



**Henry  
Hinde**  
School

# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

(Cornwallis Site)

October 2021

## Version Control

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## Scope

*This policy refers to:*

<b>Parents/Carers</b>	✓	<b>Trustees</b>	
<b>Employees</b>		<b>Volunteers</b>	
<b>Pupils/Students</b>		<b>Visitors</b>	
<b>Governors</b>		<b>Community</b>	

## Policy Statement

The school will:

- Manage attendance and punctuality in accordance with guidance from relevant legislation including the Education Act 1996; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013; Warwickshire Attendance Service; and any subsequent Act/s and / or national / regional guidance;
- Record pupil attendance twice per day - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- Make an entry in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.
- Ensure parents are fully informed about their statutory duties towards attendance and punctuality for children of compulsory school age;
- Work in partnership with parents to achieve and maintain the highest levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Encourage children to attend school as often as possible (attendance) and that they arrive and leave school on time (punctuality) - it is equally important that children do not attend school when they are too unwell to do so.

## Related Documents

This policy and procedures should be considered in relation to the guidance listed above and:

- Behaviour Policy Statement and Procedures
- Partner for Attendance & Punctuality
- Procedures

The law states that all school aged children should attend school everyday.

He or she should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Allowing a child to be absent without a good reason is against the law and parents can be fined up to £1000. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) either as authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

## **Authorised Absences**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes.

## **Unauthorised Absences**

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 for trivial reasons; truancy; absences which have never been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Providing a reason may not be sufficient if the reason given is not 'unavoidable'. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping or as a treat. Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between school, parents and child. It is never better to cover their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful.

## **Warwickshire Attendance Service**

Henry Hinde Junior School works in partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service provided by the Local Authority. If attendance and punctuality problems cannot be sorted out between the school and parents, the school will refer the child to the Warwickshire Attendance Service. They will assist in trying to resolve the difficulties by agreement with parents and the school but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

The same applies to unauthorised leave of absences - these may be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, who may pursue a monetary fine to each parent.

Parents may wish to contact the Warwickshire Attendance Service themselves to ask their advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the local education authority.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

Improving attendance at Henry Hinde Junior School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents and all staff.

### **Pupils**

All children are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Children who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the Family Support Worker, and if the need should arise, from the Principal.

Good Attendance is also rewarded by a class reward (Classopoly)

### **Parents**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school by 9:10 am on the first morning of any absence. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns, which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making, medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Any problems are best sorted out between school, parents and child.

## **School**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly any absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. School will contact parents if they have not been notified of a reason for absence by 9:30 am on the first morning of absences.

## **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending school, parents should contact the school by 9:10 am on the first day. A child's absence from school is considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. For reasons of safety, parents will be telephoned by school to confirm absence if no notification of absence has been received by 9:30 am. Failing to contact the parents via telephone a home visit will occur. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. This should be discussed with the Principal.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

From 1st September 2013, legislation does not allow any school to authorise leave of absence (e.g. for holidays) during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st September 2013:

It is illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during the term time. Schools are in session for 39 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.

## **Lateness**

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than 5 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as late, i.e. after 9:00 am.

The school have procedures in place for persistently late pupils lateness will be referred to the Family Support Worker who will make contact with parents/carers in order to try and resolve the issue. If lateness persists, the matter will be referred to the Principal and, where necessary, action may be taken or the matter may be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service. Where persistent lateness is equivalent to 10 sessions in any 5 week period, a referral may be made to the Warwickshire Attendance Service which could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or criminal prosecution proceedings being issued against you.

## **Registration**

Registration will be called by the class teacher in each of the classes at 9:00 am and 1:15pm. Registers will close at 9:10am and 1:20pm. If a child fails to arrive before the registers close, they will be marked as 'absent'. Children who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the school office. (The administrative staff/class teacher will amend the register entry to read 'absent/late'). If a child is persistently late, the Family Support Worker will arrange to meet the parents.

## **Communication**

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this. This is why the school operates an open door policy and class teachers are available during the face-to-face

handover of children at the start and end of every day providing a regular opportunity for parents and staff to communicate. Alternatively, Ms Solomon is also available on 01788 811392.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Principal. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This can be done by telephoning or emailing the school office.

## **Concerns**

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern with the Principal / Family Support Worker.

The attendance registers are looked at regularly and patterns of lateness and / or absence worked out. This information is shared with the Principal regularly (i.e. weekly) and discussed on a case by case basis that considers the reasons for lateness or poor attendance. If concern is raised about a particular child, the following support is actioned.

## **Stage Support**

- 1) Attendance Letter 1 - Advising that your child's attendance is below 96%.
- 2) Attendance Letter 2 - Advising that your child's attendance has not improved since the first letter.
- 3) Attendance Letter 3 - Invitation for parents to meet with the Family Support Worker and the Principal.
- 4) Attendance Letter 4 - Referral to the Warwickshire Attendance Service.

## **Truancy**

All the staff at Henry Hinde Junior School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it's a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Principal is notified, who then contacts the parent and the Warwickshire Attendance Service. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Principal talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. You will receive information each term in your child's report. The suggestions of parents and children about how to encourage attendance are especially welcome.

Henry Hinde Junior School has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. This school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

Authorised absences are a morning or an afternoon away from school for an agreed reason by the school.

Examples of reasons for which requests may be considered for authorisation:

- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong;
- There is a family bereavement;
- The child is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a child is attending graduation of an older sibling);
- The child is too unwell to attend school.

Unauthorised absences are when the school has not agreed the reason for a child's absence.

Examples of reasons for which requests would not be authorised include the following, and would be counted as unauthorised absence:

- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- To take the child shopping during school hours;
- Unexceptional special occasion (e.g. a birthday)
- The child is away from school on a family holiday;
- The child is on family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

Neither of these lists of examples are exhaustive and each absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Is the school allowed to authorise term time leave of absence requests?

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school. At Henry Hinde Junior School we place great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement. From 1st September 2013, legislation does not allow any school to authorise leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st September 2013:

It is illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 39 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.

### **What are 'exceptional circumstances'?**

There is no set guidance on what an 'exceptional circumstance' may be. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the Local Governing Board to consider the circumstances surrounding each term time leave of absence request on an individual basis. However, at our school we interpret 'exceptional' in this context as being a one-off and unavoidable event of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about individual requests, the normality will be that requests will be refused in line with the law.

We believe our request is under exceptional circumstances. How do I apply for a term-time absence for my child/ren?

An email must be sent to the school office who will then forward this to the Principal.

What happens if I take an unauthorised term time absence?

If parents take a term time leave of absence, which has not been authorised, they may have to pay a fixed penalty fine under Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. This fine is:

- £60 per parent if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent if paid within 28 days.
- Furthermore, your child's school attendance record will be permanently marked with an unauthorised absence, which will be passed on to their future schools. If a child is absent for an extended period of time without explanation, they may be removed from the school roll meaning that they will not have a place at the school to return to.

Additional guidance from the Warwickshire Attendance Service.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Principals shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Principals will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on an individual basis.



## Appendix 1

*Update in accordance with WES (World Education Services)*

### Leave of Absence

The regulations regarding Leave of Absence The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 advise:

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

### Expectations

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence in advance parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service has the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices of Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilonattendance> )
- **It is important to note**, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child. (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 each child is paid within 21 days).

- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis on its own merits.**

