

# Attendance Policy



**2016/17**



**Handsworth  
Primary School**

## **Aims Of Handsworth Primary School “A School With Great Expectations”**

At Handsworth primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, which offers opportunities:-

- For everyone within the school to reach their full potential and develop self-worth, self-confidence, the ability to take responsibility for their own individual actions and resilience.
- For everyone within the school to have a sense of wonder, an enthusiasm for learning and help children to develop as independent thinkers and learners with enquiring minds.
- To encourage and develop a respect and understanding for others.
- To develop all partnerships, small and large, from the individual parent to the wider community and beyond to support children's learning.
- To give children access to a broad and balanced creative curriculum to attain the highest possible standards in relation to prior attainment through assessment and learning.

### **Equal opportunities**

At Handsworth Primary school we believe that every child is entitled to equal access to a broad and balanced engaging curriculum, regardless of race, gender, class or disability. We positively celebrate diversity and difference.

### **Inclusion**

- We are committed to promoting a learning and teaching environment for all that embeds the values of inclusive educational practices.
- We aim, through a child centred approach, to ensure that education is accessible and relevant to all our learners, to respect each other and to celebrate diversity and difference.

## **Introduction**

At Handsworth we believe that positive behaviour and attendance are essential foundations for a creative and effective learning and teaching environment in which all members of the school community can achieve and feel included. The Every Child Matters agenda emphasises that all children should have their educational entitlement met to both make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Parents are aware of the school attendance policy and are encouraged to be involved with the systems and procedures that the policy describes through letters to parents, the Home-School Agreement and the school web site. The school's expectations are backed by information available through the DFE.

This attendance policy sets out systems and procedures for;

- The registration of pupils, including the length of time registers should be kept open
- Categorising absence;
- Collating and analysing attendance data to identify trends and enable action to be taken;
- Determining in which exceptional circumstances leave of absence will be granted for holidays during term-time;
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality for all lessons;
- Dealing with late arrivals;
- Dealing with unauthorised absence (i.e. when contact will be made with parents, how and when standard letter systems will be used, what measures will be taken to re-engage disaffected pupils, what rewards/incentives will be used to encourage attendance, what sanctions will be taken);
- Deferring cases to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (i.e. when, how and by whom);
- Reintegrating pupils who have been absent (e.g. providing pastoral support) peer mentoring and re-integration packages.

## **Attendance Registers And Categorising Absence**

The School is required to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in educational activity off-site, or absent.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

Parents may not authorise any absence, only the school can do this. The school may authorise an absence but inappropriate use of authorised absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence. As all absences should be treated as unauthorised until schools agree on a satisfactory explanation, it is clearly important that schools have consistently applied procedures for getting explanations and amending registers.

## **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

Handsworth Primary School works in close consultation with the Education Welfare Service and Local Authority.

The Education Welfare Officers are based within School Support and Pupil Services. Education Welfare Officers work with all primary schools and alternative education providers in Waltham Forest. School Support and Pupil Services have a key role within the authority in working with vulnerable children. The Education Welfare Officers work in partnership with school, families and other agencies to ensure that children benefit from the education to which they are entitled. This attendance policy sets out aims and objectives for both the LA and for all schools to ensure that promoting attendance receives priority attention.

Parentally-condoned unauthorised absence is a serious problem in some schools. Although requiring a different response to child-initiated truancy, it amounts to the same thing: the unauthorised absence of a pupil of compulsory school age.

By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. School staff need **not** accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person, if they doubt the explanation. It is for schools to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence.

Any further investigation should be handled sensitively but if, after this questions, remain (or where no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming), the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unauthorised absence appears to be a problem with a particular pupil, schools should involve the Education Welfare Service at an early stage. Family circumstances and/or special circumstances are **not** suitable reasons for which to authorise absence without explanation.

We hold regular coffee mornings and parents' events where we aim to work in partnership with parents to encourage punctuality and attendance.

At Handsworth we are able to provide extended school provision from 7.30am – 6pm via the YMCA Before and After School Club on site. There are also a number of before and after school clubs and activities that children can attend, including music lessons.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. School staff therefore look out for emerging patterns of authorised absence by individual pupils or groups of pupils.

The Home-School Agreement and School Handbook explains how to notify school when a pupil is absent. Some parents, for example those whose first language is in addition to English, may have difficulty in providing notes or using the telephone. We recommend that such parents make alternative arrangements, either through a neighbour, a community worker or elder sibling to notify a child's absence. In order to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, it is important for schools to ensure that there is equal access to information. Consequently this may mean providing appropriately translated material to ensure that no ethnic group is disadvantaged. The school website offer functionality allowing translation into over 60 languages.

