

Hill Mead Primary School



Attendance Policy

October 2015



Hill Mead Primary School
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Autumn 2015

The school is committed to working with parents to ensure high pupil attendance to maximise their learning and achievement.

Introduction

1.i Legal note and best practice.

- Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996).
- This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority.
- The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action.
- However, in some cases parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

1.ii School Target (in line with the National average).

- Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 96%, i.e. all pupils should attend school at least 180 days each year.

1.iii Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically.

1.iv Good attendance will be acknowledged.

- Pupils with 100% attendance each term will be rewarded with bronze, silver and gold attendance badges in assembly.
- Any pupil not receiving a badge in a term has the opportunity to achieve one by improving their attendance to 100% in the next term.
- The school will publish pupils' individual attendance rate on her/his annual school report.

Reporting any absence from school

The school has a responsibility to establish the reason for any absence of a pupil (child) on the school's register, and a duty to follow up unexplained or persistent absences.

Parents are requested to:

- 2.i Ring on the first morning of all absences with the reason and say when their child will return.
- 2.ii Keep the school updated by telephone or letter if their child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- 2.iii Bring a note from the doctor or their child's prescribed medication if their child has been absent for 3 or more days.
- 2.iv Try to arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.

The school will:

- 3.i Maintain a log of all calls from parents regarding their child's absence, dated and timed.
- 3.ii Follow up unexplained absences by:
 - Sending a text message to parents on the first morning of absence, requesting a reason for their child's absence.
 - Calling parents in the afternoon of the first day of absence, if the school has not been contacted. Calls to parents will be repeated until contact has been made.
 - Notify the named social worker, on each day of absence, of a child known to be a Child in Need or on a Child Protection Plan, until the absence is explained.
- 3.iii The school will use the following attendance codes to identify absence types:
 - / present
 - **N** absence type unknown (will change to **O** after 10 sessions of absence)
 - **I** illness of less than 3 days reported by phone or letter, or longer illness reported by doctor's letter or sight of prescription medication dated during the absence period
 - **R** one day of religious observance
 - **C** authorised circumstantial absence, e.g. burglary, flood in the home

- **G** unauthorised holiday
- **O** all other unauthorised absence
- **L** late until 9:25 am
- **U** late after registers are closed. The DFE considers this as missing a whole school session.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is defined when a child's attendance falls below 92% and is considered a serious concern by the school. Persistent absence rises from excessive unauthorised and/or authorised absences.

The school will make every effort to inform the parents of their concern and offer support. The school will:

- Invite the parents to complete a CAF if their child's attendance does not improve or there is a serious concern regarding their child's attendance.
- If there is still no improvement, the school may make a referral to the School Attendance Service for further action.

Authorised Absence

- 4.i Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.
- 4.ii The school realises that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. Parents are requested to let the school know as soon as possible, so that the school can offer support and advice.

Unauthorised Absence

- 5.i There are times when children are absent for reasons that are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:
- Waiting on a delivery
 - Going shopping or for a hair cut
 - Going for a family day out
 - Because of a child's birthday
 - Sleeping in after a late night
 - **Unapproved holidays**
 - Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

- 5.ii Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact parents and consider taking legal action against them if their child has unauthorised absences. This could result in a £100 Fixed Penalty fine being issued.

6. Term Time Leave of Absence

- 6.i The school is always concerned about the amount of school time children miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Board of Governors. Our policy:
- Requests for holidays **will not** be authorised once children reach statutory school age. Absence taken and not authorised will be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine.
 - Please remember that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their learning. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the learning can only take place when the child is in the classroom.
- 6.ii The school understands that there may times when they need to take their child out of school in term time, such as a sudden bereavement, memorial services or ill-health of a family member residing overseas. The school can authorise such absences if documentary proof of the event is provided, such as a doctor's letter, proof of bereavement or an order of service from a memorial event. The period of absence should be the minimum length of time possible. Extended trips will not be authorised and you may be fined.

Punctuality

The beginning of the day is an important time, when children are given instructions and information about the school day. Children who are late often feel left out and may find it more difficult to settle. If a child arrives after 9:25 am, the school has to mark the child absent for that session, in line with Department of Education guidance.

- 7.i Morning registration is at **8.55 am**. Children arriving after this time will be marked as **L** in the **registers**. If your child arrives after 9:25 am, the **U** code will be used.

Parents are requested to:

- Ensure their child comes through the school gate by 8:50 am
- Let the school know of any reasons why their child is late

The school will:

- Let parents know if there any concerns about their child's punctuality

- Offer support and advice, if a child is persistently late

Punctuality at the end of the day

- 8.i The school day ends at 3:00 pm for Nursery and Reception 3:10 pm for Key Stage 1 and 2.
- 8.ii It is important that children are collected promptly, so that they have a positive end to their school day.
- 8.iii Parents of children who have not been collected 10 minutes after school closing time, will be contacted by phone or text, unless contact with the school has been made.
- 8.iv The school will make every effort to contact parents or named persons on the child's emergency contact sheet, to ensure that the child is collected from school as soon as possible. The school will be understanding if unavoidable circumstances have led to late collection.
- 8.v If no contact has been established, the school has a legal responsibility to provide a place of safety for the child. A place of safety means Social Services or the police.

Leaving the school and transferring to another school

- 9.i If your child is leaving the school, parents are asked to:
- Give the school reasons for leaving
 - Provide leaving date, name and address of the child's new school
 - Change of address and contact details, if applicable
- 9.ii The school will:
- Inform Lambeth Education Services of the transfer
 - Send the child's school files to the new school

Children Missing Education

- 10.i If a child leaves the school and no information is given, and contact cannot be made with the parents, the child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the police and other agencies to try to track and locate the child.

- 10.ii By giving the school all relevant information, unnecessary and distressing investigations can be avoided.

Pupils with Special Needs

- 11.i SEN is not considered as a reason for poor attendance. There is clear evidence that school attendance and attainment are interlinked. The school has the same attendance expectations for all pupils and will support parents accordingly.
- 11.ii Children with SEN may require a higher proportion of medical appointments as a result of their particular needs. Parents are requested to try to arrange all medical appointments out of school hours.
- 11.iii Attendance is a formal part of the annual review process for children with Education and Health Care Plans or Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Attendance Monitoring

- 12.i The school will monitor the attendance of all groups of pupils in line with national expectations. These groups will include gender, ethnicity, SEN, looked-after children and other children known to Social Care.

Approved by Governing Body:

Review: