



Last Review: Autumn 2013  
Next Review due: Autumn 2016

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Mission Statement**

We are committed to raising the level of achievement of all our pupils. Promoting regular attendance is part of this target. We believe that all pupils will achieve better results, have more confidence and higher self esteem if their attendance is excellent.

### **The Importance of Attendance**

All staff have a role to play in this, as well as pupils and parents. The registration and follow up of absences will be monitored. This policy recognises that attendance can be affected by a range of factors and therefore should be set alongside other school policies on behaviour, curriculum and special needs.

### **Partnership with Parents**

At Hyde Heath partnership with parents is not just a statement. For good attendance to be achieved then genuine understanding and effort from all adults is essential. Our Home School Agreement reinforces the importance of regular attendance. Parents should understand the relationship between attendance and achievement and their role in helping their child achieve this.

### **Attendance Procedures**

The procedures we use are designed to promote excellent attendance and maintain our record of this.

### **Registers**

Teachers are reminded that the Register is a legal document and must therefore be kept accurately. The Register is marked at 9.00am each morning and at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

All Attendance Codes are listed below, and can be found at:  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=13903>

Attendance Codes		
/ Present (AM)	I Illness (not medical\dental appointments)	T Traveller absence
\ Present (PM)	J Interview	U Late (after registers closed)
B Educated off site (not Dual Registration)	L Late (before registers closed)	V Educational visit or trip
C Other authorised circumstances	M Medical\Dental appointments	W Work experience
D Dual Registration (attending other establishments)	N No reason yet provided for absence	# School closed to pupils & staff
E Excluded (no alternative provision made)	O Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)	Y Enforced closure
F Extended family holiday (agreed)	P Approved sporting activity	X Non-compulsory school age absence
G Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	R Religious observance	Z Pupil not on roll
H Family holiday (agreed)	S Study Leave	- All should attend / No mark recorded

### Absence from school during term time

There is no entitlement to take holidays during term-time. Legislation states that headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in **exceptional circumstances**. The application must be made one month in advance and in writing by a parent with whom the parent lives. A formal request must be followed by an appointment with the headteacher to discuss the request. The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion, in accordance with this policy.

We actively discourage our parents from taking children out of school for any holiday during term time. Each request for a planned absence is carefully considered on an individual basis and takes into account:

- The child's attendance record
- The circumstances and nature of the request
- The frequency of requests for absence
- The time of year

We provide parents with a summary of their child's attendance for that academic year to date when they apply for a leave of absence.

Should parents keep their child away from school for longer than was agreed, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Any parent taking their child on a term-time holiday without authorisation from the headteacher could result in a fixed penalty notice, a fine and/or prosecution under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act.

An unauthorised absence will be recorded on the child's individual record and a letter sent to the parents. This will be kept on file until the child transfers to the next school. All attendance data will be passed on to the child's next school.

The Headteacher will write to parents of any children whose absence falls below 90% during the Autumn and Spring terms. Attendance figures for the year are attached to end of year reports.

Attendance stickers are awarded half termly to all children who have achieved 100% attendance for that period.

If there is an attendance problem, then the school, the Education Welfare Officer and the parents will work together to try to solve this.

### **The Role of Governors**

The Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that statutory attendance statistics are submitted.
- Reviewing and approving the attendance policy.

### **The Role of Parents**

Parents should:

- Ensure that their child attends Hyde Heath Infant School every school day, unless ill, or, in exceptional circumstances, with granted leave of absence.
- Confirm promptly the reason for any absence. This may be done by phone, letter, email or verbally.
- Not arrange holidays in term time.
- Ensure their child comes punctually to school.
- Be involved in promoting attendance and achievement.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance : The Legal Framework

#### Education Act 1996

This Act outlines the basic obligations of parents to ensure that their child receives full time education suitable to his age, aptitude and ability. It also states that if the child has special needs his education may be at school or elsewhere. If the child is educated within a school then the attendance must be regular.

Children cannot be prosecuted for not going to school. The full responsibility falls with the parent.

A circular changed the definition of compulsory school age in 1998. There is now a single leaving date, which is the last Friday in June for all those who are 16 on or after 1 September in Year 11. Some suggestions were given in the circular for activities that pupils could undertake after their GCSEs, but study leave is not allowed or relevant since they will have finished their exams.

If a parent fails to register their child at any school then the Local Authority can begin proceedings for an Attendance order. This is quite a long process, but can end in the Authority nominating a school for the child and if the child does not attend, then prosecution can follow.

Parents can be prosecuted for not sending their child to school regularly under this Act or the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998. The attendance register provides the main evidence on which a parent (or person in charge) can be convicted and this is why it is so important to keep the register accurately.

#### Children's Act 1989

We should be aware of this Act which is the framework for dealing with children who are experiencing family problems - divorce, care proceedings etc. It includes Educational Supervision Orders, which can be sought for absence from school, but there have to be efforts to use voluntary means first. They do not appear to be widely used.

The wider provisions of the Act are relevant where a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm to their health or development. Obviously,

absence may be considered to contribute to harm. The school could be asked to provide information about a child's educational career.

### **Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 1997**

This regulation allowed afternoon registration to be moved from the beginning of the afternoon.

It also allowed for the following activities to be counted as present:

- work experience
- field trips and educational visits
- approved sporting activities
- link courses
- those attending a course at another centre - this does not include pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

## Appendix 2

### Working with Outside Agencies

#### The Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer is available to help both the school and parents with attendance problems. The main role is as follows:

- to identify, with the school, absences which need further action and advise on responses
- to plan action with the child, the family and school to resolve the problem
- to implement such action plans and support the child and his/her family
- to liaise with other outside agencies as necessary
- to initiate court action, if appropriate.

#### Social Services

Contact with Social Services is usually through the school's nominated member of staff. The school will always send a representative to a student's case conference.

Attendance matters will be discussed with the Duty Officer or a student's adviser when necessary.

#### Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) 1991

These regulations introduced the idea of schools having to report each year on their unauthorised attendance figures. These figures were to be up to the end of May.

The second part of the regulations covered the use of the computer for registration and the requirement to produce a hard copy by month. The hard copy should not be changed.

#### Education (Pupils' Registration) Regulations 1995

This concerns the admission register and the information about pupils and their parents which must be kept. Information must be updated on an annual basis.

*It gave Headteachers the power to grant leave of absence for up to ten days for holidays within term time. There is no entitlement. Pupils must be going away. This is now obsolete - please see 2013 amendments below.*

The following were deemed as acceptable for removing pupils from the roll:

1. When the child has been registered at another school.
2. When parents give written notification that they are educating the child "otherwise" than at school.
3. When the child has stopped attending and no longer ordinarily resides at an address which is a reasonable distance from the school.
4. When the child has not returned from exceptional leave of absence, except if he is ill. If pupils go abroad for an extended period, then it is best to remove them from roll, using criteria 3.
5. After four weeks of continuous absence, when there has been a reasonable attempt to find the child.
6. At the end of the process of permanent exclusion, including representations and appeals.

There are a few other obvious reasons that are acceptable.

### **Education (Pupils' Registration) Regulations Amendments 2013**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **Conclusion**

This policy and the targets set within it need to be evaluated and reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains clear and understood by all.

The policy has contributed to a whole school ethos which:

- enables pupils to achieve at the highest level
- values and rewards high levels of attendance
- reduces levels of absence
- prepares pupils for the attendance discipline of adult life
- makes clear the acceptable reasons for absence
- recognises the contribution of staff, pupils, parents and outside agencies to good attendance
- includes pupils and their views in the process of planning for improved attendance.

