

Harvills Hawthorn Primary School



Attendance Policy **September 2018-2020**

Information for Parents, Learners and Staff

"Missing School Means Missing Out..."

Miss Soper (Deputy Head Teacher)
Michelle Helland (Attendance Officer)

At Harvills we believe that good attendance leads to good achievement and can help lead to a successful life.

We have an Attendance Officer who supports our drive for excellent attendance and punctuality.

As a school we aim to:

- Achieve an attendance rate of 96% or above.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Reduce the percentage of persistent absenteeism.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing every morning of the absence with the reason and saying when your child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time.
- Discuss with your child the importance of good attendance and support the strategies we have implemented.

We shall:

- Monitor attendance weekly to ensure we are reaching that 96% or above target.
- Contact parents immediately that there is an issue with a child's attendance or punctuality.
- Have our attendance officer monitor the Late Gate every day.
- Discuss the importance of attending school regularly with children.
- Have a pupil-friendly Attendance Policy.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the Home-School agreement and on our school website.
- Publish children's attendance rates on a termly basis and on annual school reports. These will be sent to the parents.

Acknowledge and reward good attendance:

1. The class teacher has a weekly discussion with the children about their individual attendance.
2. The class with the best monthly attendance will receive a reward that is presented in our Friday Awards Assembly.
3. Have a raffle, at the end of each term, for those children whose attendance is 96% or above.
4. Organise a visit as a special reward for any children that achieve 100% attendance by the end of the academic year. These children will also go into a draw to win £50.
5. Publish class attendance rates on a weekly basis. These will be reported on the weekly newsletter.
6. Host regular campaigns to promote good attendance and punctuality with incentives.

We will follow these procedures when a child has poor attendance:

1. Follow up any unexplained absence by making a telephone call home every day of the absence.
2. If attendance begins to fall, a letter to remind parents about the importance of good attendance will be sent, along with a request for medical evidence to authorise any further absences.
3. If attendance continues to fall, a meeting will be called to discuss the matter further. A home/school attendance agreement will be discussed.
4. Raise your child's poor attendance with our Attendance Officer, who may feel it necessary to make a home visit to discuss the issue with you further.
5. If we continue to have concerns, we will make a referral to the Attendance and Prosecutions Service who visit the school regularly to review and support attendance matters. This could ultimately result in court proceedings.

ABSENCE/ILLNESS PROCEDURES

If your child is absent from school for any reason, you must contact school as soon as possible on 0121 557 1034 (where you can also leave a message) or call into school and speak to one of the office staff to explain the reason for the absence.

If you know your child will be absent due to a medical appointment, please send confirmation with dates and times and the appointment may then be authorised. An appointment card or letter will be proof of this.

Please ring every day that the absence continues or inform us of the intended return date.

If your child is absent from school, and we have had no contact to explain why, then the following actions may be taken to safeguard your child:

- We may ring or text asking you to get in contact urgently.
- We may record the absence as unauthorised.
- We may complete a home visit.
- We may call the 'emergency contacts' we hold for your child which you provided.
- If we feel a family is vulnerable, or the absence is longer than a day, we may contact outside agencies as deemed necessary by the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation is considered unsatisfactory.
- Going shopping
- A child's birthday
- A routine doctor's or dental appointment

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority.

If a pattern of absence emerges, or if a child has a significant number of absent sessions, this may be considered a persistent absence. If this is the case, a referral may be made to the Local Authority (LA). The LA has it within their power to use legal proceedings if required, including Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise learning for the rest of the day.

It is also the beginning of the children's guided reading sessions, a crucial part of the school day. If your child misses this vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.

Times of the day:

Nursery AM	8.45am-11.45am
Nursery PM	12.30pm-3.30pm
Foundation stage and KS1	8.50am - 3.15pm
KS2	8.50am-3.20pm

The doors for Foundation and KS1 will be open from 8.45am and will close promptly at 8.50am.

The KS2 playground is staffed from 8.40am.

- A Late Gate register is completed daily by our Attendance Officer, Michelle Hellend. You may be asked to explain the reason for your child being late.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as an unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will call or write to you if we have concerns about your child's punctuality. If it doesn't improve, a meeting will be called to discuss the matter further.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be taken to a place of safety for a short time. If the school is not contacted to explain the delay, children will then be moved into school's Wrap Around provision and a cost will be charged at £5. If the child is not collected from Wrap Around, school will have no alternative but to contact Children's Services.

EXTENDED LEAVE IN TERM TIME (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME)

In 2013, the Department for Education issued revised advice on School attendance (which can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/attendance/advice-on-school-attendance> and they amended the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006.

The amendments have:

- Removed references to family holidays and holidays in term time.
- Removed references to the previous allowance threshold of ten school days.
- Made clear that Head Teachers may NOT grant leave of absence in term time unless there are *EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES*.

It is up to the Head Teacher to determine whether circumstances are 'exceptional'.

PROCEDURE

Any parent requesting time off during term time must complete a written application at least 2 weeks prior to the time requested. This form is available from the school office. The Head Teacher will then look at the request and determine if the circumstance is exceptional. They will take into account the circumstances, reason for needing time off, the amount of time requested, time of year and the child's previous attendance history including previous holidays in term time.

A letter will then be sent with the Head Teacher's decision of whether the time requested will be authorised or unauthorised.

Any unauthorised time off during term time, which meets the criteria, will be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Service. They may decide to issue a fixed penalty notice of £60, per parent, per child. This rises to £120, per parent, per child if not paid within 21 days.

School will ensure all parents and families have access to all school holidays as soon as they are available for the following year, a list of these are also available on Sandwell Council's Website.

If children are absent from school for longer than 20 days, proceedings may start to remove the child from the school's admissions register. This would be done in accordance with the guidelines and procedures given by Admissions and the Attendance and Prosecution Service.

CONSEQUENCES

The potential consequences of unauthorised leave in term time are:

- Possibility of Penalty Notice being issued (to each parent for each child).
- Possibility of losing a child's place on our school attendance role.
- The possibility of prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised holidays.

OTHER INFORMATION

The school's policy does not allow leave of absence for holidays in term time. Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up on their learning.

The school Attendance Officer may decide to complete a home visit if we believe a child is on holiday but this has not been reported by a parent/carer.

School will consider each request individually and respond in writing accordingly.

All Sandwell schools follow this policy and may consult with one another if there are siblings in other schools.

School will always make a member of staff available to talk to you about your circumstances and answer any queries you may have.

Leavers/Transferring School

When pupils leave (other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School), and you have not given us the relevant information so that we can contact you, your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies to try to track and locate your child.

By following the information below, unnecessary investigations can be avoided:

If your child is leaving our school, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office)
- Confirm that our school has your current mobile phone number
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred

- Let us know the date that you are moving
- Until you notify us that your child has been admitted, they will stay on our roll and every day of absence will be recorded.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Penalty Notice (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to aim for these high standards. Help your child to fly.

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Review date: September 2020.

HARVILLS HAWTHORNTON