



High Hazels Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

High Hazels Academy Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governors Jan 2017

Review Date Jan 2019

Agreed by Staff

Whole School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Mission Statement

‘Every child matters, and every day counts, Darnall children deserve only the best ‘

At High Hazels Academy we give the achievement of good attendance and punctuality high priority.

All school staff at High Hazels Academy strive to make the school day an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for all children. School attendance is crucial as the schools are dedicated to maximising the achievement of all children regardless of race, gender or disability. Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to educational achievement and social integration. To support regular attendance the schools will work in partnership with the children, parents / carers and all stakeholders.

High Hazels Academy expects every student to achieve 100% attendance during an academic year.

Scope

The aim of this Policy is to enable the Academy to improve student’s attendance by either full or efficient Legal sanctions under section 444 of the Education Act or by referring the student and their families to the relevant agencies to access support.

Whilst the legal requirements for attendance do not apply to children under 5 years old, regular routines for young children support the settling - in process and enhance their sense of security. They can also foster good habits for later life. Even if a child only has a part time nursery place regular attendance is still very important. Poor attendance and punctuality even at the earliest age can affect achievement in later life. Establishing good habits from the start helps children adapt to the daily routines of the nursery day, and the familiarity of school life.

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at High Hazels Academy are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Aims

The schools aims are

- For your children to achieve and flourish, feel safe and happy, and to be confident to succeed to the best of their ability. A child who fails to attend primary school cannot take advantage of educational opportunities and rarely achieve their potential.
- To establish the value of education at an early age with parents / carers and children can be beneficial in later life, having a positive effect on self – esteem, behaviour and achievement.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils, making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents / carers, staff and governors and volunteers.
- To ensure that all parents / carers understand and appreciate that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, needs and ability. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational need they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The school attendance target is 96.5%, when this has been achieved, the expectation is that this will be maintained by the support of the pupils, parents / carers and all those associated with the school.

Responsibilities

The Local Authority has to offer educational provision for all school age children appropriate to their age, needs and abilities.

Parents / carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do is an offence punishable by law which may lead to a fine or imprisonment imposed by the Magistrates Court.

Registration Procedures

All teaching staff are responsible for registering students within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Nursery

- In the Nursery registration is taken at the beginning of each session. Children are expected to attend every day.
- Morning registration starts at **8.30am**. Children need to be in their classroom prepared for the school day for **8.30am**.
- Afternoon registration starts at **12.15pm**. Children need to be in their classroom prepared for the school day for **12.15pm**.

Infant and Junior

- Morning begins at **8.40**. Children need to be in their classroom prepared for the school day for **8.40am**.
- Pupils in the Infant and Junior school arriving after registration will need to go through the main school office; they will be given a 'late' mark. Pupils arriving after the register has closed at 10.00am will be given an unauthorised late absent mark, which will be accumulated with other absence marks, and can lead to either a fine or prosecution for non – attendance.
- Afternoon registration for the whole school takes place at **1.00pm**. Children going home for lunch need to arrive back in school in time for registration as education commences immediately after.
- Morning and afternoon attendance and absences are recorded electronically using the school's MIS system.
- Attendance Officers will use attendance codes as set out by DfE. Any absence reasons will be sought on a daily basis. Not all reasons for absence are accepted.
- The registers are completed using the designated codes. Any absence reasons will be sought on a daily basis. Not all reasons for absence are accepted.

Punctuality

For pupils to feel, and be included with the whole school day, it is vital that they start the day with their peers and teacher. Lateness can have the same damaging effect as absence, and High Hazels Academy expects all pupils to be punctual.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school reception to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. Parents / carers will be expected to explain why their child is arriving late to school. All pupils arriving late will be escorted to their classrooms by a member of staff.

Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.50am children arriving after this time will be marked with an "L" late mark.

If students accrue an unacceptable amount of late marks parents will be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the pastoral team and a school governor to discuss the concern around lateness and ways we can work together to improve punctuality.

