

Hall Green Primary School



School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 Hall Green Primary School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.3 Hall Green Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.4 Hall Green Primary School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusion. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:
 - present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
- 3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- 3.4.1 Illness In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- 3.4.2 Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.
- 3.4.3 Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- 3.4.4 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 3.4.5 Holidays and Extended Leave Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

However, up to 10 school days leave in any one school year **may** be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must complete a Request for Leave of Absence form and submit it to the head teacher before holiday arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take into account a number of factors. Key issues considered will include:

- Length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SAT's and other examinations
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.

Only in exceptional circumstances will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

- 3.4.6 Religious Observance Hall Green Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the community we serve and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any recognised day of religious observance.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

- 3.4.7 Traveller Absence The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

- 3.4.8 Late Arrival Registration begins at 8:55am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but as arriving late. The register will close at 9:25am.

- 3.4.9 Unauthorised Late Arrival. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

- 3.4.10 Unauthorised absence. Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Hall Green Primary School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

4.1 As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Review the school's Attendance Policy regularly and ensure that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

4.2 The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.

- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

4.3 Parents will be requested to:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

5. Support Systems

- 5.1 Hall Green Primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.
- 5.2 The school also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
- 5.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
- Discussion with parents and pupils
 - Referrals to support agencies

- PSHE
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Family learning
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Wide range of short term and long term rewards

5.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school, in partnership with the LA Attendance Service, will follow the agreed protocol to instigate legal sanctions.