

# Hutton All Saints' C. of E. Primary School



**Commitment to Excellence within a Caring, Christian Environment.**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **School Attendance and the Law**

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The school attendance register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes which identify why the pupil was absent from school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide whether or not the absence is justified and, if so, should ensure that the most appropriate authorised absence code is entered into the attendance register.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. **Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence.** This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (provided the Essex [Code of Conduct](#) criteria has been met).

If a pupil is absent without a leave request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in line with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days). Parents/carers who choose not to pay the fine(s) within relevant timeframes could face legal in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with section 436A of the Education Act 1996, the school will, after making appropriate checks, report any pupil who is believed to be 'missing from education' to the Local Authority (LA). Such referrals should be made to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service by no later than the tenth day of absence. The LA has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

Improving attendance at Hutton All Saints' school is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents and staff (all staff).

### School

- Registers will be called promptly between 8.50am and 9:00a.m. and at 1:00p.m. and 1:15pm for all children. This will be entered directly on to the schools SIMS registration system. Registers will close at 9.00am and at 1:20pm respectively.
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as an 'L' for a late absent coding. Pupils who arrive after 8:50, when the gates have closed, should report to the office where **a)** the child is given a late slip to be completed in class and **b)** the LATE GATE REGISTER needs to be signed by the parent.
- If a pupil arrives after 9.15am or 1.20pm, the register entry will read a 'U' (unauthorised) absent coding.
- If at the start of the first day of absence the school do not receive a phone call, the office will try to contact the parents. If this is not possible the office will contact all other contacts on the pupil's contact details. If the school is unable to locate the child and is concerned about his or her well-being, child protection procedures will be followed.
- Requests for leave will be considered on a case basis and only leave due to exceptional circumstances will be authorised. All requests must be submitted in writing, with sufficient notice to enable a response to be provided.
- Where attendance levels are causing concern, school staff will contact parents to arrange a meeting to identify the reasons for absence. Parents may be required to provide medical evidence where illness absence is considered high.

### Parents/carers

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible - by phone call on the first day before the start of school and subsequent dialogue with the school indicated when the child is anticipated to return. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- **Parents must ensure that:**
  - if their child is experiencing difficulties in school which may lead to absence, they contact school staff to discuss concerns and find a resolution which prevents absences;
  - when school staff request medical evidence, such as appointment cards (to cover absences incurred as a result of attending GP or dentist appointments) or prescribed medication (to cover whole days of absence as a result of diagnosed illness) that such evidence is provided without delay to enable absences to be authorised;
  - where a parent experiences difficulties obtaining medical evidence, school nursing services may be able to liaise with the relevant GP/medical practitioner to secure this evidence on behalf of the school. Parents will need to provide permission for information to be shared in this way;
  - failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence may result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service will be considered.
- Parents must only request leave if there are exceptional circumstances as family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances.
- Expectation to work with school to resolve any attendance issues.
- Parents whose first language is not English or have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

### Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually.

- Expectation that they attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons
- Pupils should arrive in time for registration (see paragraph titled School for details)
- Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher.

## **Registration**

If a pupil is persistently late, the Headteacher will meet the parents to address the concern.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

Registers will be inspected half termly in order to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

## **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence**

### **Absence may be authorised if:**

- the pupil was absent with leave authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances;
- the pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause';
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
- there is a family bereavement;
- the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school;
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition;
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit;
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance/competition; or
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g., if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).

### **Absence should be unauthorised if:**

- no explanation is forthcoming;
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation/ or letter supplied;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday); or
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday.

### **Procedures for Following Up Absence**

- If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher will write to the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school. In certain cases, illness absence will only be authorised with medical evidence.
- If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.
- All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded on a note and entered on the SIMS systems.

### **Children at Risk of Missing Education**

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

## **Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES)**

If the work of parents and school staff does not achieve improvements in a pupil's attendance levels, a referral may be made to an external agency.

The school may refer a pupil to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service where attendance remains a concern and where no valid reasons for absence have been identified/evidenced. If attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The local authorities has a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

### **Rewards / Celebrations**

- Annual attendance certificates for 100%, (medical appointments taken into consideration).
- Class stickers given for 100% attendance by all pupils in a week.
- Rewards given for improved attendance.
- General awards: merits, team points, caring certificates, stickers and extra playtimes.

### **Attendance Targets**

Hutton All Saints' has an annual attendance target set by governors of 97%. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target. Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

- 90 % attendance means that your child will be absent from school to the equivalent of one half day every week
- In one year this is the equivalent of 4 weeks missed • Over 5 years of education this is half a school academic year.
- 80% attendance is equivalent to a whole academic school year missed over 5 years.

### **Monitoring**

The Headteacher will report attendance and punctuality analysis to the Governing Body on a termly basis. This will include whole school attendance percentages, the percentage of persistent absentees and the school's response to attendance/absence/punctuality issues. The Safeguarding Governor, on behalf of the Governing Body, will monitor individual cases more closely on a termly basis as appropriate. The EWS will be involved for cases of persistent absence when the school has exhausted its available interventions and if unauthorised holidays are taken. The EWS will monitor individual cases where agreed with the school.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Parents will be informed of their child's percentage attendance termly on their reports. This will be given a RAG rating. Please see letter below.

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you will be aware, we monitor attendance at Hutton All Saints' closely as there is a direct link between a child's attendance and their progress/attainment in all areas of the curriculum. This letter is to show you clearly the attendance percentage expectations. Your child's report attendance percentage will be colour coded using the 'RAG' system.

From 1 September 2015, the Government reduced the absence threshold from 15% to 10%. This will now class a student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee, compared with the previous figure of 85%, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence.

The **RAG** (Red, Amber, Green) system looks like this:

<b>Attendance above 95%</b>	<b>Green</b>
<b>Attendance 90 – 94.99%</b>	<b>Amber</b>
<b>Attendance Below 90% (and in danger of being a persistent absentee)</b>	<b>Red</b>

Attendance for all pupils nationally is expected to be at the level of **Green** (above **95%**).

If your child's attendance is consistently **Amber** this is a cause for concern, and will need to be monitored by school/parents/carers. If your child's attendance is **Red**, it will be monitored by school, and if it does not improve, the Educational Welfare Officer may be asked to check attendance information more closely and may contact you.

I would also like to remind you that the law does not give any entitlement to parents to remove their child from school during term-time for the purpose of a holiday. Head teachers may only grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance and there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

It is important that you keep in touch with me if there are concerns about your child's attendance, especially if there is any way in which you need support. Illness is a major reason for low attendance and while we do not want children to be in school if they are unwell, we also want to ensure that their education does not suffer. Guidance on infection control in schools can be found on our website. If we can help with a referral to the school nurse or in any other way please let us know.

Yours sincerely

Miss J.Miller  
Head Teacher