There is no legal requirement for parents' notes to be retained by a school. But if a pupil attends irregularly and there is a possibility of legal action, it would be sensible to keep the notes for up to three years. The information could be used in court.

### **Procedures – Who does What and When?**

Registration for Handsworth opens at 8.50am for lessons to commence at 9.00am. Register closes at 9.00am and is open again from 1pm to 1.05pm for KS1 and 1.15pm to 1.20pm for KS2. Children are regarded as being 'late' if they arrive at school after this time. Because lateness will affect the child's entitlement to early morning learning provision, the class teacher keeps a class record of any pupil who arrives after registration, so that patterns of lateness can be monitored.

Parents must sign in at the main school office with a reason for the lateness after 9.00am.

### **Lateness**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of lateness, which could provide grounds for prosecution. If a child/ren is/are significantly Late eg. 12 times per term, arriving on or after 9.30am, this will generate a 'U' which will trigger a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

For Health and Safety and educational reasons, it is important that a late book is kept to note the children who arrive after the registers are closed. These records are invaluable in the event of an incident such as a fire.

In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.

### **Presence at Registration**

Pupils present at morning registration are recorded on the electronic register on SIMs in the classroom.

**AM / PM**  
- - / - -

## **Recording Absence**

Schools **must** differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Schools **must also** record separately if the pupil is undertaking an approved educational activity (see below). Schools may record this by a code only. Letters from parents explain the absences and the Headteacher authorises the absences. There are a number of attendance codes (see attached) which are also in the class registers.

## **Absence Codes**

Schools find it useful to use codes for identifying patterns of absence. The type of code used is a matter for individual schools, in accordance with LA advice for consistency in the analysis of absence data.

## **The Use of Electronic Registration**

Handsworth keep registers electronically. The original entry in a register and any subsequent alteration must be clearly distinguishable. Both the original entry and the correction should be preserved so that on retrieval the entries appear in chronological order.

If an electronic registration system is used, the attendance register must be printed off at least once a month. At the end of each school year sheets must be bound into annual volumes and, like manual registers, kept for at least three years after the date on which they were last used.

Attendance is monitored monthly by the school office and concerns are discussed with the class teacher and/or Headteacher, particularly if attendance drops below 90%. Prolonged absence for a period of over a week, holidays and patterns are also monitored closely as these can have an adverse affect on pupils' attainment and well-being.

Consistent lateness is communicated monthly to parents. Unauthorised absence is communicated individually to parents as the need arises. School concerns are communicated to parents and 90% attendance is closely monitored. As part of Every Child Matters the school secretary makes a call if parents have not notified school of their child's absence. Attendance is communicated three times a year at two parents' evenings and through the school report, through coffee mornings and individual parent meetings.

At certain times it may be necessary to convey the importance of attendance at school through core meetings with the Social Services, EWO, School Nurse and parents.

The links between good attendance and high standards are continually being reinforced and staff are also expected to set a good example in being present at school except for genuine illness.

After a period of absence we always offer pastoral support to the child and monitor their well-being in class and at play.

## **Strategies used by the school in the area of attendance**

This policy works in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy, special needs, behaviour and inclusion (anti-bullying, race equality) policies.

To encourage good attendance we give out certificates for children with 100% attendance each term and award the attendance bear weekly to the class with the best overall attendance.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of these strategies aim to achieve 97% + and raise standards across the school as well as ensuring all children continue to stay safe, enjoy and achieve.

The school office will monitor attendance weekly and inform the headteacher. The EWO works closely with Handsworth and formally monitors attendance.

As attendance is a whole school priority, governors are informed three times a year at full governing body meetings of how we are achieving our target.

### **Approved Educational Activities Off-site**

The absence of pupils to take part in supervised educational activity outside the school but authorised by the school is recorded as "approved educational activity". This is the **equivalent of 'present'** for the purposes of the annual absence return and performance tables, but it should be clear that such pupils are off-site for health and safety reasons or in the event of an emergency.

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used;

- Dual registration arrangements with a Pupil Referral Unit or special school. Both institutions share responsibility for the pupil. Failure to attend either institution, as instructed, without good reason is unauthorised absence;
- Field trips and educational visits, in this country or overseas;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- Pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under the overall supervision of the home school (i.e. a flexible arrangement sort of formal dual registration). This can include special tuition for visually impaired children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on the school's roll.

