

Halstead CP School

Attendance Policy



Approved by the Full Governing Body

Patricia Dunmall (Chair of Governors) – Mr Hawkins (Headteacher)
Signed :

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SYNOPSIS

Halstead Community Primary School is committed to working in partnership with parents, pupils and other professionals to provide effective educational programmes for all pupils.

This policy reflects that we recognise that every child has the fundamental right to receive an education as well as benefit from education through regular school attendance.

It identifies the role of the school in developing strategies to support pupils in achieving maximum possible attendance and deal with school based problems impeding full attendance as soon as possible.

Where attendance issues cannot be resolved within the available school based strategies, the matter will be passed to the Education Welfare Service.

The school will work with parents/carers and outside agencies where there are issues not related to school impeding a pupil's ability to learn and or attend school.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain the profile of attendance within the school and with pupils and parents/carers.
2. To ensure that attendance is maintained above 96%
3. To improve punctuality.
4. To reduce unauthorised absence.
5. To ensure that any ongoing issues affecting the ability of pupils to maintain high levels of attendance are addressed either through school resources or referred to appropriate outside agencies.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 PARENTS OR CARERS

- 1.1 Halstead Community Primary School wishes to work in partnership with parents/carers to achieve good school attendance. The target attendance for a pupil at Halstead is at least 96%.
- 1.2 Parents/carers sign the Home-School Agreement, which includes a statement that they will ensure regular attendance.
- 1.3 Parents/carers of registered pupils at Halstead Community Primary School are legally required to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Lateness in law can be seen as absence and pupils arriving after the close of registers will be recorded as unauthorised absent. Where such absences reach 10 or over a Fixed Penalty Notice may be applied for through the LA.
- 1.4 Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for absence and the date on which the pupil can be expected to return. On return the parent should provide the pupil with a dated note confirming the reason for and length of absence for the Class teacher.
- 1.5 Appointments for medical reasons should be made, whenever possible, outside of school time. Where this is not possible the appointment card should be shown in advance to the school office.
- 1.6 Parents/carers should also ensure that their child is properly equipped and fit for the learning environment.
- 1.7 Parents/carers are expected to arrange family holidays out of term time. Holidays for pupils in Years 2 and 6 will not be authorised, as this is a time when there is an expectation that parents will be supporting the school in preparing their children for their end of Key Stage assessments.

2.0 PUPILS

- 2.1 Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons. The target attendance for all pupils is a minimum of 96%.
- 2.2 Pupils are expected to arrive for 8.50 a.m. registration. Pupils arriving late are expected to follow the late registration

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procedure at the school office. Failure to sign in if arriving late is in breach of the school's Health and Safety Policy.

- 2.3 Pupils arriving after the close of registers at 8.55 a.m. will be marked as unauthorised absent and their parents/carers could be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice fine if the number of unauthorised absences for this reason reaches 10 sessions or more.

3.0 THE GOVERNING BODY

- 3.1 The Governing Body of Halstead Community Primary School has a responsibility for attendance with other stakeholders and will be familiar with the current legislation in relation to school attendance, which includes exclusion and education off-site.
- 3.2 They will be acquainted with the registration system in the school.
- 3.3 The Governing Body have agreed that they will not sanction the authorisation of holidays during term time for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- 3.4 The Governing Body require the Headteacher to report on attendance each seasonal term at a Full Governing Body meeting in order to monitor attendance.
- 3.5 Governors will participate in training on attendance matters and nominate one of their number to have a specific interest and overview of attendance.

4.0 THE HEADTEACHER

- 4.1 The Headteacher has the day-to-day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.
- 4.2 The Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission and at regular intervals throughout the year. The signing of the Home-School Agreement will support this.
- 4.3 The Headteacher has a duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 to make returns to the LA and DCSF as and when requested. In addition, he is required to

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report to the LA individual pupils who have been absent for more than two weeks or who have developed a poor pattern of attendance.

5.0 CLASS TEACHERS

- 5.1 The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring that teachers keep registers in the correct manner.
- 5.2 Teachers will monitor the attendance of individual pupils, identifying trends and individual concerns with the Headteacher.
- 5.3 Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits will be used to monitor attendance and discuss strategies / resources to support individuals. This will include referrals to outside agencies.
- 5.4 Class teachers have a vital role to play in the raising of attendance and punctuality in our school.
- 5.5 Class teachers will ensure that the registers are called promptly and correctly in order that the school conforms to statutory requirements and that data is available for health and safety requirements and information and data reading processes.
- 5.6 If a pupil about whom there are Child Protection concerns is absent, the Designated Child Protection Person should be informed on the first day of absence.

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

When a pupil of this school is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bare in mind factors that could relate to the Child Protection, Behaviour Management and the Anti-Bullying Policies.

The school has clear systems for following up absence through first day of absence contact and letters home if absence fails to be explained. If attendance drops below 85% in a term, parents/carers are informed.

All pupils with attendance below 80% with no acceptable reason are discussed with the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer.

Formal referrals will be made to the Education Welfare Service where school based strategies have not made the necessary impact on attendance and or parents/carers have failed to engage with the efforts of the school to address issues.

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School based strategies will include contact with home by appropriate school staff (Class teacher, Parent Support Adviser, Secretary, Headteacher), meetings with parents/carers and letters informing parents/carers of levels of absence, support for the pupil and explanation of expectations. Contact with parents in these phased and information-sharing stages conforms to Human Rights legislation and addresses areas of natural justice that may come under scrutiny should the case require action through the courts.

Court action can only be taken by the Education Authority in cases where pupils' absence from school is unauthorised. By authorising absence the school is giving the pupil leave to be absent and there is therefore no offence being committed by the parent/carer.

The parents/carers of pupils who accrue 10 or more unauthorised absent sessions in a term could be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine from the LA on receipt of information from the school that indicates that:

- pupils caught on truancy sweeps;
- that the absences are condoned by parents/carers;
- that parents/carers are taking pupil on excessive holidays in term time;
- that there has been excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior agreement;
- there has been persistent late arrival – after the Register has closed.

HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED HOLIDAYS

Under regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, there is a discretionary power for leave to be granted for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. Applications for all term-time family holidays must be made in writing and application forms are available from the school office. If it is for a period in excess of two weeks application must be made to the Headteacher at least four weeks in advance. Parents/carers will be required to explain the nature and purpose of the trip, why the trip could not be taken during the school holidays, and whether this event is likely to occur again during the pupil's school career.

Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted for a period in excess of two weeks, or for more than one holiday a year and these applications may be referred to the Governing Body who will then decide, taking into consideration the pupil's attendance pattern, the cost of the trip and the impact of the pupil's education, whether leave of absence for the whole period will be granted.

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Parents are discouraged from taking family holidays in school term time. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 will not be granted leave of absence for family holidays.

Where a pupil has an extended holiday approved it is expected that wherever possible school holiday periods will be included. Although it is recognised that it is not always possible, the family should discuss with class teachers possible times to take extended holidays that will have less impact on the pupil's education.

The leave granted will be to a maximum of six weeks of term time, with a clear date to return. Should the pupil fail to return without any other contact to the school, following notification to the Education Welfare Service, the pupil will be taken off the school roll after 10 days (Education [Pupil Registration] regulations 2006).

The Governors will not authorise any holidays at times when pupils are scheduled to take statutory or optional SATs. Parents/carers will be informed of these dates as soon as they are known.

OTHER CONCERNS

Where the concerns impeding attendance and or learning are based outside of the school, the school will refer to outside agencies to support the pupil and parents/carers, with the knowledge of parents/carers.