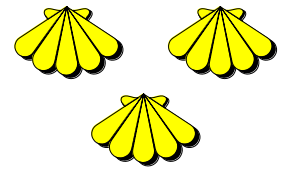


# High Wych CE Primary School



## High Wych Child Attendance Policy May 2019

### **1. Aims**

To ensure:

- all pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- that no pupil is deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.

### **2. Parent/Carer Responsibilities**

2.1 Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

2.2 Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

2.3 Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn on a regular and full time basis
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's rules
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- not book holidays during term time

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

2.5 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 following a meeting with the Deputy Head. 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.

2.6 Leave of absence **should be avoided at all times** but especially 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

These will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

**Please always be honest about absences as this sets a good example to your child. Absence codes can and will be changed should further information come to light.**

### **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 a reason that the school think is acceptable, 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 weekly 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 Deputy Head Teacher will alert the Head Teacher if any child's attendance falls below the school's minimum attendance percentage, currently 95% although we aim for all children to achieve at least 96%. Strategies will then be discussed to support the family to improve their child's attendance eg parent letters/phonecalls/meetings. referral to Aspects/SENCO/GP/follow up meetings with Attendance Officer etc.

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** and continue until an answer is received.

3.6 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 contact 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 Improvement Officer so that arrangements can be made. Each school is linked to a Hertfordshire Attendance Officer who receives regular updates about any of our children who are causing concern.

3.8 The Deputy Head Teacher will review attendance data weekly and will use this data during meetings with the school's Attendance Officer and Governing Body. These meetings will agree the attendance thresholds and targets

for specific children 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 and punctual attendance:

- the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;
- Children who have 100% attendance will receive an Excellence Certificate for Attendance, awarded at a Whole School Assembly at the end of each term
- 100% Attendance trophy to be given out weekly to the best class
- The Governing Body reserve the right to use Fixed Penalty Notices for persistent unauthorized absentees
- Parents will receive letters half termly where attendance is causing concern and agree a meeting date to discuss where necessary with the Deputy Head

3.10 Lateness/Punctuality of your child is recorded and where necessary, followed up. Children arriving between 8.50- 9.20am will be marked as late. Registers will close at 9.20 and children arriving after that they will be marked as absent for that session unless an acceptable reason is cited.

#### **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.

- Unavoidable illness
- Close family bereavements
- Emergency 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

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

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers the parents are capable of securing their child's regular attendance. This is the responsibility of the Local Authority. Both parents will receive a formal letter advising them of their child's unauthorised absence.

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

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

1. The decision to authorise absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion

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 may be 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 in line with county regulations.

## **7. Implementation**

This policy received the full agreement of the *Governing Body* and was agreed at their meeting on \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed - 05/2019

Ratified by: \_\_\_\_\_