### **Temporary School Closures**

For school days where the whole school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire, heating failure or other structural damage, no attendance registers are needed.

### **Deleting Pupils from the School Roll**

There are clear and strict regulations on the circumstances in which schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in *Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, and amendments.*

[http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi\\_19952089\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19952089_en_1.htm)

<http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1997/97262401.htm>

<http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2001/20012802.htm>

Schools should consider the regulations carefully before deciding to remove a pupil from their roll, taking advice from the LA as appropriate.

For removing permanently excluded pupils from roll see 'Categories of authorised absence' below: -

Where a school has made the decision to remove a pupil from their roll, they should notify their LA.

If a pupil is to be taken off roll because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school.

School staff should be concerned:

- If the parents do not name the new school;
- If a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation;
- If a pupil has not returned to school within the agreed return date for a holiday taken in term time.

If schools are concerned they should alert the area child protection representative without delay. If they have no named contact they should inform the LA's Designated Child Protection Officer who can make a decision on whether to alert Social Services. Social Services may in turn involve the police. If, however, schools have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should contact the police directly.

### **Absences during term time**

***From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, national legislation gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.***

***Head Teachers would not be expected to regard any term time holiday as exceptional.***

***If you decide to go ahead and take a holiday in term time, for three days or more, that has not been authorized by school you will receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking your child on holiday during term time. From September 2013 these Notices incur a fine of £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine has not been paid after 28 days the matter would be referred to the magistrates courts for their consideration.***

### **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Parents should be encouraged to make appointments for their children out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attender.

If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or goes home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.

We keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.

If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and the LA can consult the School Health Service, or the pupil's GP.

A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked as present.

### **Days of Religious Observance**

This is an absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.

Schools should be sensitive to such requests and parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

### **Exclusions**

A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.

In the case of a permanent exclusion the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the first school day after the day on which:

- (i) the independent appeal panel upholds the permanent exclusion; or
- (ii) the independent appeal panel does not uphold the permanent exclusion, but does not direct the pupil's reinstatement; or
- (iii) the prescribed period for lodging an appeal has expired and the parent has not lodged an appeal; or
- (iv) the parent has, before the expiry of the prescribed period, advised the LA in writing that he does not intend to appeal.

In the meantime the absence is to be recorded as authorised.

The school is responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll. At Handsworth we follow the Exclusion Guidance for Schools, 2006 from the LA.

### **Family Bereavements**

The School should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and has discretion to authorise such absences.

## **Family Prison Visits**

The school will authorise requests for absence which will enable a child to visit his or her parent in prison.

Appendices:

**Websites for further information**

Codes for register

## APPENDIX 1

### **Additional Information 1**

School Attendance: information for Parents

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/publications/index](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/publications/index). Copies of the leaflet are available from DfE publications centre on 0845 60222 60, email [dfes@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dfes@prolog.uk.com). The leaflet is available in 17 community languages.

### **Additional Information 2**

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/legislation/index.ctm](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/legislation/index.ctm) – The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, as amended.

### **Additional Information 3**

The governing body (which is responsible for the attendance register) is registered with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. *The Office of the Data Protection Register* <http://www.dpr.gov.uk/> can give further advice.

## ATTENDANCE CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

# HANDSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handsworth Avenue, Highams Park, London E4 9PJ  
Tel 020 8527 5991 , school@handsworth.waltham.sch.uk  
Headteacher – Jill Augustin BSC (Hons), NPQH, MA (ed)



## Request for Leave of absence during term time

All parents will understand that regular attendance at school is necessary for children to make good progress with their education. A Copy of the school holiday dates are attached to help you plan holidays with a minimum effect on school time.

**From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, national legislation gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.**

**Head Teachers would not be expected to regard any term time holiday as exceptional.**

**If you decide to go ahead and take a holiday in term time, for three days or more, that has not been authorized by school you will receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking your child on holiday during term time. From September 2013 these Notices incur a fine of £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine has not been paid after 28 days the matter would be referred to the magistrates courts for their consideration.**

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I wish my child ..... Class ..... to be excused from attendance from

dates ..... to .....The number of School days to be missed is .....

Please give the full reason for asking for **exceptional** leave of absence in term time:

.....  
.....

Signature of Parent/Guardian ..... Date: .....

Authorised/Unauthorised by ..... Teacher to initial when seen

✂-----

**Reply slip** – To the parent of: Child's Name ..... Class .....

Your request for absence has been authorised/unauthorised

From the dates ..... to .....

**If unauthorised your request has been refused. Please see above for details of penalty notices.**