



Managing Pupil Attendance Policy

January 2015

Next Review Due: January 2016

HMFA Managing Pupil Attendance Policy

POLICY DATE: 31 January 2015

REVIEW DATE: January 2016

Introduction

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DfE Aug 2013

All schools within HMFA expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. All of our schools are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

- to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected,
- to ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality,
- to raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality,
- to ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality,
- to keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance,
- to identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them,
- to work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Guidelines:

Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person if their child needs to be absent from school as this is their parental responsibility.

At morning registration, any child who is not present will be marked as code 'N'.

School must be informed of a reason for absence by 10 am by the parent. If school have not been informed of a reason for absence by 10 am, a member of the Admin. staff will telephone home to request a reason for the child's absence.

This is followed up in writing if contact is unsuccessful. All letters are sent out on a Friday for any child still marked as code 'N'.

If there is no response to the written communication within two weeks, the absence will be marked as unauthorised - code 'O'.

Children may also be marked as unauthorised if school feel that the reason provided is not justified. Parents may be requested to provide evidence.

If there are any safeguarding concerns regarding individual children, the Safeguarding Manager should be notified. She will take reasonable measures to ensure that the absent child is safe and well, including engaging the EWO to carry out a home visit or asking the Police to carry out a safe and well check.

The Local Authority Child Missing in Education (CME) procedure will be implemented by the Safeguarding Manager if the threshold set out by the CME policy is reached.

Authorised absences include:

- sickness
- hospital appointments
- dentist
- funerals

Medical appointments should be arranged if possible outside of the school day. Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day.

Absence without Leave

HMFA schools follow Local Authority guidelines for holiday requests during term time.

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. However, there may be circumstances when this is unavoidable.

All absence requests must be made in writing to the Head Teachers.

No absence for leave requests will be granted during the week in May in which S.A.T.'s take place for year 6. Notification of the date will be given to parents as early as possible in the academic year.

Any absence for leave for a child with less than 95% attendance will be refused unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Any absence for leave that has not been authorised will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Parents will be notified in writing by the school.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential in ensuring that all children maximise their educational opportunities and future life choices.

Failing to secure a pupil's regular attendance is an offence under Section 444 (1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Where a family requests absence for leave, the decision to authorise (or not) will be made by the Head Teacher.

In the event of an unauthorised holiday being taken during term time, it is expected that school will make every effort to warn the parents that they may receive a PENALTY NOTICE if the absence for leave is taken. The school will do this in writing and will obtain proof of postage.

The Education Welfare Officer advises schools that information regarding absence for leave requests should be made clear in the school's attendance policy.

If an unauthorised holiday is taken during term time, the school will make a referral to Herefordshire Council and a Penalty Notice may be issued as a result:

- each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent from school as a result of unauthorised holiday; for example Mum = £60 other parent/carer = £60
- the legal definition of a parent is contained in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and refers to any adult who is a natural parent, someone with parental responsibility or someone who cares for a child

The penalty notice is a fine of £60 per child (£120 in the case of two parents) payable within 28 days of its date of issue. If this payment is not received in full the amount payable will double.

If the Penalty Notice is paid, no further action will be taken for that offence period. However, if no payment is made, or if there are further unauthorised absences, Herefordshire Council may take further legal action, which may result in court proceedings.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.50 am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after that time. All children arriving late must report to the office.

After 9.20 am the lateness is classed as 'late after the registers closed – code 'U' This code counts as unauthorised absence.

Lateness is monitored half termly. The Education Welfare Officer may be asked to contact parents to request a reason and to offer support where children are persistently late. The Safeguarding Manager will be informed and formal discussions with the parents will take place. The Education Welfare Officer may be present during these discussions.

The Education Welfare Officer will also monitor lateness by being present at the start of the school day at regular intervals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations.

Procedures:

- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored.
- Log kept of all children who arrive late.
- Log kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been received and of phone calls made to parents.

The Safeguarding Manager is responsible for scrutinising lateness and attendance percentages on a half termly basis for all schools within HMFA.

Any child with an absence of less than 90% will have their records examined and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Attendance figures will be presented at Governors meetings.

The Safeguarding Manager will meet regularly with the EWO to discuss figures.

All practices will be reviewed annually.