

# HOO ST WERBURGH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND MARLBOROUGH CENTRE



## PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

**Chair of Governors: Mr I Chappell**

**Date: February 2015**

**Head of School: Tara Deevoy**

**Date: February 2015**

**Updated: September 2017**

## Introduction

***Hoo St Werburgh Primary School & Marlborough Centre recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment.***

This policy is written with the above statement in mind.

For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for absence.

Having a good education will help give your child the best possible start in life. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children with poor attendance have trouble feeling included within school life and tend to have difficulties forming friendships.

By law all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. It is the parent's responsibility for making sure that their child attends regularly and on time.

The school is committed to working with parents and pupils as we believe that this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The minimum expected level of attendance for any child at our school is 95%. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. We continually monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

This Policy operates in accordance with the framework and advice contained within the Medway guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the school and its Governing Body intend to follow.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The school has a high level of expectation to optimise the pupil's achievement during their school life.

### School expectations and actions

Attendance Percentage	Actions that may be taken
100%	Maximum attendance achieved – certificate awarded
Above 95%	Minimum expectation met - No action
92%-95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents informed by letter</li> <li>• your child's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer &amp; Headteacher</li> </ul>
90%-92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents informed by letter</li> <li>• your child's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer, Headteacher &amp; Attendance Advisory Practitioner</li> <li>• you may be invited to attend an Attendance Advisory Clinic</li> <li>• you may be refused any further authorised absence and asked to provide written evidence of illness/absence</li> </ul>
Below 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents informed by letter</li> <li>• your child's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer, Headteacher &amp; Attendance Advisory Practitioner</li> <li>• you will be refused any further authorised absence and asked to provide written evidence of illness/absence</li> <li>• you may be invited to attend an Attendance Advisory Clinic or Panel meeting</li> <li>• a formal referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner, which may result in issue of a penalty notice or prosecution by the Local Authority.</li> </ul>

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee (PA) when they fall below 90% attendance, no matter the reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

### **To help to achieve this, the school will:**

- celebrate good attendance via weekly assemblies, and praise 100% attendance regularly throughout the school year
- report to parents their child's attendance with each school report.
- contact parents should their child's attendance fall below the school's minimum expectation of 95%

It is a legal requirement for the school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the Department of Education.

### **We expect the parent to:**

- notify the school on the first day of absence before 8.50am, when their child is unable to attend, with a reason
- keep the school informed if the absence is continuing so that work can be sent home and so that the school can prepare for the child's return
- provide a note indicating attendance for medical appointments before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- provide up to date contact numbers and change of address

## **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent or you know they will be late it is parental responsibility to inform us on the **first day of absence, before 8.50am**. This can be done by leaving a message:

- **preferably** on our answer phone (available 24 hours a day)
- alternatively with Morning Matters on the playground every morning or
- at the school office
- on parent mail

If your child is absent and we have not been notified by 8.50am, we will telephone you to ascertain the child's whereabouts and reason for absence. If we are unable to speak to our Priority 1 contact we will leave a message where possible. We will continue to telephone further contacts provided, until we are able to confirm that a child is safe.

If we are unable to confirm a child's safety by 11am we will take further action to ensure that we know that the child is safe and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. A home visit will be made if appropriate and the police will be informed.

**Centre children only** - it is parental responsibility to report any absence or lateness, **please do not leave messages with the drivers/couriers** to pass on.

## Promoting Regular Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they miss instructions and vital information or news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and can be embarrassing for the child. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### To help to achieve this, the school will:

- encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality
- provide you with advice and support if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
- Try to facilitate the collection of children where parents have temporary transport problems if possible.
- contact the parent each Friday if their child has arrived after 8.50am unaccompanied on 2 or more occasions in any one week
- inform the parent each month if their child has been late 3 or more times
- have ad hoc 'late gates' with the school Attendance Advisory Practitioner to allow parents the opportunity to address the issue of lateness immediately
- refer pupils with repeated, unexplained or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason to the AAP and/or Social Services where relevant.