The register will close at 10.00am. Students arriving after 10.00am will be recorded as 'late after registers closed' (register mark 'U'). This will count as an unauthorised absence for that school session unless a reason is provided for lateness e.g. a note from parents about an emergency doctor's appointment.

If students accrue an unacceptable amount of 'U' late marks, where an unauthorised absence has been marked within a half term parents will be subject to prosecution/fine.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry, length of travel.

The majority of pupils are punctual, and prepared for the school day, however it is sadly recognized that some pupils are regularly late, and this is a problem.

Meetings will be held regularly with all parents / carers presenting their children late on more than 3 occasions to discuss their child's lateness these will be led by a member of staff and may be supported by governors or external agencies as appropriate.

Parents / carers can also be fined or prosecuted for repeated episodes of lateness.

Absence

- Parents and carers are expected to contact school on the first day of absence either by telephone, writing or by visiting school by 9.15am. Schools will also expect an indication of the length of the absence. Proof of the absence may be required if the absence becomes a concern to school.
- If the parent / carer fails to contact school then school will make contact by either a telephone call or by text. To support school with this task it is expected that all relevant contact details are given to school.
- School staff will update the office if they are aware of any possible reason for absence, and will update the SIMS database of all knowledge shared by parents / carers.
- If explanations for absence are not authorised then the parents / carers will be notified, and made aware of any possible consequences linked to poor school attendance.
- If a pupil is absent due to an allegation of bullying then the school will either contact the parent / carer by telephone or conduct a home visit.
- Medical appointments and similar should be made after the school day, however this may not always be possible. In this case parents / carers should inform school **in advance** of any medical appointments no more than 3 medical appointments per year will be authorised during the school day any further instances will be unauthorised unless there is a prior agreement with the school attendance team.
- An authorised absence pass will be issued by the office when the pupil is collected. It is expected that the pass be returned to the office when the pupil returns to school. Pupils are expected to attend school before and after all appointments.
- Parents / carers may also be asked to ensure an appointment letter is signed by the medical practice to confirm attendance. This will contribute to supporting the practice of safeguarding. Failure to provide medical evidence when students attendance has dropped below 93% will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Authorised Absence

- Illness
- Exclusions
- Authorised absence discussed and agreed with the Headteacher

Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Full days absence for routine medical appointments where attendance either before or after the appointment could have been achieved.

- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Failure to provide medical evidence when students attendance has dropped below 93%

Response to Poor Attendance

- The parents / carers will be made aware of the concern expressed by school by a telephone call and meetings in school.
- Parents will be invited into school to be made aware of their child's attendance, and to discuss positive routes of improvement.
- Parents may be invited to enter into a Parenting Contract. This is a formal written agreement between themselves and either the Governing body or the Local Authority.
- If interventions and support agreed by the parents / carers and school fails due to the lack of co-operation by the parents / carers then a Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued.
- If the PNWL is failed, then a fine will be issued. If the fine is paid then all incidents of non attendance relating to the fine are cleared.
- If the fine is not paid, then the case will be processed to be heard in the Magistrates Court where a fine, tagging, community service or imprisonment can be disposed.
- If the parent / carer is deemed capable of securing their child's regular school attendance but is not willing to take responsibility of doing so, then the case can be progressed as 'aggravated' which will be logged as a Criminal Act.
- Children attending nursery may lose their place by repeated incidents of absence. If the absence of a nursery child becomes a concern to school then the parents / carers will be invited to a meeting in school to discuss any possible consequence.
- For parents / carers of children attending Nursery, funding will be paid for up to 3 weeks absence per year, as long as there is prior agreement. Any additional weeks will not be funded. Parents / carers need to surrender the place if an agreement has not been made.

To Promote School Attendance

- The school will work as a team to deliver the importance of attendance to pupils, parents / carers, school staff, governors and all stakeholders.
- Attendance will be reviewed on a regular basis ensuring that parents / carers receive half-termly updates, and that the Governor for Attendance has access to all statistics.
- Each half term pupils who achieve 100% attendance are rewarded with a certificate.
- Details of attendance figures are placed around the school at key points.
- In addition to this for those who achieve 100% may be rewarded with vouchers/ activities.
- Attendance will be regularly highlighted formally and informally at coffee mornings, workshops, parent council, transition meetings etc.
- All improvers are recognized throughout the school year by receiving certificates and recognition from the Headteacher.

