



## PROMOTING GOOD School Attendance Guide

### Helping your child to make the most out of school

**Good school attendance** habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents set the standards and expectations for your child.

Showing your child the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but helps them to keep and sustain friendships and enjoy the school environment.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

#### **Our school is here to support you.**

We understand the difficulties some parents can face and will work with you. Trust the experience of the class teachers and other school staff, and share with them any concerns you may have.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Remember children can be tired when coming out of school, so a short chat over a snack may produce a better result than a long list of questions.

If your child raises anything that concerns you, it is much better to raise it with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. Allow us the opportunity to address any concerns or difficulties. This will often help to put your mind at rest, knowing that your child is ok and is doing well in school.

At Hill View we want all children to have a positive experience of school life and be able to reach their full potential. One way in which parents can help their child to do this is by ensuring they attend school every day.

Parents can often feel that more time is spent at school than at home. There are **365** days in the year and **190** days in the school year leaving **175** days for children to spend at home with their parents.

If a child takes leave of absence during term time, **10** school days, attendance starts to fall to only **180** days in school. If the child is then **ill for 5 or more** days in a year, they start to spend more time at home than at school.

**As the parent** you are responsible for ensuring that once your child is registered at a school, they attend regularly and punctually. Starting good habits earlier on is much easier than trying to change poor attendance habits, battling with your child to attend school and struggling to get out of the door on time. Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child.

School absence falls into one of two categories; **Authorised**, those which the school can give you permission for and **Unauthorised**, those which we will not.

Examples of absences which the school is unlikely to authorise can include:

- **Sickness of a parent, or other family member**
- **Inadequate clothing for school**
- **Child being used as a carer**
- **Problems with transport**
- **Non urgent medical treatment**
- **School refusal or truancy**
- **Days off for birthdays, shopping trips**
- **Family Holiday**
- **Travelling abroad**

Whilst as a parent you may think you can give your child permission to be at home, you cannot. **The only person who can give permission for a child to be absent from school is the school's Headteacher.**

**If your child will be absent from school**, you must notify them by telephone call on the first day of absence and follow this up with a note once the child returns to school. The school's Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, depending upon the reason given. Most childhood sickness that prevents school attendance will be classed as authorised absence. However, if your child is frequently absent from school due to sickness, the school can ask that you provide medical evidence or they may have to stop authorising the absences. This does not mean that the school does not believe you or your child, but that they want to do the best for you by ensuring your child can attend school as much as possible, providing extra support such as accessing the school nursing team if needed.

As a parent you can help keep your child's level of absence down by sending them into school every day and arriving on time. The registers will close  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour after the beginning of the start of the school day. Arriving after this time will mean your child is marked as having an unauthorised absence and this could lead to a fine being issued.

**Help support your child** by keeping absence rates down. Children who are frequently absent are usually those who fall behind and find it hard to keep friendships, which can lead to being unhappy in school.

Since September 2013 headteachers have only been able to grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. As a rule of thumb a family holiday or travelling abroad is not considered to be an exceptional **reason**.

There are **38 weeks** in the year when schools are open, and **14 weeks (175 days)** when families can visit family overseas; go on holiday; travel; take educational trips; and attend non-urgent medical appointments.....

**So is your request for leave exceptional?**

**This is for the headteacher to decide but consider would your employer grant you additional leave?**

Reduce absence due to medical reasons by making non-urgent medical appointments for your child outside of school hours. Always let your child's school know the type of illness your child has that prevents them attending at the start of the school day. They will guide you as to whether your child needs to be absent from school all day and when they should be expected to return.