

HARRINGTON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



REVIEWED:

July 2019

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

July 2020

Adopted: Pending Governor Approval

Striving for Excellence. Achieving Together.

Striving for excellence. Inspiring to achieve collaboratively through respect, happiness and creativity. We are independent and reflective for continuous improvement.

Harrington Hill is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT:

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our weekly newsletter and on all classroom doors;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying weekly class achievement and announcing it in school newsletters.
- Reward good or improving attendance at individual and class level through class competitions, certificates, attendance medals, extra play and outings/events.

- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school, such as parent meetings, attendance workshops and surgeries, distribution of leaflets etc.

THE LAW RELATING TO ATTENDANCE:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

THE LAW RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, either by phone call or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, essential medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Learning Trust using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Regular illness without evidence (ie GP letter, appointment stamp, prescription, medicine label)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. Contact the school and arrange a meeting to gain the support you may need.

UNDERSTANDING PERSISTENT ABSENTEESM:

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence (PA) mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through regular data analysis carried out by the Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) Attendance Officer allocated to our school, the school Attendance Officer, and the school secretary.

Meetings are offered to parents/carers of PA pupils in order to understand the causes for the child's absences and to enable the school and HLT Attendance Team to offer the appropriate support to improve the child's attendance (referral to an outside agency such as the school nurse or doctor; social services, First Steps etc).

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Hackney Learning Trust School Attendance Officer.

UNDERSTANDING ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- In the event of not receiving information regarding the absence, attempt to contact you (1st & 2nd listed contacts) in the morning through text or phone, leaving messages where possible. If we are unable to make contact on our first attempt, we will try to make contact again shortly after to all other listed contacts. After a third and final attempt to make contact is made, and assuming there is still no response by lunchtime, we will carry out a home visit that afternoon to check that the child and family are ok. Finally, as a last resort, if we are still unable to make any contact with the family at this stage, the police will be contacted and the case will be handed over to the relevant authorities.
- Send a school letter of concern if absences persist throughout a term.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and HLT Attendance Officer if absences continue to persist further.

- Refer the matter to the Hackney Learning Trust Education Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer (SAO) from the Hackney Learning Trust. She/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Learning Trust.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the SAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Hackney Learning Trust.

LATENESS:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:55 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:05 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be sent a school letter of concern. If lates continue, you will be asked to meet with a member of the senior leadership team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. However you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Holidays in term time will not be agreed and will be marked down as an unauthorised absence.

All applications for leave (see appendix 1) must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or any other important times in the school year.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96.5% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

SUMMARY:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1



Harrington Hill Primary School
Harrington Hill
London E5 9EY

Tel 020 8806 7275
Fax 020 8806 3364
admin@harringtonhillhackney.sch.uk

Harrington Hill Nursery School
Tel 020 8806 0855

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

If you consider you have to take a holiday in term time, and that you have exceptional circumstances, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name Tutor Group/Class

Home Address
.....

First day of absence Date of return to school.....

.....
Total number of days missed

Reasons for absence

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this may result in legal action.

Name of Parent/Carer making application _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence)

✂-----

Student Name Tutor Group

AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates:

___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___

UNAUTHORISED: Your request for a leave of absence during term time has not been authorised because:

(NB – if you proceed to take the holiday this will result in a Penalty Notice being issued)

Signed Head Teacher Date ___ / ___ / ___



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EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING SCHOOL TERM TIME

Information prior to requesting permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, which may be granted for **exceptional** circumstances **ONLY**. Before completing the form, **please read these notes carefully**:

Any absence during term time is proven to be very detrimental, as your child misses important lessons, creating 'gaps' in their understanding of key concepts and they find it difficult to catch up, potentially causing a serious impact on their academic development and attainment. Teachers use valuable time helping returning pupils catch up, depriving those who really need them. Children also find it difficult to manage friendships and the class dynamic when they have missed key school events at the beginning or end of term.

1 The *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*, state that you do **not** have the right to take your child out of school for family **holidays** during term-time. The educational needs of your child take priority at all times.

2 The law only allows the school to grant permission for leave in the event of **exceptional** circumstances. Your request may be refused if it is not agreed that the reason for absence is exceptional. So **please do not book any travel tickets** without getting the school permission first.

3 Family weddings, anniversaries, cheaper airline tickets, family reunions and children's birthdays are **not** generally considered to be exceptional circumstances.

4 Visiting a relative who is unwell is also **not** normally a valid reason to disrupt your child's learning – If that relative requires the care and support of adults this should ideally be only while your child remains attending at school.

5 You **must** apply for permission in writing **beforehand**, using this form. Please attach any documentary evidence that you feel will support your request.

6 If you take your child out of school **without** permission, you may be referred to the local authority, who may then prosecute you under the terms of section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or as an alternative,

issue each parent with a Penalty Notice Fine. Penalty Notice Fines are issued at the rate of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days; this rises to £120 if paid within days 21-28; if unpaid after 28 days, then the matter may then be referred to court.

7 If you need to travel at **short notice**, or are **delayed** on your return journey, then you will need to supply copies of all booking and travel documentation to show the dates that bookings were made, the original travel tickets as well as any evidence of rescheduled travel documents. All of this information is required by the school if they are to reconsider.

8 If you have any children on-roll at another school, then permission from that school must also be requested and agreed.

9 As well as the points in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, we take into account exam and SATs dates, your child's attendance and punctuality record, as well as their level of academic achievement or support needed around their learning in school.

10 If your request is *approved* and you leave *earlier* or return *after* the date agreed, the school reserves the right to record the *entire* period as unauthorised absence.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE/STAFF AT LEAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE INTENDED ABSENCE