

Learning in Harmony Trust

Hartley Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to ensure that there are systems in place so that all pupils at Learning in Harmony Trust schools attend regularly.

We recognise that attendance impacts significantly upon progress and social development and as a Trust we are committed to promoting good attendance. A strong parent partnership ensures that children get the very best from their education. Working in partnership with families, we aim to provide each child with every opportunity to achieve their potential. In order to do this it is essential that all pupils attend school regularly and on time.

*'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence'.
Education Act 1996*

Aims and Objectives

We aim to improve attendance in order to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- ensure that pupils enjoy, succeed and have access to wide range of opportunities.

Registration

Children can arrive at school from 8:40am. Registration is at 8:50am.

Any student arriving after this time will gain a 'late' mark (L). At 9:00am registers are closed and any student arriving after that time, in accordance with the regulations, will gain an unauthorised absence (U) which will affect their overall attendance.

If a child is persistently late, the Attendance Team and class teacher will monitor the situation and a meeting will be arranged with parents. Attendance Officers at Trust schools will carry out 'late gates' monitoring in partner schools termly.

Absences

The Attendance Team can record authorised absences for good reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. too unwell to bring children to school, weather too cold;
- truancy;
- absences which are not properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children (even if unwell) or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- contact the school as soon as possible on each day of the absence and explain the reasons for the absence (parents should leave a message if they cannot get through);
- keep their child off school for at least 24 hours following their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea where this has been the reason for the absence;
- contact the school to notify us of any further absences e.g. if a child has been advised to remain off school by their doctor;
- Provide medical evidence from their doctor where there are concerns about the child's level of attendance.

If a child is absent the school will:

- phone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them;
- invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation at a meeting with a member of the attendance team and other professionals if absences persist;
- Long term absences as a result of serious illness are covered the Medical Conditions Policy.

Child missing in Education CME

Under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, schools have the safeguarding duty of investigating any unexplained absences. The school will inform the local authority of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 schools day or more without permission. Where the reason for the child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority must investigate the case and ensure the child is receiving suitable education.

Palliative Care

If a pupil requires palliative care, we will determine what attendance is reasonable for him/her in consultation with parents and relevant healthcare professionals. It is important that healthcare professionals are involved in decisions about attendance because parents might prefer to keep the pupil at home for as much time as possible, and this may not be in the best interests of the pupil.

It may be appropriate to consider any of the following:

- options for a reduced timetable or shorter school days;
- how support will be linked to an Individual Health Care Plan;
- what work, if any, will be sent home to be completed; and
- at which point the pupil will stop attending school altogether.

These are all dependent on the stage of the pupil's illness. It might be that parents welcome the opportunity for their child to attend school because it creates a sense of normality, or they

might not feel it is appropriate. However, being in school does increase the risk of infection, and pupils who are terminally ill are likely to have reduced immunity; decisions on whether the pupil should be in school are made in accordance with the child's Individual Health Care Plan. Some pupils with a terminal illness may have a life expectancy of many years and should expect to be in school for a long time.

Persistent Absence

Persistent Absence is defined as any pupil whose attendance is 90% or below. Patterns of unexplained persistent absence will be investigated at an early stage and will involve all staff who come into contact with the child to understand the underlying reasons.

The following stages will be used to manage the situation, unless pupils have a serious medical condition which explains their absence:

Level 1

- School will contact parents by letter to notify them of the attendance issue and invite them to attend an attendance meeting. It will be explained that their child's attendance will be monitored.
- Failure to attend this meeting will result in another letter informing parents that if their child's attendance will be monitored and if it does not improve a move to level 2 will be made.
- Any unreported absence whilst at Level 1 may result in an unannounced visit. This may involve school staff, the Local Authority or Police Officers.

Level 2

- If attendance does not improve then the school will contact parents by letter, inviting them to a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team and the attendance team.
- During the Level 2 meeting, the school will complete a parenting contract outlining discussion points of the meeting, support offered and action plan agreed.
- Discuss with family whether an Early Help Assessment (EHA) should be completed.
- Set a 4 week target for the child's attendance and review. If this target is not achieved, proceed to level 3.
- Any unreported absence whilst at Level 2 may result in an unannounced visit.

In the unlikely event that the Level 2 is not successful then an Attendance Panel may be considered which is led by the LA. This would involve the attendance team, Headteacher and a representative from the Governing Body.

Level 3

- Weekly home visit by the attendance team, working with parents/carers and child to address the barriers regarding poor attendance.
- Referral to social care considered?

