



## **School Attendance Policy**

The Governing Board of Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery adopted this policy on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Reviewed July 2021.

## **Rationale**

This Policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of pupil attendance at Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery.

The Policy is a result of consultation with the wider school community and an analysis of existing attendance data to establish current absence trends. It aims to ensure the enjoyment and achievement for all pupils at Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery.

## **Principles**

The Governors, Head Teachers and staff wish to ensure every child has the opportunity to:

1. Fully participate in school life
2. Enjoy and achieve
3. Feel a valued member of the school community

## **Aims**

- To reduce persistent absence
- To improve attendance
- To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance
- To identify groups of pupils and individuals whose absence or punctuality causes concern
- To identify pupils persistently absent from school (10% or more absence)
- To track pupils' attendance and monitor and evaluate progress
- To identify main causes of absence and take action to address them

## **Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance**

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

The school follows the local **Children Missing Education** protocol and liaises closely with the link EWO. No child is removed from roll until the investigative period is complete. Staff are aware of how safeguarding issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM) may impact on school attendance and procedures are followed as appropriate. (See school safeguarding policy.)

## Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Parents must:

- Provide details of at least three different people who can be contacted in the case of an emergency and ensure that all have given consent for their numbers to be stored on the child's record
- Contact school on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance. This can be done via the school app, on the telephone or in person
- Update the school on the third day of non attendance if the absence is expected to continue
- Request leave at least a month in advance (if possible) for holidays/extended absences in term time by following the school policy procedures. The request form can be requested via the school office or filled in via the app. Term dates are published on the school's website and app and a paper copy is issued to all parents/carers.

NB: All information supporting your application for a leave of absence must be submitted along with your application to school. This includes any evidence supporting 'exceptional circumstances' for consideration by the head teacher. Any evidence submitted from an employer must be on letter headed paper and **signed by your employer**. Any supporting information submitted may be used as evidence should the case later proceed to court.

- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

## School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

The Headteacher is the school attendance leader and will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance, teaching and learning to encourage all pupils to attend and achieve
- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils

## Registration

Parents should ensure pupils are in school for 8:50am for morning registration and 1pm for afternoon registration.

- A pupil arriving after 8.50am and 1.00pm will be marked late.
- A pupil arriving after 9:20am and 1.30pm will be marked as late after the register closes. This is regarded as an unauthorised absence for the half-day session.

A pupil arriving in school after 8.50am/1.00pm should follow school procedures for late arrivals – go to reception and inform office staff of late arrival. For all pupils except Year 5 and Year 6, an adult must accompany the child to the office and explain the reason for arriving late.

Parents whose child(ren) are persistently arriving after 9:30am on 10 or more occasions will be invited in to school to discuss the lateness and seek a resolution. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement, the matter will be discussed with Education Welfare Service and consideration given to issuing a Penalty Notice. Parents will also be contacted if they are regularly late in picking up their children at the end of the school day or if they regularly take their children out of school before the end of the school day.

### **Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The parent must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school (or lateness) and it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

School will usually authorise absences where a pupil is:

- Unable to attend school due to illness
- Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Whenever possible, routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays
- Absent due to other exceptional circumstances.

School will not authorise absence for:

- Holidays or days out
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after brothers/sisters
- Parents' own appointments

School will request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 96% and has not improved over another half term. (See flowchart on page 7) When attendance is lower than 90% in the first half term, medical evidence may be required sooner.

The school follows the necessary procedures for Penalty Notice fines to be issued by the Local Authority in cases of unacceptably high levels of unauthorised absence.

## School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance

School will:

- Invite parents at the start of each year to disclose any information about themselves (health or otherwise) that might be relevant when responding to an emergency or unexplained absence
- Contact parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 10am to ensure the safety of the pupil. (NB if there is no response, the school will follow the "First Day Calling" procedures listed below.)
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- Contact parents by letter when a pupil's attendance falls below 96% to highlight concerns
- Issue an attendance letter to all parents at the end of each term, indicating how the pupils' attendance compares to the expected level.
- Invite parents in to school for an attendance review meeting, when a pupil's attendance is of concern. (Whilst Covid-19 control measures are in place, this may be conducted over MS Teams or as a telephone conference call.)
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance.
- Gather the views of pupils and invite their suggestions for how to improve attendance and/or punctuality.
- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school
- In partnership with the Local Authority, use a full range of strategies, including penalty notices and legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- Complete a Common Assessment where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified
- Implement a range of rewards for pupils (groups and individuals) with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils, including use of SEAL to promote emotional well-being
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment

## **First Day Calling Procedures**

At a national level, there have been some high-profile, tragic cases of pupil injury and fatality, where aspects of the follow-up to pupil absence were a contributing factor. For this reason, Hallwood Park Primary School will take the following measures to identify the safe whereabouts of a child who is absent from school:

- The Attendance Officer will check the morning registers and match absences with messages received from parents
- If no message has been received by 10am, the Attendance Officer will ring the parent listed first in the pupil's contacts list and ask the reason for absence
- If there is no answer, the Attendance Officer will ring the remaining emergency contacts and ask for assistance in making urgent contact with the parent
- If there is still no contact with the parent and further calls have failed to elicit a response by mid- to late-morning, the Attendance Officer and another member of staff will visit the child's home if staffing levels and circumstances permit.
- If the school is still unable to establish the child's whereabouts and the situation is considered to be an emergency, the police and/or Children's Social Care will be contacted as appropriate to log the school's concerns and to seek assistance. (It will be classed as an emergency if the child's absence suggests the need for immediate assistance and forced entry due to a health condition, injury or some other life-threatening situation.)

## **Penalty Notices**

The school will review pupils' attendance regularly with an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority and penalty notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Ongoing, unacceptably high level of unauthorised absence, including unauthorised lateness, where there has been insufficient improvement as a result of action taken by the school. The Local Authority will issue a penalty notice warning and set a target for a fixed period before the fine is issued.
- Unauthorised holiday or family visits taken during term time. Upon return to school, if the absence has brought the pupils' attendance below the expected level, a penalty notice will be issued by the Local Authority without further warning.

(Please see Halton Borough Council's website for more information about the penalty notice protocol: Link:

<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/EducationandFamilies/PDFs/Schools/penaltynotice.pdf>.)

## Persons responsible for attendance at Hallwood Park School and Nursery

- Mrs Goodwin (Head Teacher) – attendance leader
- Designated attendance officer - Mrs Shanks (Office Manager)

### Flowchart for Managing Attendance at Hallwood Park Primary School

