

Hillside Primary School

Attendance Policy



Hillside Primary School Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Hillside Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with all staff and school governors and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the governing body know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Hillside Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 The office administrators will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Head teachers, and made available to all staff and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing bodies in the Head teachers' Report. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session, using the prescribed codes (see *Appendix 1*).

ii) The registers will be called promptly by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

At Hillside Primary School these times are 8.50am and 1.05pm.

iii) The registers will close no later than 30 minutes after they have been opened. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the

register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness

2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the schools in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the schools as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the schools at a later stage, the register will be amended i.e. an 'I' to denote illness added to the original entry on receipt of an explanatory letter. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the admin managers.

ii) Hillside Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at the school will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the School**.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the schools **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) Where leave has been granted by the schools in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- (b) Where the schools are satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand)
- (d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

(f) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

- In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday because the holiday is cheaper during term time;
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the schools will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff Training

The Head teachers and/or Office Administrator will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Office Administrator will ensure that attendance data is complete and accurate. The Head teachers will report to parents and the governing bodies (see para. 2.2 above). The governors' report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame.

3.3 The schools attendance last year (2016/17) was 95.9%
The schools attendance target for this year (2017/18) is 96%

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Hillside Primary School. Parents are reminded in newsletters and on the information screens about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 First Day Absence

All phone messages regarding sickness or late attendance are recorded in the desk diary. Parents are expected to contact and inform the school of illness on the first day of absence, as set down in the school prospectus.

If no phone call is received by the school by 9 am, the School Secretary or Admin Assistant will contact the parents/carers concerned by telephone. Information received is recorded in the register and the teacher is informed.

4.3 Third Day Absence

The School Admin assistant will ring the parent/carer for an update on the situation.

4.4 Fifth Day Absence

The School Admin assistant will ring the parent/carer for an update on the situation.

4.5 Ten Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Norfolk Pupil Attendance Service. The school will include details of action that they have taken.

4.6 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

When will a Penalty Notice be issued?

Hillside Primary School aims to work with parent/carers to improve pupil attendance. The individual schools are required to submit reports to Norfolk County Council, who may issue Fixed Penalty Notices in the following situations, where unauthorised absence meets the criteria for legal intervention:

Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school

85% attendance or less, with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday or

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence.

4.7 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the school attendance officer.

Regular attendance checks are made by the Educational Welfare Officer and a standard letter is sent from the school to parents of any children whose attendance falls on or below 90%

4.8 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.9 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be reminded that they are late and asked for a reason. The register will be marked L so that any emerging patterns can be quickly monitored.

4.10 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late- after the register has been sent to the office should therefore report to the office. It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.

4.11 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign in and out at the office.

4.12 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Hillside Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

5. Term-time Holidays

5.1 Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement or time of family crisis where travel is needed

Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

5.2 All requests for a leave of absence will be responded to in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

6. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by The Acorn Co-operative Learning Alliance

6.2 Hillside Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

6.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify the school on the first day of absence before 9 am.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Hillside Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

7. Pupils' responsibilities

7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or head teacher.

7.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

8. Governors' responsibilities

8.1 The governing body shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

9. Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with an allocated **School Attendance Officer**.

Link Governor: Wendy Griffiths

Head teacher: Simon Minter

Date: June 2018

Review date: June 2019

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

We recommend that you submit this application prior to booking any holiday

Please note that taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. We would remind you that parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time. Holidays in term time will only be authorised in special/exceptional circumstances. If the school refuses your application and you still take your child out of school, the absences will be treated as unauthorised and recorded as such.

Full Name of Child(ren) _____

Class _____

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total Number of School Days _____

Reason for Application

Signature of Parent _____ Date _____

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not been agreed.

Signature of Head Teacher _____

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil who has an attendance of 85% or less with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a six week period, or 10 consecutive half-day sessions unauthorised absence, will meet the criteria for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If unpaid, a further invoice for £60 per parent per child is issued; both individual invoices would then have to be paid, making a total of £120 in 28 days.

Appendix 3

Authorised Holiday Letter Template

Dear Parents

Re CHILD'S NAME

I have recently received a request for authorisation of absence that you wish to take during the school term. I have considered the reason given as to why this absence should be authorised and I have decided that I am able to grant this request on this occasion due to the very exceptional circumstances.

