



Reach for the stars.

HILL VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The governing body's key roles are:

- To provide a strategic view
- To support and challenge
- To ensure accountability

PRINCIPLES

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Hill View Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child, whose attendance drops to 90% each year, will over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

AIMS

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Social Worker so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- To safeguard children by ensuring they attend school regularly.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.

- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records, which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence taken during term time, through application forms, letters, fines and legal procedures.
- work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- Refer to the Educational Social Worker any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to Governors, Bournemouth LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the member of the School Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities, which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the School Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Headteacher

The 'Headteacher, working with members of the school leadership team is responsible for

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Authorising any absence due to exceptional circumstances.

- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Deciding when referrals to the Educational Social Worker need to be made.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- The Headteacher will be supported by the school Pastoral Support Worker.

Pastoral Support Worker

The Pastoral Support Worker liaises with the Educational Social Worker, school staff and parents. She meets and supports families and individual children with their attendance.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Creating and sending standard letters regarding attendance
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Educational Social Worker.
- Making referrals to the Educational Social Worker

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if necessary and for exceptional circumstances as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

All the school gates open from 8.30 am until 8.50 am (small playground) 8.50 am (large playground). The classroom doors open at 8.40 am this is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom and settle for registration and the start of the school day, which begins at 8.50am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil, who is absent, must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The class teacher must complete the attendance register by 9.00 am and by 12.40 pm (KS1) and 1.10 pm (KS2). (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present) These registers are then sent electronically to the school office. Attendance registers MUST NOT be reopened once closed.

All attendance records are documented using INTEGRIS software. Attendance registers are legal documents and are kept secure.

Lateness

Once the gates are closed, the only way to enter the school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept showing pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.20 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

- A late mark will be given if a child arrives in school via the school office once the gates have been locked. The class register will be closed by 9 am.
- A **Late Letter 1** will be issued for any child who has 5 late marks over a half term (coded L).
- An unauthorised absence (U code) will be given if a child is more than 25 minutes late (9.15 a.m.)
- A **Late Letter 2** will be issued for any child whose persistent lateness causes concern.
- A pupil who is *consistently late* will be referred to the Educational Social Worker.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

We also write to parents who regularly collect their children late at the end of the day.

Absences

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that the school receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process, this is part of our Safeguarding responsibility. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

- Parent/carer are expected to contact the school by telephone before 9.15 a.m. on day 1 of a child's absence to provide a reason, messages can be left on the school answer machine.
- The school will contact the parent/carer via text after 9.15 a.m. on day 1 if a pupil is absent without reason.
- The school will contact the parent/carer by text, on day 2 to ascertain the reason for non-attendance; should there still be no response.
- Telephone contact is attempted on day 3; if this proves unsuccessful, a letter is issued requesting notification of the reason for the absence. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)
- Absences where a reason has been unable to be ascertained or where the reason given is unsatisfactory will be marked as unauthorised.

Parental Request for Absence from School

Parental requests for absence in term will only be authorised by the Headteacher if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

Examples of circumstances that are not exceptional may include:

- Cheap holidays/flights or holidays/flights that have already been paid for
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Absence that coincides with important school events such as the start of term, assessments.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns. The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters, which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Social Worker.

Where attendance is 96% or less we will:

- Issue **Letter** to parents warning them that their child's attendance is at or below 95%.
- Send **Letter 2** to parents asking that they attend a meeting with a member of the SLT to discuss their child's attendance, which is at or below 95% and there is a concern over the absence or if it has not improved.
- Should there be no response to **letter 2** or attendance does not improve a referral will be made to the Education Social Worker.
- If a child's attendance is **90%** or less we will consider making a referral to the Education Social Worker.
- Consider issuing penalty notice.
- Send a warning letter to all parents whose children fall below 90%.

Education Social Worker

Regular meetings are held with the Education Social Worker to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

We discuss pupils:

- Whose attendance is 96% or less?
- who are absent for more than two weeks without a medical certificate
- who fail to attend school regularly
- who are constantly late
- With ten or more unauthorised absences.

Report unauthorised absence to the Education Social Worker who may decide to issue a Penalty Notice, which carries a fine of £60 per parent, per child, which increases to £120 if the fine is not paid promptly within 28 days.

Monitoring Attendance

The school completes DfE attendance returns and reports to the Governing Body regularly. We aim to provide support, advice and guidance to parents on getting their children to school and work in partnership with other agencies.

The school will make reasonable efforts to contact parents where a child is not at school.

Responsible: Headteacher
Reviewed: September 2017

Changed: Yes
Review: September 2020