Leave Of Absence

The Law and Term Time Leave

Can pupils go on holiday in term time?

Under current regulations, Statutory Instrument 1995 No 2089 The Education (Pupil Registration)

Regulations 1995, schools have discretion in exceptional circumstances to grant a leave of absence in term time.

Parents are **not entitled** to remove children from school for holidays. A leave of absence must be applied for, and the decision to authorise the request rests entirely with the Headteacher.

Guidance to Parents/Carers:

Wherever possible parents/carers should take holidays during school holidays; Parents/Carers should avoid taking a school aged child on a leave of absence at times when they should be taking exams or tests. The Academy will not authorise a leave of absence at these times

Parents/Carers should not expect the Academy to agree to a family holiday during term time.

If a child is absent for more than ten days, the school may set work for them to do while they are away. (DfES leaflet "School Attendance Information for Parents").

If the school sets work it is an expectation that this is completed and handed in on the pupil's return to the Academy.

High Hazels Academy – Request for leave of absence during term time

High Hazels Academy believes that full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress.

Absences due to holidays taken during term time can hinder academic attainment. Pupils have approximately 13 weeks holiday from school each year, adequate time for family holidays to be taken.

There is strong DfES evidence showing that children who are absent from school for any length of time regularly underachieve.

However, at the Headteacher's discretion under exceptional circumstances a request for absence may be authorised.

If the Headteacher grants a leave of absence, it is solely at her discretion and a number of factors will be considered including:-

- Your child's prior attendance
- Your child's academic progress and learning needs
- Any previous leave requests.
- The timing of the request.

If the request is granted it is the responsibility of the Parent/Carer to ensure that any work provided is completed during the leave of absence and that any further work missed is written up on the pupils return.

Leave of Absence in excess of 10 days

In recognition of High Hazels Academy's diverse community, once during a pupil's time at the Academy the Headteacher may consider an application for an extended leave of absence of more than 10 days. To request a leave of absence of more than 10 days the following procedures must take place:-

- Parents must contact school prior to any tickets being booked and arrange to meet with the pastoral team and a school governor at least 20 school days before travel to discuss the request for leave and complete a request for leave form..
- Copies of tickets with definite return date must be supplied to the Academy's Attendance Officer
- Contact numbers and names for both the UK and overseas must be provided.

If the leave of absence is not authorised and the students is absent for more than 10 days High Hazels Academy may take steps to **remove the pupil from the school roll**.

If the request is granted and a student fails to return at the expected date High Hazels Academy may take steps to **remove the pupil from the school roll**.

High Hazels Academy will ensure to the best of their ability there was no good reason for the pupil's absence before deleting the

pupil.

High Hazels Academy and the Local Authority will make reasonable enquiry to locate the pupil before the deletion is made.

The school will delete the pupil from the school registers, refer the child to the local authority children missing from education service and transfer the pupil's information to the National Lost Pupils Database.

Failure to return your child to school could result in an unauthorised absence recorded against your child which may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, this being a minimum of £60 (per parent, per child).

Refusal of Leave:

Leave of absence will not be granted in the following circumstances. (This is not exhaustive)

- During National Examinations - No arranged period of absence will be authorised for any child who would be taking national examinations.
- Where pupils have patterns of poor attendance.

The Headteacher will also take into account the following factors when considering requests:

- Whether the leave of absence is at an inappropriate time in the child's academic development.
- Whether the trip/excursion can be taken during school holidays.
- The timing of the request - leave will not be granted at the beginning of the school year.
- Whether there have been repeated requests.

Where permission is refused but the pupil still takes the leave this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, this being a minimum of £60 (per parent, per child) and action may be taken to remove the child from role.

Where permission is granted High Hazels Academy expects parents to contact the school IMMEDIATELY if anything delays the pupil returning to school.