessary absence. Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Stevens
Headteacher



Absence Request Form

Name of Student(s): _____ Year Group(s) _____

Date of proposed absence: _____

Please fully state the reason why you are requesting this absence in term-time:

Name: _____ Parent/Guardian

Signed: _____

Date: _____

For School use only

In considering this application, we will take into account the following:

- At what point in the academic year the absence is requested and how close they are to internal/external examinations.
- Your child’s overall attendance during the academic year - (Good attendance is 96% with no unauthorised absences).
- Any exceptional circumstance absence requests that may have already been granted during the academic year.

Decision

% Attendance to date

The circumstances of your request are not considered to be exceptional and cannot be granted. If your child is absent from school, it will be recorded as an UNAUTHORISED absence.

The circumstances of your request are considered to be exceptional and permission for absence is granted on this occasion.

Signed: _____

Date: _____