



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2018

At Hawley Primary School we aim to ensure that pupils receive a full-time education to maximise opportunities for all pupils to realise their potential. Experience and research both locally and nationally demonstrate a clear correlation between good attendance and good attainment. We therefore believe that establishing the habit of regular and punctual attendance at an early age will prove to be an excellent preparation for all of our pupils, for later school years and future employment.

We strive to be a welcoming and caring school where everyone feels safe and secure; all staff work together with the children and their families to ensure that all pupils are on time and attend school daily.

In order to achieve this aim we will create systems that enable us to monitor the attendance of groups of pupils and individuals and where necessary, build in incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping, and challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who do not. Throughout we will endeavour to maintain good communication with pupils, parents, carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and support.

OUR SCHOOL TARGET

Hawley Primary School's aim is to maintain high levels of attendance every year. Our current aim is to improve our attendance so that we meet or exceed the national average level of attendance. **Our current target for 2017-18 is 95% attendance.**

OUR STATUTORY DUTIES

This policy is written in relation to the following acts of Parliament and guidance relating to attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- We will also take account of all new legislation and initiatives.

KEY FACTORS OF THIS POLICY

- Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child attends school regularly
- Leave should not be taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances, where authority has been requested in advance and agreed by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to a request being agreed.
- Where unauthorised absence is taken the school may take what they consider to be the appropriate action and this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service. This could result in a Penalty Notice/s being issued to parents if a child is taken out of school during term time without written permission from the Headteacher. It is the parent's responsibility to secure this permission.
- The tariffs for the Notices are £60, to be paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days, the payment increases to £120 for a further 7 days. If still not paid at this time the matter may then be sent for prosecution, not for an unpaid fine but for the original offence. **All Notices are issued per parent per child as of Local Authority guidelines.**
- Parents and carers are asked to agree this policy when they accept a place at Hawley. This policy makes clear that unauthorised absences not only damage their own child's education, but also others'. Teachers need to spend extra time with children who have been absent to help them to catch up with work they have missed, which reduces the time available to give to the remaining children in the class. In addition, the change in dynamic of a classroom when students are not in school can also have a profound effect on some children, particularly younger pupils. This is one of the crucial reasons for a firm attendance policy, because when parents withdraw their children from school, it is not only their children who are affected.
- This policy also seeks to encourage punctuality. Children can arrive at school from **8.45am** and should be ready to enter the school by **8.55am**. Children arriving after **9.05am** are recorded as being late and where children repeatedly arrive late the school may take a variety of actions to rectify this. If a pupil arrives at school after the close of registers, post **9.20am** they will be recorded as an unauthorised late (U code). In accordance with DfE guidelines, this is marked in the register to indicate the student being absent for that particular session.
- The school day ends at **3.20pm** unless arrangements have been made for extended services. Where parents continually fail to make arrangements to pick up their children on time at the end of the school day, the school may have to consider referring the matter to Social Services and/or Camden's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It is every parent's responsibility to ensure that their children are collected on time from school every day.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The school gives high priority to advising all parents, carers and pupils of the importance of regular and punctual school attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, not least because these are extremely important when there is a problem regarding attendance.

Measures we take include:

- Holding induction sessions for all new parents and pupils
- Including attendance and punctuality performance in the school newsletter, as well as any new school policies or government legislation.
- Producing statistics of whole school attendance performance to be displayed regularly in the school newsletter. Termly attendance performance reports are also given to all parents and governors
- All staff are made aware of the values and standards expected for school attendance and taught how to encourage school attendance
- A reward system for pupils is in place to reinforce good attendance and make those who are punctual proud of their punctuality
- Term dates are published in advance and are communicated in the school newsletter. Any changes in the term date schedule are communicated more than one month in advance and communicated in a letter to the parent of every child.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Children receive guidance from teachers on an individual, class and school level about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. If a child has concerns about their attendance or punctuality they are encouraged to speak to their class teacher.

Children are encouraged to walk and cycle to school and to get to school on time before the start of the school day.

Children are encouraged to go to bed at an appropriate time so that they are not tired the next day. They are encouraged to prepare for the following school day on the night before so they are not rushed in the mornings.

There are incentive schemes in place to promote good attendance and punctuality amongst the children.

Children who are regularly collected late at the end of the school day may be referred to the school education welfare officer and in some instances social services.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP

Reporting an absence

The school works with parents and carers to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises that parents have a crucial role. If a pupil needs to miss school, parents/carers should inform the school of their child's absence immediately and provide an explanation as soon as possible. The nature of the explanation will determine whether the school will authorise the absence or not.

