

Philosophy

Houghton Regis Primary School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning. Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance. We will identify and address, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance and adopt, at all times, a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

Principles

The school will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. The school will promote positive staff attitudes to those pupils returning from absences.

Staff will be made aware of the registration process and receive in-service training as necessary on registration regulations and the education law.

Registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and attendance regularly monitored.

Parents will be encouraged to contact school early on the first day of absence.

Senior managers and school governors will regularly evaluate attendance procedures.

A range of reward systems will be used to celebrate good and improved attendance of all pupils.

Procedures will allow returning absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other pupils in the class.

Procedures

Improving attendance at HRPS is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, pupils, parents and all school staff.

Pupils are expected to attend school and lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support.

At the end of each school week the office manager updates each child's attendance and punctuality record using "G2 Attendance" software and prepares the register sheets for the following week. During Monday assembly the class with the best attendance receives the attendance shield to display for one week and a small incentive. At the end of each term, pupils whose attendance is 100% receive a certificate and small incentive.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are required to notify the school of the reason, preferably, on the first day of absence.

Any absence for which there is no notification is considered an unauthorised absence. If no notification of absence is received on the first day of absence and the child is considered to be "at risk" then the Headteacher will follow up the absence the same morning.

The office manager checks the registers daily and notes any unauthorised absence. A letter is then sent to the parents requesting by return a reason for the absence. All notes or letters of absence are dated by the office manager and placed into an absentee file in class order. This file is kept in the general office. A proforma is kept inside the front cover of the register for class teachers and office staff to record reasons for absence which are reported verbally.

A pupil's absence from school will remain unauthorised until the parent gives a satisfactory explanation. Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns over their child's attendance. Parents are encouraged to avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours.

Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school

A school has the right to request a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is issued to parents of a child who has been absent from school without permission. The L.A. Access and Inclusion Service will no longer issue an initial warning to the parents but will proceed directly to issue the £60 Notice.

The following will apply:

- if a child accrues 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence over a 12 week period a school may request the Access and Inclusion Service issue a FPN of £60 to the parents:
- if this £60 is not paid within 21 days it increases to £120;
- if this £120 is not paid within 28 days the Access and Inclusion Service will then prosecute the parents in the local magistrates' court. On conviction the parents can be fined up to £1000.
- FPNs are issued on the basis of one per parent per child.

Leave of Absence during term time

The Governors of the school have discretionary power to grant leave of absence for pupils, for up to ten days, in special circumstances, during term time. All requests must be made in writing, to the Headteacher, at least six weeks before the leave is to be taken. Forms for this purpose are available in the office.

The Headteacher will consider all requests on an individual basis paying regard to the child's current attendance rate. Leave of absence during test periods should be avoided.

Requests for more than ten days during one academic year will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will be referred to the Access and Inclusion Officer for approval.

School staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Staff will convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality. A range of strategies will be used to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Registration

Registers are called promptly at the start of the day i.e. 8.55 am and again at the start of the afternoon session. Registers will be marked in pencil on the printed sheet inside the class register.

Registration will close at 9.05 am and 12.55 / 1.25 p.m. Where pupils arrive late and the register is still open, they will be marked late but counted as present for the session. Where pupils miss registration and do not provide an adequate explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as unauthorised absent. Where pupils miss registration but provide an acceptable explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as authorised absent for the session.

Lateness

If a child is absent at registration then the teacher will leave the register open for the office manager to complete unless information is available to confirm the child will not be attending school on that day. The office manager checks the registers for late pupils at 9.10 and 12.55 / 1.25 and marks the pupil either present or absent as appropriate.

Parents and children report to the office to sign in if they arrive at school after registration has been completed and the office manager completes the printed attendance sheet and informs the kitchen staff. If the lateness is persistent a letter drawing attention to the incidents of lateness is sent to the parents. If the attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parent to a meeting.

The aim of the meeting will be to identify and resolve any difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance. The Access and Inclusion Officer comes into school during the year to monitor the registers and discuss staff concerns or issues relating to individual pupils.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the Access and Inclusion Service and formal intervention planned in accordance with Government Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Success criteria:

Attendance and punctuality of individual pupils will improve and targets will be met.

The profile of attendance both within the school and the local community will be raised.

New pupils will be informed about the importance of attendance and the policies and procedures operating within the school.

Attendance topics will be included as content in school assemblies and PSHCE lessons.

Appropriate, timely, referrals will be made to the Access and Inclusion Service.

School targets will be met and incentives awarded.

Protocol for Children left at school at the end of the School Day

If a child is left at the end of the school day:

- **between 15-30 minutes**, school staff will try to establish contact with parents by phone or contact the listed emergency number. Other possible contacts will be tried. A home visit could be made if this is felt to be reasonable.
- advice will be sought from Social Services if the child is on the Child Protection Register or it is believed that the family is known to the department.
- advice will be sought from the Access and Inclusion Service if this is appropriate.
- the local Police station will be contacted stating the child has been abandoned, if the child has not been collected after school and no other information is forthcoming as to the whereabouts of the parents/carers after a period of **one hour**.
- If the problem persists detailed records will be kept, recording times and action taken. Consideration will be given as to whether to notify Social Services to investigate the circumstances under the Child in Need procedures.

Up-dated September 2014