

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. If a pupils' attendance rate falls below 90 % 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 our EWO and/or Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the EWO 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 EWO to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in term time:

Please see separate letter sent to parents for information about the government amendments to the 2006 Education Regulations Act. As soon as governors have up-to-date information about the LA's 'Code of Conduct' referring to Penalty Notices, then this will be written into the Policy.

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.

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. 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 September 2013

To be reviewed annually