Level 4

- Pupil planning meeting at the Borough Council which is attended by the EWO and line manager, parents and representative from the school.
- Action plan set.
- First or Final warning letter issued. Any unauthorised absences after this warning will result in parents being issued a penalty notice. Further unauthorised absences may lead to court action by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices

- In accordance with the Education Act 1996 Section 444 and Section 444a, penalty notices can be issued to parents whose child/children are not in regular attendance at school.
- The penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days but within 28 days, the penalty notice will increase to £120. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days the debt will be referred to the Debt Collection Agency.
- Parents cannot appeal against the penalty notice being issued and there is no option to pay in instalments.

Requests for Leave of Absence (Appendix 1)

Taking holidays in term time affects children's education as much as any other absence and there is no entitlement for parents/carers to take children away in school time. The 2006 Regulations make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In order to request a leave of absence, parents/carers must complete a form and write an accompanying letter which explains the exceptional circumstances; the school will consider each application individually. A maximum of 10 days per academic year can be authorised. Any unauthorised leave can result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution. All requests for leave must be made and agreed by school before holidays are booked.

There are some circumstances when leave in term time will never be agreed:

- In September or when a pupil is just starting the school. This is important as children need to settle into their new classes quickly.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (e.g. KS1 and KS2 SATs).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Schools have a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All staff are committed to working with parents and children in order to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and opportunities are promoted. Attendance issues are discussed with parents at termly consultation meetings and reported annually.

The Headteacher and Attendance team meet regularly to discuss attendance issues.

Attendance data is reported to the Governing Body termly.

Regular attendance is promoted and celebrated through weekly, termly and annual assemblies and reward systems.

Presented to staff and governors: March 2017

Review date: March 2019



Appendix 1

Model Letters

Level 1: Attendance Letter

Dear Parent/Carer

I am concerned by _____ level of attendance. I enclose a copy of his/her attendance certificate for your information.

As you can appreciate, academic attainment suffers if children do not attend school on a regular basis. It is important that we see an improvement in your child's attendance and that you inform the school immediately if there is a valid reason for absence.

I will be monitoring your child's attendance closely over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely

NAME

Attendance Officer



Level 2: Meeting Summary

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for meeting with me on _____

As discussed we have set a target of 100% and will review this on _____
at _____. Should _____ have any time off during this
period medical evidence will need to be provided.

I look forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Attendance Officer

Level 2: Meeting Summary (Non Attendance)

Dear Parent/Carer

It is disappointing that you did not attend the meeting arranged on _____ This would have given us the opportunity to discuss ways in which we could support you in ensuring that _____ comes into school regularly.

In your absence an action plan was agreed and an attendance target of 100% has been set for the next four weeks. I would like to invite you to an attendance meeting to review this target on _____ at _____.

If in the meantime, there is any difficulty that the school can assist you with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Attendance Officer

Level 2: Improvement

Dear Parent/Carer

I have today reviewed your Level 2 and am taking this opportunity to write to you to let you know that since our last meeting _____ attendance has been steadily improving and we appreciate your efforts to ensure they are in school regularly.

We will now close the case at Level 2 and continue to monitor his/her attendance. Should this improvement begin to deteriorate, it will be necessary to arrange another meeting.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Attendance Officer

Level 2: No Improvement

Dear Parent/Carer

Further to my previous letter, _____ attendance has not shown sufficient improvement and I am therefore requesting that you meet with me so that we can discuss his/her current attendance and how we can work together to significantly improve the situation.

I have arranged a meeting for _____ which I hope you will be able to attend. Please telephone me on _____ to confirm your attendance at the meeting.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Attendance Officer

Appendix 2

Level 2 Attendance Meeting (Parent/Carer Attended)

Date: _____

Pupil's Name		DOB	
Parent's Name		Year	
Current Attendance		Unauthorised Attendance	

School: Reasons for absences
Parent/Carer: Reasons for absences

Solutions for improving attendance
<input type="checkbox"/> The pupil named above must be in school every day and on time. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical evidence must be provided for any absences. <input type="checkbox"/> A member of the Inclusion Team will arrange a meeting to discuss Early Help.
Other comments:

Date and time of review: _____

Targets to achieve: _____

Signed:

(Parent)

(Attendance Officer)

Level 2 Attendance Meeting (Parent/Carer failed to attend)

Date: _____

Pupil's Name		DOB	
Parent's Name		Year	
Current Attendance		Unauthorised Attendance	

Solutions for improving attendance
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The pupil named above must be in school every day and on time.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medical evidence must be provided for any absences.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A member of the Inclusion Team will arrange a meeting to discuss Early Help.</p>
Other comments:

Date and time of review: _____

Targets to achieve: _____

Signed:

(Attendance Officer)



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Head Teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Child and Family Early Intervention Team who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Please complete one application per child.

