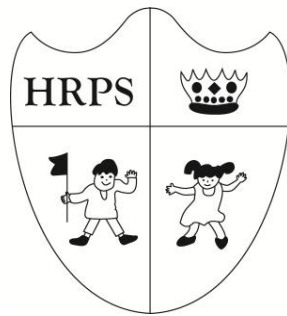


Houghton Regis

Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

January 2018

Introduction

The law states that it is the parents/carers obligation to ensure that their child, if of compulsory School age is receiving an efficient education. Good attendance is essential for children to gain the most from the learning opportunities offered to them in a classroom. A good attendance means that your child is in School at least 190 days of the year. Absences from school can hinder a child's progression as children miss important sections of their learning thus making future learning difficult.

At HRPS attendance concerns are highlighted as early as possible with parents and, where necessary, with the Education Welfare Officer assigned to our school. We promote excellent attendance with a range of rewards and incentives. 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. Please note that it is essential that any absences are reported to the School daily.

The Headteacher, Governors and Staff of Our School work together alongside other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. The procedures in this policy are in place to make sure this happens.

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
- Pupil's 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 8:50am, 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.

In line with Ofsted's expectations we are using a 'Trigger' system to highlight any attendance issues. Our attendance target is 96%, when a child's percentage falls below this then the initial response from our School will be a Trigger 1 letter (appendix 2). This highlights the low attendance so that improvements can be made and any support needed can be established and put into place. Following on from this your child's attendance and punctuality will be monitored. If, when it is later reviewed there has been no improvement or attendance has fallen further Trigger 2 (appendix 3) will be issued. This is a formal warning and requests that medical evidence is provided for any future absences. No absences will be authorised without this evidence once Trigger 2 is sent.

The step that follows Trigger 2 if no improvement is made is a Fixed Penalty Notice warning (appendix 4).

Schools have the right to request a Fixed Penalty Notice 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 issues an initial warning to the parents but will proceed directly to issue the £60 Notice.

The following will apply:

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

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 your 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

SCHOOL ACTION
Current Attendance
(Attendance sheet attached)

Previous holiday checked
Head Teacher to authorize
Supporting evidence required

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME RETURN SLIP

To: Parent/Carer

Permission has / has not been granted for

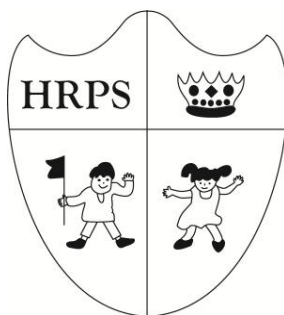
To be absent from school for days from to.....
(inclusive)

Reasons given (if appropriate)

Signed: Date:

Appendix 2

Headteacher: Mrs B Waite
Deputy Head: Mrs R Parmar
Telephone: 01582 867487
Fax: 01582 867487
Email: houghtonregis@cbc.beds.sch.uk
www.houghtonregisprimary.co.uk



St Michaels Avenue
Houghton Regis
Dunstable
Beds
LU5 5DH

Date

Dear

RE: School Attendance- Trigger 1

Am writing to alert you that your son / daughter's attendance has now fallen to %. I have attached their attendance summary to date for your information.

Our aim at Houghton Regis Primary School is to promote and encourage good attendance as it is a major contributor to good attainment. Pupils who attend regularly statistically achieve better outcomes at school.

We would prefer for students to have 100% attendance. We realise this may not be possible for all pupils but we would appreciate your support in ensuring that your child's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target of 96%. For the time being, your child's attendance will have to be monitored.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve 's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us here at Houghton Regis Primary School.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S Peklivanas
Office Manager & Attendance Officer

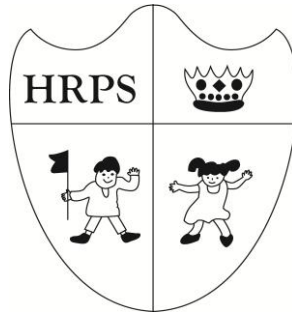


Appendix 3

Houghton Regis

Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs B Waite
Deputy Head: Mrs R Parmar
Telephone: 01582 867487
Fax: 01582 867487
Email: houghtonregis@cbc.beds.sch.uk
www.houghtonregisprimary.co.uk



St Michaels Avenue
Houghton Regis
Dunstable
Beds
LU5 5DH

Date

Dear Parent/ Carer of

School Attendance- Trigger 2

As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our school's attendance levels, therefore improving the life chances all children and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Unfortunately _____'s attendance has now dropped to _____%, and as per school policy, we now require you to provide us with medical evidence for all future absences (prescribed medicines, prescriptions, doctors' notes, hospital letters and appointment cards). We will not be authorising any absences without this evidence from this point onwards, regardless of reasons provided.

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance at school. Please ensure your child's attendance improves as soon as possible as failure to do so may result in the School or Local authority giving consideration to take legal action against you, a course of action that could be avoided with your full co-operation.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve _____'s attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

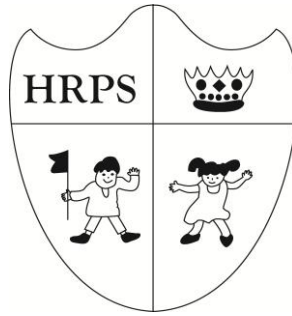
Mrs S Peklivanas
Office Manager & Attendance Officer



Houghton Regis

Primary School

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St Michaels Avenue
Houghton Regis
Dunstable
Beds
LU5 5DH

Dear Parent/ Carers of

Date

RE: School attendance – Final Letter before Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our school's attendance levels, therefore improving the life chances of all children and enabling them to achieve their full potential as they grow.

Unfortunately, attendance has now dropped from % to %, and if your child's attendance continues to fall after this letter, I will have to refer you to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Where pupils have 10 unauthorised sessions from school (i.e any absence where the school has not given permission) parents may be subject to a fine of £60 payable in 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Also, unless we are provided with supporting medical evidence such as appointment cards, doctors letters we will not be authoring any future absences for all future absences

Requesting the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice is used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent/carer fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act**

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Peklivanas
Office Manager & Attendance Officer