If the school is not notified of an absence then the school will initiate contact with the parent on the first day of absence. The school will make contact by written correspondence if phone or text contact is not possible.

Making a request for exceptional leave

Your child can only miss school if either:

- they're too ill to go to school
- you have advance permission from the head teacher for exceptional leave

The head teacher is only able to grant an authorised absence in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays during term-time and long weekends are not acceptable reasons for absence. A particular problem for Hawley Primary School is extended holidays and families taking additional days around the time of school holidays. We know that this can present difficulties with more expensive air fares – but in choosing to send a child to Hawley, parents must accept the school’s policy in relation to attendance during term time. As mentioned above, one of the key reasons for this is not just the missed education of the child taking the holiday, but the effect the absence has on other children in the class. This can often be compounded by parents taking children on holiday in term time who then ask the teacher for extra homework, taking up more of their time and therefore cutting the time available for the rest of the class. This is not an acceptable request and we believe that children need to be in school every day during term time.

There are only a few reasons for which authorisation for absence may be granted; for example, the death or funeral of a close relative. In these circumstances, we may ask for proof of the bereavement and/or evidence as to when any travel documents were purchased.

Emergency medical and dental appointments can be a reason, although all routine check-ups should be scheduled outside of school hours. We may ask for proof of a medical appointment, such as a medical appointment card.

Other exceptional circumstances may be authorised at the Headteacher’s discretion.

We will also consider whether the leave is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness or other traumatic events. Leave is **not** authorised because of availability of flights, accommodation or a family member’s work commitments.

We may also consider leave for ethnic or religious requirements, for example, (usually) one day’s leave for Religious Observance may be granted when this falls on a school day.

If a child returns to school late after a holiday then we will expect to be given a valid reason and to see written proof of the date they had originally planned to return to the UK. This would apply if a child is delayed whilst abroad and there is a claim that the delay was unavoidable. If this evidence cannot be supplied, then a penalty notice may be issued. The onus is then on the parent to prove otherwise.

Parents are expected to adhere to the procedure for authorised school leave. All requests for school leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher, **prior to the leave being arranged, or any travel plans made**. An exceptional leave request form is available to request leave and can be obtained from the school office. The completed form should be addressed to the Headteacher.

If parents have any comments, concerns or complaints regarding the school’s attendance policy these can be addressed in writing or by appointment with the Headteacher. If any parents wish to work with the school in partnership to promote and implement good school attendance practise this is encouraged and applauded. If a parent believes the school can support or assist them in their child’s school attendance we would be happy to accommodate this.

THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher will consider every request for leave on its individual merits. The parents will need to give the proposed dates of absence and return, as well as clear and strong

reasons for the absence. If leave is granted and the child fails to return on the agreed dates it is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If an extended absence is taken without authorisation, or parents are not contactable by the school, a child may then lose their place on the school roll. They may then have to apply to Camden Admission's Service for a new school place. Due to school waiting lists this **may not be at the current school**.

The school's attendance lead responds to teachers' referrals and concerns and checks the registers for problems with attendance, taking appropriate action where necessary. This information is shared consistently with the head and class teachers so that strategies can be employed to improve attendance within each class year.

The Headteacher oversees the collection and reporting of attendance data and the publication of statistics and reports on attendance to parents, pupils, governors and the Camden Learning directorate.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

All class teachers have the responsibility of keeping an attendance register. This is a legal document and must be completed accurately. It is a legal requirement that the attendance register must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are coded according to the information received from the parent of the child.

The class teacher monitors the register daily and is encouraged to be attentive and discerning to any emerging patterns of absence and lateness or any alarming changes in this area.

Class teachers encourage patterns of punctuality and good attendance by praising those children who came to school each day and arrive on time.

The class teacher reports any concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality to the school attendance lead and the Headteacher. This can sometimes result in a referral to the school education welfare officer.

THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The administrative staff record late arrivals each day and take telephone calls from parents or carers concerning pupil absence.

Each week the administrative officer enters the attendance data for each class from the class registers on to the database.

Individual pupil attendance reports are compiled on the request of the Headteacher or the education welfare officer (EWO). The administrative staff will also prepare termly and annual returns to the local authority.

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is responsible for monitoring, supporting and assisting good attendance in all Camden schools. Education Welfare Officers monitor school attendance registers, hold consultation meetings with Headteachers and take referrals from the schools.

