

Howes Community Primary School Primary Attendance & Exceptional Leave Policy



Policy on Attendance

Introduction

At Howes Primary School we recognise that regular attendance and punctuality by pupils is an important factor in raising their achievement. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and to recognise that even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between the regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At Howes Primary School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1. Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

1.1 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in Coventry are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave.

Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.

1.4 Further guidance can be found in the school's Exceptional Leave Policy and Parent leaflet, but it should be noted that requests for leave of absence for the following will always be refused for children with less than 95% attendance.

1.5 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty, which is currently £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

2. What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

The Government's own guidance on the issue of attendance states an expectation of at least 96%+.

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours or to get a haircut or to watch a play; this will not make it an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. Procedures

3.1 At Howes Primary School the school day begins at 8.55 am

3.2 The register is taken for children from Nursery to Year 6 once the children have settled into class. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9.00am they are given a late mark and later than 9.30 will be given an **unauthorised absence** mark.

3.3 The afternoon session begins at 1pm for Reception, Years 1 and 2 and at 1:15pm for Key Stage 2 and the same procedures apply.

All children who arrive after the playground gates are locked at 8:55 must enter the school via the main entrance and their names are logged and minutes late recorded. This log can be used in prosecution evidence in court proceedings in the event of persistent lateness.

If a child is absent without notification

3.4 Where no notification has been received by 9:30 am a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office.

3.5 If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school's Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher, /Inclusion manager who will then work with the Learning Mentors in order to check on the safety of the child. This information will be shared with the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher / Inclusion Manager and appropriate action will be taken.

If the parent does not contact the Office by 10:00 the Learning Mentor will telephone the family on the first day of absence.

If a child is absent from school for three consecutive days and the school are unable to make contact with the family or an emergency contact, the school will carry out a 'safe and well' check at the family home. If the school is concerned about the welfare of the child it reserves the right to do so sooner.

Missing children

3.6 If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

Written Notification of absence

3.7 When the child returns to school, a note must be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence, unless a telephone call has been made previously.

3.8 Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, the note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

4. Requests for exceptional leave of absence

4.1 If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office.

4.2 The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.

The school will delete pupils from roll who fail to return to Howes within 10 school days of the agreed return where leave of absence has been authorised by the Headteacher; or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if leave of absence has not been agreed.

5. Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness

5.1 If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6. Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.

7. Rewards for good attendance

7.1 All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive a certificate, an enamelled badge and an extra reward such as an extra playtime, extra minutes on Golden Time etc. Special consideration will be given in circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to a long term illness or a medical condition.

7.2 A special certificate and star badge will be presented for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year.

8. Attendance targets

8.1 Howes Primary School sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

9. Monitoring

9.1 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance and the Headteacher will produce an annual report. The governing body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.

9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

9.3 The rates of weekly attendance and lateness will be reported in the school newsletter and in the annual governors' report.

9.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the Headteacher/Deputy Head or Inclusion manager, who will contact the parents or guardians.

10. Review

10.1 The policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Policy Date: February 2019

Next Review Date: February 2021

Exceptional Leave Policy

Exceptional leave during the School Day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day parents must inform the school office staff so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the school office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

Exceptional leave during Term Time

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for leave during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority (see school's Attendance Policy).

Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Requests for Exceptional Leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least **4 weeks** before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an **Exceptional Leave of Absence Form**, which can be obtained from the school office.
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.
- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
- Further information can be found on the Parent leaflet.

Review

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If your child's attendance is below 85% and there is not a valid reason for their absence, you may be fined or taken to Court.

100%	Outstanding
99%	Excellent
98%	Very good
97%	Good
96%	Good This is the minimum level of attendance expected by Government.
93-95%	Satisfactory Room for improvement.
90-92%	Unsatisfactory This is well below Government expectation.
85-89%	Poor School will be monitoring and help given to raise levels of attendance.
80-84%	Cause for concern Attendance Officer involvement.

Daily Attendance Procedures

TIME	PROCEDURE	WHO
DAILY	Visible Presence on the Playground and front of school	HT/DHT/LM/SENCO
8:30AM	Go through answer machine messages and record absentees and reason for absence	OS
8:55AM	Bell and gates closed	LM/SSO
8:55 – 9:30AM	Any children late to go through the office and minutes late are recorded. Parents asked to give reason and sign late log.	LM/OS
9:10AM	Registers close	CT
9:15AM	All registers to office	CT
9:30AM	Children arriving after this time receive an unauthorised absence mark	OS
9:30AM	Text message parents/carers re absent children with no notification	OS
10AM	Print off list off all absent children with no notification following text and inform LM	OS
10AM	Investigate and make calls using known contact information. Log calls	LM
10:30AM	Share information with Inclusion Lead, HT or DHT.	LM
	Evaluate – Consider home visit.	SENCO/HT/DHT
	Following Home Visit or Non- contact report to DSL.	SENCO/HT/DHT

Late Correspondence Procedure

PROCEDURE	WHO
If a child is late for 3 sessions in a two week period Letter L1 sent home and a copy filed	LM
Log details	LM
If a child is late for a further 3 sessions over the next two week period Letter L2 sent home and a copy filed	LM
Log details	LM
If a child is late for a further 3 sessions over the next two week period advise LM	OS
Log details and refer to SENCO	LM
SENCO to liaise with Attendance Officer	SENCO

Attendance Correspondence Procedure

PROCEDURE	WHO
Print all attendance data prior to half termly meeting with Attendance Officer	OS
Print all attendance data less than 90% on the Monday prior to the end of each half term	LM
Send letter 1A to all families whose child's attendance is below 90%.	LM
Log details	LM
Monitor and Review correspondence logs at each half termly Attendance Officer meeting	LM/SENCO

HT – Headteacher

DHT – Deputy Headteacher

SENCO – Inclusion Manager

LM – Learning Mentor

OS – Office Staff

SSO – Site Service Officer