

HAVERSHAM VILLAGE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Haversham Village School is a highly, successful infant 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 reach out for excellence. 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.

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 affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absences will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so this may affect the learning of others in the same class as well.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will :

- Give you details on attendance on your annual report, but please note that every half-day absence is recorded so if your child is away for 1 day they receive 2 half-day absences.
- Report to you at Parental Consultations on how your child is performing at school and if there is any cause for concern about your child's attendance this will be reported to you.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good 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
- Truancy before or 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 or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15 % or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA (persistent absence) 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 our pastoral system.

All PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include; allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. From 2015 if a pupils' attendance rate falls below 90 % Governors have agreed that we will send a letter to the parents alerting them to this concern.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – if you have not contacted us already or we have been unable to contact you.
- Or, you can call into school and talk to the school administrator

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Local Authority Senior Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Senior Attendance Officer if attendance becomes a problem

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact number at all times. So 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. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

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 can disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.00 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time, ready for work. Registers are taken at 9.00 am, so your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time. School doors are opened at 8.50 am.

At 9.15 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. You will be asked to sign in our 'Late Book', based in Reception, if your child is late, explaining the reason for the lateness.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Local Authority Senior Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Applications for leave of absence during term time :

Please see separate letter sent to parents for information about the government amendments to the 2006 Education Regulations Act. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for authorised leave in school time to go on a family holiday. Taking holidays in term time affects a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time. The

Government believes that any savings parents make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

Following government regulations that came into force in September 2013, Haversham Village School will not authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If leave is granted the headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be absent from school with authorisation.

All applications for leave of absence must be made at least 3 weeks in advance using a 'leave of absence' form. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application on a case by case basis.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice and fines.

Strategies for promoting attendance :

- Attendance data is monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy / practice.
- Parents are reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parent's evenings, etc.) of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- Children who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored re-integration programmes prepared for them.
- The headteacher will make a termly report to the schools Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The headteacher may contact Children's Services in order to identify how best to support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Monitoring and Evaluation :

The attendance of children will be monitored on a regular basis by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will keep Governors informed on attendance issues through the Headteacher's termly report to the Governing Body.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

We aim to have a minimum level of attendance for this school of 95 % attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Year 2016 / 2017

Designated Teacher : Headteacher

School target for attendance : 95 % minimum (preferably 96 %)

School target for unauthorised attendance : 0 %

Government target for improved attendance : 95 %

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are :

Mrs Alison Mears Headteacher and Governors

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. Our figures for 2015/16 were 95.8 %, and unauthorised 0.3 %, 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.

Revised November 2017
To be reviewed annually