The EWO may meet parents/carers and children in school, write to parents/carers, arrange home visits and refer to other professional agencies. The results of these interventions are reported to the school, and in many cases the interventions are carried out alongside school staff. Refusal to engage with these interventions and/or no subsequent improvement in attendance and punctuality, could lead to the issuance of a Penalty Notice/s or magistrate court proceedings.

The school has the right to refer a child to the Education Welfare Service where there has been persistent unauthorised leave. The EWS can issue Penalty Notices which are charged at £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid within 28 days. If payment is not paid within 28 days the Education Welfare Service may seek proceedings against the parent in the Magistrates Court. If taken to court and convicted this can attract a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months in prison or a criminal record.

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE SCHOOL WILL INVOLVE THE EWS

Where a child has poor attendance or punctuality the school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we will invite them to discuss the problem and suggest ways to improve attendance and/or punctuality. If this is unsuccessful we will give warning of a referral to an EWO. A referral may be made to the EWO under the following circumstances:

- 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence
- More than 10 days of authorised leave
- A term time holiday taken without permission
- A pupil who has been more than 15 minutes late (after the close of registers) on multiple occasions
- 90% or less attendance

Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child and they are dispatched via the contact details held by the school. If a parent or family moves out of the address that the school holds, it is the family's responsibility to inform the school immediately. Proof of a new address can be evidenced by a council tax bill, a tenancy agreement or a housing benefit form.

It is the responsibility of the parent/s, to inform the school of any new contact details or change of address.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS

The Governing Body has responsibility for monitoring attendance, school attendance policies and related issues. It is their role to be aware of general attendance issues and along with the whole Governing Board inform and oversee school attendance performance initiatives.

Reports and statistics and initiatives to improve school attendance will be shared and consulted on with the Governing Board and documented in Governors meeting minutes (made available to all parents).

OUR SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Children can arrive at school from **8:45am** School doors open at **8:55am** at which time the nursery, reception and infant pupils can be escorted to their classrooms by their parents/carers and KS2 pupils (juniors) are expected to walk independently to their classrooms.

Children who arrive after **9:05am** (start time) are marked late in the register. After the close of register at **9:20am** children will be marked with a U code. This is the equivalent of being marked as absent. If a pupil accumulates a large number of U codes a parent/s can receive a Penalty Notice.

School ends at **3.20pm** and parents/carers should collect children at that time unless extended hours arrangements are in place.

Each parent/carer must complete a form with contact telephone number, email details and address of anybody who is designated to pick up their child/children from school. Should parents wish to change this list of names we will need written consent from the parent in advance.

Children in **Year 6** are permitted to arrive and leave school unsupervised on the condition that the school has a permission letter from the parent.

A child cannot be picked up or brought to school by anyone under the age of 14. Children over the age of 14 who are themselves attending school which finishes at 3.20pm should not be in charge of picking up children from Hawley Primary School. If this happens we will write to the parent/s, inform the Education Welfare Service and may refer the matter to Social Services.

Term dates

School term dates are published in advance and can be found on the school website.

They are also available from the school office and will be regularly highlighted in the school newsletter.

Staff training days (inset days) are included in the term dates schedule. Parents or carers will receive written notice of any changes in term dates. Those changes will also be published in the calendar in school newsletter.

Date: January 2018

Agreed by Governing Body: March 2019

To be reviewed: January 2019

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY SUMMARY FOR PARENTS

Punctuality

Children need to be ready to assemble at **8.55am** and must be collected at **3.20pm**. If those collecting children are not the primary parents or carers the school must be informed in writing. A pupil cannot be delivered to or collected from school by anyone under the age of 14. Children are marked late after **9.05am**. The registers close at **9.20am** and any arrival after this time is treated as unauthorised late arrival and marked with a U code in the register.

Attendance

Full attendance is expected during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances do not include holidays, long weekends, leaving for holidays one day before the end of term or visits to family or friends. Parents must understand this when they place their child in the school.

Exceptional leave absences should be requested in writing in advance from the Headteacher. Acceptable reasons generally include close family bereavements and funerals and emergency medical and dental appointments (although routine check ups should be scheduled outside school hours). The Headteacher may also consider ethnic or religious requirements in certain circumstances.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are treated seriously by the school and the local authority. Initially we try to resolve any such absences by contacting parents directly, but if there are persistent problems of either punctuality or attendance the local authority is informed. Although it is very much a last resort, ultimately, Penalty Notices may be issued to parents.

Pupils can also lose their place at the school if extended leave is taken without permission.

Each pupil's punctuality and attendance record will also be passed on to any school they propose to attend after they leave Hawley Primary School.