

Higham Ferrers Junior School

'Be the best you can be'



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This Policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body in June 2016

Signed:

(Chair of Governors)

This document has been agreed between schools in the Rushden and Higham Cluster of schools. This policy has been produced to ensure a consistent approach towards attendance throughout the cluster.

Since agreement the policy has been updated by Higham Ferrers Junior School in line with new NCC absence rules.

Aim:

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it, the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.

Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Organisation

The class register is to be completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers open at **8.40am** and close at **8.50am**. Pupils arriving between **8.50am** and **9.20am** will be marked as late.

Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately:-

L - late **8.50am up until 9.20am** classed as present

U - **after 9.20am** classed as unauthorised absence

Continued lateness will be reported and discussed with the parents. **Adults must sign latecomers into the Late Record which is in the School Office.**

Absences must be recorded by staff using the correct absences and attendance code as issued by the Department for Education.

All letters explaining absences are to be kept until the end of the school year and then filed with the registers. School originated telephone messages from parents may be disposed of at the end of each half term as the office has a duplicate record of them which will be archived.



Parents should report an absence either by telephone, in person or in written by 09.00am.

As a first day response, the Attendance Officer will telephone parents.

A set of standard letters will be sent to parents where persistent lateness and/or absence are in evidence. Where school cannot make contact with parents then the Parent Support Advisor (PSA) will be contacted. Attendance below 95% for the previous term and annual figure will trigger action by school and targets **will** be set. If issues cannot be resolved then school will work with parents to establish an action plan. School will analyse lateness and attendance on termly basis.

If a pupil has more than 10% unauthorised absence and/or their overall attendance is less than 90%, then an interview is arranged between the Head teacher and parents. If the child has not been in for 10 days and school have tried but have been unable to contact home, then the Educational Entitlement Team will be contacted.

If a child is on a Child Protection Plan any absences must be reported immediately and these will be investigated.

Leave and Holidays in Term time

From 1st September 2013, a new law gave no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher **must be satisfied** that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Head teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

The Local Authority's decision to issue a fixed Penalty Notice is based on information submitted by the school.

Triggers for the fixed Notice Penalty will be

- 18 sessions(9days) of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 90% or less.

It's important that parents understand that the initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240.

Requests for leave must be given in writing to the Head teacher and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the exceptional circumstance if necessary.



In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only. The Rushden and Higham cluster of schools agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for the Head teacher to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances **could** include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Principal must liaise with other schools where other siblings attend.

Leaving School during the School Day

No child will be allowed to leave the premises during school time unless collected by a parent or responsible adult. All departures must be logged with the school office.

Targets

Targets will be set for individual children when their attendance falls below 95%. This is subject to the reasons for the low attendance.

Responsibility:

The overall responsibility of monitoring pupils' attendance lies with the Head Teacher. The school is responsible for the collection of attendance data and producing appropriate responses.

Points of Identification, Monitoring:

At the beginning of each term the school will identify:



Children whose attendance has fallen below 95% for the previous term **and** for the current year.

The registers will be analysed to find the reasons and patterns. An initial letter will be sent out to set a target of 95% for the next term.

Children who continue to have attendance below 95% but have improved receive a letter and are set a new target

Children who continue to have attendance below 95% and have not improved will be sent a letter requesting a meeting between the Head teacher and Parent.

Children whose attendance is below 90%

Letters will be sent to the Parents/Carers of these children to set targets if appropriate. If targets are not achieved then a referral will be made to the PSA (Parent Support Advisor).

Children who have persistent absence will have a letter to explain that a referral will be made to the Educational Entitlement Service.

A process spreadsheet is used to record what actions have been taken and this will act as an audit trail.