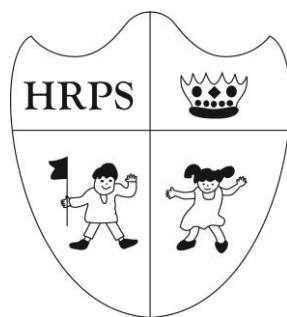


Houghton Regis

Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

2018~2019

Policy: Attendance and Punctuality Policy
Reviewed By: Curriculum Committee - Date
Ratified By: Full Governing Body – Date
Next Review: - Date
Staff Responsible: Bernice Waite

Introduction

The law requires that children attend school for 190 days each year and every day is important. Attendance at school is essential for children to gain most benefit from the learning opportunities offered to them in the classroom. When absent from school for any reason, children can miss important sections of their learning which can make future learning more difficult. Persistent absence can leave many gaps in a child's learning, thus making it difficult for them to keep up with their peer group in the classroom.

At HRPS we promote excellent attendance with a range of rewards and incentives and by highlighting attendance concerns as early as possible with parents and, where necessary, with the Education Welfare Officer assigned to our school. We believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is ensuring that children are happy in school and therefore want to be in school every day.

Where absence cannot be avoided, for example, where a child is too unwell to attend school, it is important that the time missed is kept to a minimum. We expect parents to ensure that their GP is involved in any ongoing medical issues which cause regular absence from school and keep school informed of such matters. If a child has suffered from sickness and/or diarrhoea there must be a minimum of 48 hours from the last episode before returning to school.

This policy sets out the means by which we aim to promote excellent attendance.

Aims

We aim to...

- Promote daily, punctual attendance at school as essential for children's learning.
- Identify attendance or punctuality issues as early as possible
- Support parents in ensuring their children attend school every day and on time.
- Provide clear guidelines and specific criteria for when term time leave will not be authorised.
- Follow up all incidences of unauthorised absence and refer parents to the Educational Welfare Service where appropriate.

The following procedures and systems are in place to enable us to meet these aims:

- A register of attendance is kept, in accordance with legal requirements. It is called twice a day at the beginning of each session.
- All pupils who arrive late at the start of a session must be signed in the 'late/exceptions' book which is kept by the school office. The reason for lateness must be recorded and persistent lateness will be followed up by the Educational Welfare Officer.

- We hold regular 'Late Gates' to encourage parents to get their children to school on time and to monitor persistent lateness.
- Parents are requested to telephone the school on the first day of absence, any unexplained absences will be followed up with a phone call from 10am.
- A list of unexplained absences and late marks are produced on a regular basis to ensure consistent monitoring. If no reason for absence is provided after 3 days then a parent support worker will visit the home address.
- Where pupils are admitted to hospital, every effort will be made to liaise with the hospital staff to ensure that appropriate work is planned where requested.

Authorised Absence

There are some reasons where occasional absence from school is unavoidable and would therefore be recorded as an authorised absence. Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments, although these should be taken outside school time where ever possible.
- Days of religious observance (2 days maximum).
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- External examinations
- When traveller children are travelling with parents as part of their trade
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces

There may be other reasons for absence, which could be recorded as authorised absence, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Unfortunately, there are some occasions when parents choose to remove children from school for reasons which do not justify time out of school. It is essential to discourage such absences and if you take your child out of school without prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and noted on your child's school records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

The following are examples of some of the reasons which will **NOT** be authorised:

- Shopping (including shopping for school items such as shoes)
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Lack of childcare provision or transporting children to and from school
- Holidays
- Weddings

Term Time Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments removed references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances and it is only for the Head Teacher to determine what is truly exceptional. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 days out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for any activity other than school.

Leave of Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Pupil's attendance is less than 97% in the previous 12 months.
- During SATs or any other examination years
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other concerns such as poor punctuality or the ability to catch up on any missed work.

We will also take into account the following:

- The pupil's general attendance record
- Proximity of examinations
- Amount of time requested
- Age of the pupil
- Pupils ability to catch up on work
- Pupil's educational needs
- The general welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- When the request was made

Applications for Leave of Absence

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning which is missed. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it to renew friendships with their classmates.

For these reasons we strongly discourage parents from applying for term time leave for their children. However, if such a request is made it must be made in advance of the absence or the absence cannot be legally authorised. All requests must be made at least four weeks in advance to the Head Teacher by completing the request form (appendix 1). A parent/adult with whom the child resides must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply us with confirmation of your return flight tickets.

Failure to return to school on the date expected

If there is a reason which delays the pupil in returning to school the parent/carer must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised.

Registration

The school day begins at 8:55am, classroom doors open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am. Once the doors are closed the only way into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way must be signed in the late/exceptions book and will receive a late mark. Registers close at 9am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late after registration closed' which is an unauthorised absence mark.

Sharing Attendance Data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements and an attendance display in the hall shares the best attending classes. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies.

This develops healthy life skills for the children's futures and it also engages conversation about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

Every week attendance awards are given to the following groups with the best attendance:

- Foundation & KS1
- KS2
- Gender
- House Team

The best attending classes in Foundation & KS1 and KS2 are awarded a certificate and attendance shield. The best class overall receives the 'Attendance Bear' for the week.

Monitoring Attendance

A member of the Office Team has the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded. Regular meetings are held with the Head Teacher to discuss any attendance concerns.

Appendix 1

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING TERM-TIME

Before completing this form, please refer to the School & LA Policies on Absence during Term-Time. The Policies are available to read in the School Office or can be accessed via the school website:

As a Parent/Carer, you should complete this form and return it to you child's school AT LEAST FOUR (4) WEEKS before the date when you want the period of absence to start; a separate application must be completed for each child.

Child's Full Name:

Date of Birth: Year Group: Class:

Address

Period of Absence: From To (inclusive)

Number of School Days Absent: Date of Return to School:

Reason Requesting Absence Please give details about why this absence is exceptional and MUST be taken in term time. Absence for holidays will NOT be authorized. (Please use continuation sheet if necessary)

Name: Relationship to Child:

Signed: Date:

Please indicate if your child has siblings in any other local schools: Yes/No
Name of School/s:
.....

SECTIONS BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL STAFF ONLY

<p>SCHOOL ACTION Current Attendance (Attendance sheet attached)</p>	<p>Previous holiday checked Head Teacher to authorize Supporting evidence required</p>
---	--

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME RETURN SLIP

To: Parent/Carer

Permission has / has not been granted for

To be absent from school for days from to.....
(inclusive)

Reasons given (if appropriate)

Signed: Date: