

HORNINGSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Attendance Policy

'Together we learn'



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a successful, community school with a strong family feel.  
We nurture and inspire everyone in our community to be the best they can. With strong traditional values and high expectations, we ignite a passion for life-long learning and enable our children to be confident, aspirational and creative learners.

## Policy Statement

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We recognise that there is a shared responsibility and aim to promote a partnership approach; supporting and encouraging parents to work with the school in ensuring good attendance.

Regular attendance is very important and has a direct impact on a child's development and raising achievement and attainment. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## Aims:

- Attendance percentage of pupils at our school is at least good.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To maintain a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data.
- To maintain an effective partnership with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies.
- To recognise the individual needs of each pupil and family with regard to attendance.
- To ensure that our children make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning.
- To encourage, recognise and reward good attendance.
- To ensure the legal requirement in respect of attendance are clearly communicated.

## The legal framework

Parents must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted.

By law schools are required to:

- Take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon.
- Report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for 10 consecutive school days or more without known reason.

By law, the attendance register must show for every session, whether a pupil is present, attending approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory

justification for the absence. All other absences are unauthorised. Our attendance registers are electronic and integrate with School's Information Management System.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Responsibilities of Staff:

- Improve and maintain good attendance.
- Maintain an attendance profile through assemblies, staff meetings, monitoring registration process, target setting, liaison with EWO (Education Welfare Officer), parent/carer contact, school attendance meetings, attending la attendance meetings or court assembled meetings.
- Ensure accurate registration, follow-up notes and parent/carer contact.
- Ensure first day contact and maintenance of records.
- The headteacher is the designated attendance leader.
- The admin team oversee and monitor daily attendance data.

### Responsibilities of Parents/ Carers:

Parents have, in partnership with the school, an important role to ensure that good attendance is maintained and have the following responsibilities:

- Ensure their child always arrives in school on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn'.
- Work in partnership with the school to help their child gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Support the school to develop a positive attendance and punctuality culture.
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance.

The pupils also have a responsibility to make sure they follow school procedures made known to them for receiving their registration mark, and in particular if arriving late.

## Safeguarding

The school takes the safety of all children very seriously and if a child does not come in to school we must have a valid reason for their absence. We need to be sure that a child has not left home in the morning and failed to arrive at school. We will contact parents if we have not been informed of a reason for a child's absence.

## Procedures

### Punctuality

The school promotes punctuality as a part of being virtuous and having good manners. We actively work to build a strong culture of punctuality being a life skill needed now and in the

future when they are adults. We expect our parents to share this mindset and actively work to ensure that they too instil punctuality in their children through encouragement and by example. This is mirrored in the parental responsibilities section of this policy in terms of ensuring they promote a positive culture and ensure their child arrives on time and ready for learning.

The school therefore actively discourages late arrivals by pupils for these reasons and also as a late arrival may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity but that of others.

It is the legal responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives promptly. Irregular attendance or late arrival can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning and confidence. Late arrival means that a child misses the start of the day when the morning's lesson is introduced and explained. Friendships and social groupings can also be affected. Arriving late after the register closes without a valid reason will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

The bell goes at 8.50am daily - any child arriving after that time will be marked as 'late' in the register. After 8.50am the child enters school through the main entrance door via the school office and not from the playground to class. Late after 9.15 am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness by pupils will be investigated by the head teacher with the parents, to see if there are difficulties at home or genuine unavoidable circumstances which are contributing to lateness.

### Absence due to ill health

Parents are asked to inform the school if their child is unwell by 9.15 am on the first day of absence (by phone using the absence message box option). If no contact has been made by 9.15 am when the registers close, the school office will phone the parents. If we are unable to contact the parents and have no letter explaining the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. A letter from the GP may be requested if a pupil has high levels of authorised absence through sickness and parents will be invited to an informal meeting with the headteacher. Parents may be asked for proof of illness if staff have a valid reason to suspect that the illness may not be the reason for the absence.

### Dental/medical treatment

Parents are expected to make any routine appointments outside of the school working day. Only an emergency appointment or a hospital appointment which cannot be rescheduled will be authorised. Parents must fill in a leave of absence form in advance of known appointments. School will complete and return to the parent. Any scheduled appointment letters are copied and maintained with the request form.

### Holiday absences

The school does not authorise any holidays during term time.

A request for a leave of absence must only be considered if;

- The parent the child normally lives with applies in advance for the absence; and
- There are **exceptional circumstances** for the absence.

If a child is removed from school for an unauthorised holiday the school will ask the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice which carries a fine (for 10 sessions or more – 5 days). Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution due to the parents failing to secure their child's school attendance. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear that headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances need to be submitted 4 weeks before the absence giving the Head Teacher time to consider the application. Any retrospective requests will be denied.

### Other absences

Permission for special occasions, such as funerals, weddings, must be requested in writing in advance by filling in a Leave of Absence form. The headteacher will review the request and return the form with the outcome to the parent.

### Monitoring attendance, reporting and support for families

The school monitors attendance data regularly. An attendance meeting will be arranged with the parents, when a child's attendance drops below 90% (with no known reason), to see if the school can support the family.. If no improvement is seen a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer will be organised.

School provides parents with a termly attendance report showing their child's attendance and punctuality for that term as well as a cumulative report of their attendance from September. Attendance meetings are convened for any family with persistent punctuality or attendance issues to explore the reasons and ways the school can support the family. Each parent/ carer has online secure access to their child's live attendance percentage via eSchools.

### Communicating the contents of the policy

The school attendance policy is available to everyone on our school website. A summary and support document is also provided to all our families in the Parent Handbook. This is presented to all parents in our welcome briefing and attention is regularly drawn to the policy through newsletters and informal and formal meetings.