### We expect the parent to:

- ensure that their child arrives at school on time and ready to learn ( this means breakfast before school) each day
- let the school know if their child is going to be late
- understand the importance of punctuality and promote this with their child
- **centre children only** – ensure their child is ready and waiting for their minibus/taxi

## Lateness Procedure

The school day starts promptly at **8.50am** and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to enter school by **8.45am**. Children are led into school and external doors are closed at 8.50am promptly. If your child arrives after 8.50am then they will need to enter the school via the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded. If they arrive between 8.50am and 9am then they will be coded 'L' late mark.

At **9am** the registers officially close. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a 'U' unauthorised late mark. If your child is going to be late it is parental responsibility to inform us as soon as possible. This can be done by leaving a message:

- **preferably** on our answer phone (available 24 hours a day)
- or at the school office from 8am

**Centre children** – Please note that we are aware your child will be coming into school on a minibus/taxi and as a result lateness due to traffic is taken into consideration.

## Holidays/Absence in Term Time

No holidays in Term Time Update 2013

There have been some changes made to the regulations around holidays being taken in term time and this section explains these changes.

The Department of Education (DfE) has amended the regulations governing requests for holidays in term time. With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Headteachers MAY NOT grant any holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Hoo St Werburgh Primary School WILL NOT authorise any holiday or absence at all except in the event of exceptional circumstances such as the wedding or funeral of immediate family. This must be agreed with the Head of School. All requests need to be submitted in writing to Head of School or Head of Specialist Provision.

Should you choose to remove your child during term time without authorisation you are not only disrupting your child's education but are also at risk of receiving a penalty fine.

From September 2013, the DfE has amended the Education (Penalty notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that any parent/carer who receives a Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time will have to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay a fixed penalty notice could result in prosecution.

As we are, by law required to comply with these amendments to the regulations, which affect all absences from school during term time taken after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

Thankyou for your continuing support in this important matter.

## Unauthorised Absences

### Medway Council Update 2017

If your child incurs 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a six week period ( this includes O"s" & U "s" ) a referral will automatically be made to AASSA and a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer within the household. You will receive a £60.00 fine, increasing to £120.00 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine will result in a court prosecution for your child's non-school attendance.



## Medical Appointments

The school must be informed in advance of any medical appointments, unless it is an emergency. To cause the least disruption to your child's education we encourage parents to arrange any medical appointments outside school times eg before/after school, during school holidays or at break/lunchtimes. Written evidence must be provided whenever possible. If attendance is low then it is imperative that evidence is provided to prevent 'unauthorised' absence being recorded.

Parents must collect their children and bring them back in again when attending appointments during the school day. Parents should come to the office, where the office staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer. The school will sign the child out and then back in again when they return.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless evidence has been provided and it has been agreed by the school.

## Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be coded by school (see 'understanding the attendance codes' below), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- keeping children off school unnecessarily
- another member of the family is ill or has a medical appointment
- parent cannot get the child to school
- the child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained or requested
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- your child attends a medical/dental appointment for more than half a day without written proof that this is necessary
- the weather is bad
- the family have overslept, had a late night or a bad night's sleep

- there are problems with uniform/clothing

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we can work with that family; we can offer support within school via our Attendance Officer and/or School & Community Officer. In addition we can use outside agencies to help if required, such as the School Nurse or the Attendance Advisory Practitioner.

### Understanding the attendance codes

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMS Attendance Module. Class teachers complete a registration sheet twice daily and return it to the office. Reasons for absence are recorded using the relevant codes shown below.

/	Attended morning session	\	Attended afternoon session
L	Arrived late during 10 minute period the register was open	U	Arrived late after registers closed
C	Other authorised circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances, other approved absences not covered by other codes)	O	Unauthorised absence, not covered by any other code
H	Family holiday (authorised)	G	Family holiday (not authorised)
B	Educated off site (not dual registration)	E	Excluded
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	M	Medical and dental appointments
P	Approved sporting activity	S	Approved study leave
R	Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong	T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Y	School closure (exceptional circumstances)

## The Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – you are committing an offence and the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

The LA may decide to prosecute a parent if this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.
- A penalty notice of £60 may be issued (by the LA, school or police) as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 28 days. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution.

Medway LA employs Attendance Advisory Practitioners (AAPs) to help them carry out their statutory duties. AAPs will make home visits and assess the problem in the wider family context.

## Summary

The Head of School, Head of Specialist Provision and the Governing Body are responsible for this policy and its implementation. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.