

# Attendance Policy (with COVID Appendum)

## Horwich Parish CE Primary School



Approved by: FGB

Date: Nov-21

Author: DM

Version: 1

Last reviewed on:

Nov-21

Next review due by:

Nov-22

## Horwich Parish C of E Primary School

God with us, lighting the way to love and respect

### Aims

#### Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning; enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets
- fulfil our school attendance target of 97% in line with national target

At Horwich Parish Church of England Primary School we believe that “God is with us lighting the Way” for our pupils. This mission statement reflects our commitment to fostering a love of learning. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

### Expectations

#### We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

#### We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- provide school with 3 contact telephone numbers (one of these must not live in the same household)

### Examples of Authorised Absence

- genuine illness of the pupil
- hospital appointment for the pupil
- medical appointment for a child with a medical care plan
- speech and language appointment
- Emergency doctor and dental appointments
- Illness where a child’s attendance is under 92% should be authorised only with supporting medical evidence from a GP surgery.
- major religious observances
- visits to prospective new schools
- external exams or educational assessments
- Attendance at weddings or funerals of direct family members (1 day )
- Participation in a public performance where a licence has been sought and granted by the Local Authority

## Unauthorised Absence

- Any request for exceptional circumstances where a child's attendance is under 98%
- Routine doctor and dental appointments
- Illness where a child's attendance is under 92% - unless accompanied by medical evidence provided by GP
- shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park
- a birthday treat
- oversleeping
- Traffic issues (unless in the case of a major incident)
- looking after other children / other family member
- appointments for other family members
- Holidays taken in term time

## The school will NOT authorise any absences if a child's attendance is below 90% without evidence eg- medication/text/appointment card from GP

- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

## We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parent/carers after 9am when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received from parents/carers to explain the absence. All 3 contact telephone numbers will be used by the office that have been provided by parents.
- ensure that daily absences and late marks are forwarded to the Head Teacher for Monitoring.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be requested.
- ensure that all staff who are in any doubt about the whereabouts or safety of a child contact the school office and Head Teacher immediately so that steps can be taken to contact the parents.
- ensure that any concerns over the safety of pupils who are not in school are reported to the local authority integrated front door team.
- Include attendance and punctuality figures on the annual report to parents.
- Ensure that absences and punctuality are discussed with parents during parent conferences.
- make enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Monitor whole school attendance % on a ½ termly basis and put steps into place to improve attendance of individuals. Refer cases of persistent absentees to the School Social Worker.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the LA Early Intervention Service and seek and follow advice provided by them.

## Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

We believe that every moment spent in school has an impact on learning and therefore punctuality to school is of high importance. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school doors are open from 8:40 am until 8:50am. Parents are asked to leave the premises as soon as possible to allow gates to be locked at 8.50am and 3.20pm.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Registration takes place at 8:50am and pupils who arrive between 8:50am and 9am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.00am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence 10 or more unauthorised will be subject to prosecution by the local authority in the form of a penalty notice.

- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.05pm
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the school office and is referred to in the Home School Agreement.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

### **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

- During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.
- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are required to provide evidence of all scheduled medical appointments. This may be in the form of a letter, medical card or confirmation of booking text message.
- parents are requested to complete a form giving the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time. These forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded from the website.
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- if a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person or social care.

### **Leave of Absence**

- The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published in advance and leave of absence will not be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.
- holidays during term time will **NOT** be authorised.

The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- in exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a term time holiday providing your child has an attendance record of 98% or above over the previous three terms.
- where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances or a term time holiday an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance.
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and parents will be notified of this.

Unauthorised holidays taken during term time include:

- holidays that are financially more manageable during term time
- holidays taken to coincide with parents leave of absence from their employers
- holidays taken to experience a festival or event

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave if a child is absent from school for a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 school days) during two consecutive half terms.

## **What is an unauthorised absence?**

- Any absence that the school has not given permission for or has not permitted.
- Truancy from school, with or without parents knowledge
- Inappropriately parentally-condoned absence (i.e you know your child is absent from school and you do nothing about it
- Delayed return from a period of leave which has been approved by the school
- Late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

School will encourage parents to improve attendance and punctuality and explain why absences have not been authorised.

Letter will be sent to parents when school has concerns regarding a pupil's punctuality and attendance and will work with parents to ensure no further absences or lateness is accumulated following any warning letters being issued.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance during 2 consecutive half terms or 10 sessions of unauthorised absence has accumulated within an academic year then a Penalty Notice will be issued and posted to parents/carers by the Local Authority.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

£60 per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of poor attendance by your child. This may attract fines up to £1000 and/or a range of disposals such as parenting orders or community sentences depending on individual circumstances.

If poor attendance continues the LA may also consider prosecution under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment.

## **Penalty Notices for Holidays**

In accordance with guidance from Bolton Council and in line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Head teacher can now request a penalty notice for families that take 5 or more days' holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- On occasions when an unauthorised holiday will be taken that will last for 5 days (10 school sessions or more) then the school is not obliged to issue a formal warning letter and a penalty will be automatically requested.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

## **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send appropriate material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **Truancy**

All the staff at School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is unlikely that a primary school aged child will truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action should be taken straight away. If truancy is suspected:

- the Head teacher is notified, who then contacts the parent, either by phone, or by home visiting if possible.
- the Early Intervention Team is informed.

- parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved.

In the event of not being able to talk to the parent:

- the Head teacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend.
- If there are, these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. Class Teachers along with office administration staff will be responsible for monitoring attendance on a daily basis, and office staff will report any daily absences to the Head Teacher. If there is concern about a child's absence, staff will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be monitored and action taken by the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

**This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every 12 months.**

### **COVID APPENDUM**

Absences due to COVID (when a child has a positive PCR test) will continue to be authorised. Other than that all other absences will be treated as before.