Name of Child:	
D.O.B:	
Class:	
Date of First Day of Absence:	
Date of Return:	
Number of Days Requested:	

Important: A letter must be attached to this request, outlining the ‘exceptional circumstances’ for which a leave of absence is being applied for.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

School/Office use only

Current attendance:		Authorised	Unauthorised

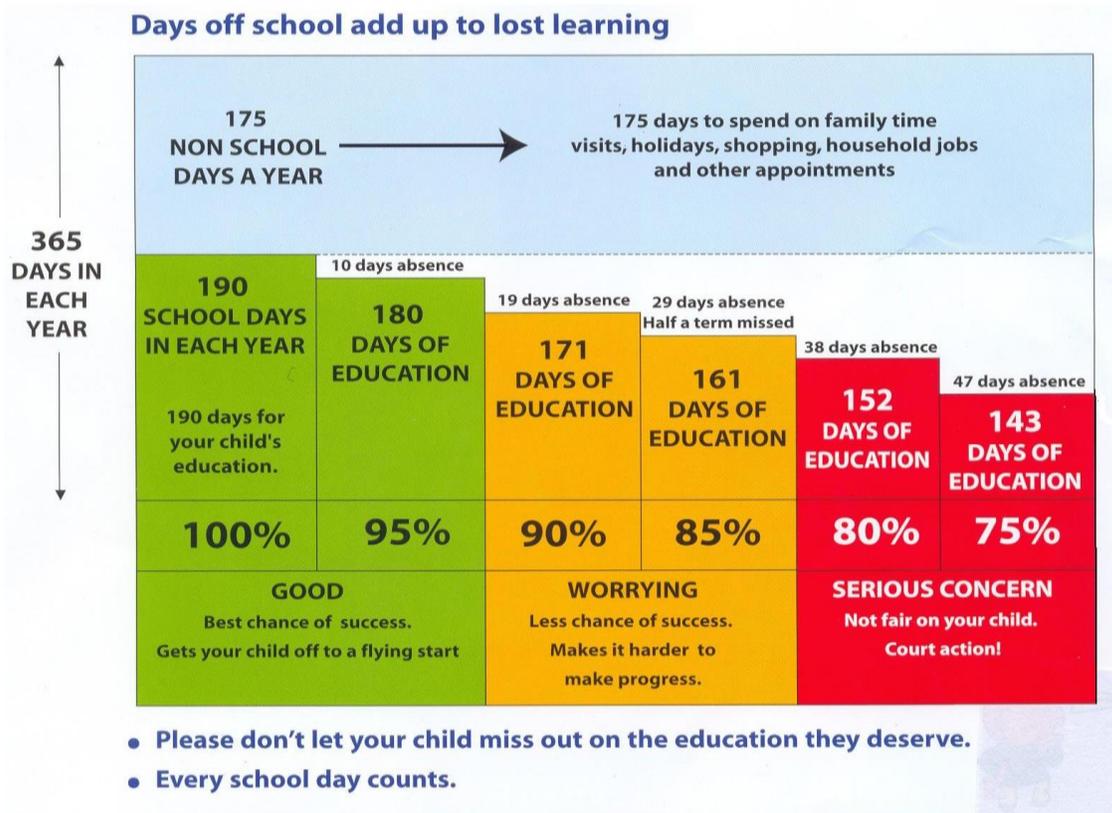
Appendix 4

Great Attendance = Great Grades

Attendance	Primary
>98%	<p>92% achieve level 4+ in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>Five times more likely to achieve Level 5 in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>(98% = 4 days missed of the school year)</p>
95%	<p>86% achieve level 4+ in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>(95% = 10 days (2 weeks) missed of the school year)</p>
90%	<p>77% achieve level 4+ in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>(90% = 15 days (3 weeks) missed of the school year)</p>
85%	<p>59% achieve level 4+ in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>(85% = 30 days (6 weeks) missed of the school year)</p>
<80%	<p>50% achieve level 4+ in Maths and Reading tests at the end of KS2.</p> <p>(80% = 40 days (8 weeks) missed of the school year)</p>

DfE (Feb 2015)

We target intervention with students whose attendance falls below the target of 95%



- If children do not attend school they will not achieve.
- We want all students to achieve high levels of attendance and give themselves the very best life chances and choices.
- There are 175 non school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments. There should be little need, except in "exceptional circumstances" for your child to miss a day's education.
- 90% attendance may look impressive but it means that the child has missed 19 days of education in a year and risk dropping one grade in their GCSEs.