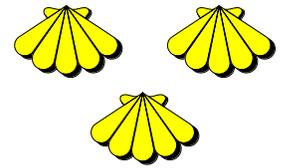


# High Wych CE Primary School



## High Wych Child Attendance Policy Sept 2018

### 1. Aims

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

### 2. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

2.1 Parents/carers have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis.

2.2 Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason (such as sickness) they should contact the school as soon as possible and before 9.00am on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, note or in person. The school should then be kept informed on a daily basis.

2.3 When a child returns to school after a period of absence a note should be brought in by the parent/carers to explain the absence. If a child has a medical appointment a note may be sent to school on the day prior to the absence, but we would ask that parents/carers make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

2.4 Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence as only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parent/carers. High Wych Primary School carries out absent coding in line with the Local Authority (LA) guidance. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.) Unacceptable reasons for absence include shopping and birthdays.

2.5 Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of the school day (8.50am.). If a child is late they should report directly to the school office. (Nursery 8.40am)

2.6 Requests for leave should be made at least 4 school weeks in advance and will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher or in their absence by the Deputy Head. Each application will be assessed against the criteria set by the DfE. Criteria include attendance level, impact on learning, exceptional circumstances etc. Parents/carers should not expect leave of absence to be granted automatically. Parents/carers are advised not to make any arrangements until the request for leave of absence has been considered.

2.7 Leave of absence should not be requested:

- during the month prior to and week of Key Assessments (currently held during May/June);
- the beginning or end of a school term.

### **3 School Responsibilities**

3.1 The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

3.2 Registers will be called twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session. If a child arrives after the register has closed but their parent/carer provides them with a note detailing a reason acceptable to the school, they are marked as authorized absence for that session. If they are late and fail to provide an acceptable reason they will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole of that session.

3.3 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given. The Deputy Head Teacher will monitor registers termly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

3.4 Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Head Teacher and Deputy Head should be informed. The school admin assistant will alert the Head Teacher if any child's attendance falls below the school's minimum attendance percentage, currently 93%

3.5 If a child is absent the office staff will select the correct code for that absence. The school attendance admin assistant will aim to contact by telephone, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence (first day calling - the primary aim being to check on the safety of the child). This phone call should be done, wherever possible, **by 10.00am**.

3.6 All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and initialed by the class teacher, put into the register, and sent to the school office to be held on individual children's files. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher and Deputy Head (who may then choose to speak to the parents/carers concerned).

3.7 If an absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence (such as necessary stays in hospital), the school will contact the Attendance Officer so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

3.8 The Deputy Head Teacher will regularly review attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Attendance Officer and Governing Body. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and attendance service.

3.9 The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;
- Children who have 100% attendance in any one year will receive an Excellence Certificate for Attendance, awarded at a Whole School Assembly;
- Clear attendance information will be entered on the school website
- 100% Attendance trophy to be given out weekly to best class
- The Governing Body reserve the right to use Fixed Penalty Notices for persistent unauthorized absentees

#### **4. Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:**

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for **authorising** absences.

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and orthodontic appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

#### **Family Holidays:**

Parents should not take pupils on holiday during the school term though in exceptional circumstances schools are able to exercise their discretion when granting parental requests. However, each request should be considered individually taking into account the age of the child, previous attendance patterns, parental views and the educational progress of the child.

#### **The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time**

As a general rule, the LA will not issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence due solely to a holiday without permission. However, there may be circumstances where this sanction is appropriate. The EWS will work with Head Teachers to agree the most appropriate course of action for each individual case.

Parents are invited to discuss Holidays in term time with the Head or Deputy Head prior to applying for Authorised Holidays in term time.

#### **5. Additional Guidance**

1. The decision to authorise absence is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation.
2. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Heads will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
3. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.
4. Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.

5. Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
6. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
7. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
8. Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

## **6. Review Date**

This attendance policy will be reviewed every two years.

## **7. Implementation**

Reviewed - 09/2018