However, I do need to make you aware that evidence shows that absence from school at the Primary stage of a child's education has a direct impact on their final success at High School – it is very difficult for any child to make up for missed time in school. I must also remind you that the law says that parents and carers do not have the legal right to take their child out of school for any reason in term time. Therefore, I will not be able to authorise any further absences after this one.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Minter
Head Teacher

Appendix 4

Unauthorised Holiday Letter Template

Dear Parents

CHILD'S NAME

I have recently received a request for authorisation of absence that you wish to take during the school term. I have considered the reasons given as to why this absence should be authorised and I am afraid that I am unable to grant this request on this occasion.

I realise that this decision may be disappointing but the guidance given to schools is that leave may only be taken in “exceptional circumstances”. Evidence shows that absence from school at the Primary stage of a child’s education has a direct impact on their final success at high school – it is very difficult for any child to make up for missed time in school.

I must also remind you that the law says that parents and carers do not have the legal right to take their child out of school for any reason in term time, therefore, if you proceed with this leave and take your child out of school, the absences will be treated as unauthorised and recorded as “G” on your child’s attendance record.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Minter
Head Teacher

Appendix 5

Unauthorised Holiday (4.5+) Letter Template

Dear Parents

CHILD'S NAME

I have recently received a request for authorisation of absence that you wish to take during the school term. I have considered the reasons given as to why this absence should be authorised and I am afraid that I am unable to grant this request on this occasion.

I realise that this decision may be disappointing but the guidance given to schools is that leave may only be taken in “exceptional circumstances”. Evidence shows that absence from school at the Primary stage of a child’s education has a direct impact on their final success at high school – it is very difficult for any child to make up for missed time in school.

I must also remind you that the law says that parents and carers do not have the legal right to take their child out of school for any reason in term time, therefore if you proceed with this leave, which will mean your child will have an unauthorised absence of 15% or more in a six week period, we will be obliged to refer this to the Local Authority for them to consider action.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Minter
Head Teacher



HILLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lords Lane, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth,
Norfolk NR31 8PA

Head Teacher : Mr S Minter M.Ed, B.Ed, B.Phil, NPQH

Tel: 01493 661399 Fax: 01493 443153

Email: head@hillside.norfolk.sch.uk

Dear Parent/Carer,

July 2017

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Hillside Primary School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions¹ of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at Hillside Primary School who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

 **Norfolk County Council** Fixed Penalty Notice Referral Form
Attendance Team - confidential

Please ensure this referral is submitted to the Local Authority within 10 working days of absence meeting the criteria.

Child's details	Click here to enter pupil's full name	
DOB: enter date of birth	Male/female	Year group
Address:	Click here to enter address	
Postcode:	Click here to enter postcode	
School:	Click here to enter school name	
Ethnicity:	Click here to enter ethnicity	
School age siblings and name of school:	Click here to enter sibling/s name/s Click here to enter sibling/s school	
Parent's details:		
Parent 1	Click here to enter parent 1 full name	
Date of birth:	Click here to enter parent 1 date of birth	
Address(if different to above):	Click here to enter parent 1 address	
Telephone number:	Click here to enter telephone number	
Home language of parent:	Click here to enter home language	
Parent 2	Click here to enter parent 2 full name	
Date of birth:	Click here to enter parent 2 date of birth	
Address(if different to above):	Click here to enter parent 2 address	
Telephone number:	Click here to enter telephone number	
Home language of parent:	Click here to enter home language	
Please add any additional parent details with information as detailed above:		
Click here to enter additional parent details		
Reason for referral:		Please tick
1. 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 8 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday (i.e. 9 sessions or more)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance period: This will vary depending on the reason for referral, please provide dates and attendance data accordingly. Referrals can only be accepted if this section is fully completed.		
Click here to enter a date. to Click here to enter a date.		
	Number of sessions	%
Total number of sessions available		
Attendance		
Authorised absence		
Unauthorised absence		
Please attach		

Document owner: Care Family
INET number: [email]

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Version number: 1
Date: Aug 2016
created/revised:

 **Norfolk County Council** Fixed Penalty Notice Referral Form
Attendance Team - confidential

<input type="checkbox"/> Child's full attendance record including details of reasons for absences
<input type="checkbox"/> Whole school warning letter (dated)
<input type="checkbox"/> Parental request for leave (if made)
<input type="checkbox"/> School reply to request for leave of absence (as applicable)
1. What interventions have already been undertaken by your school to address attendance issues: Click here to enter text.
2. If you are applying for an FPN due to 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period, please specify why this is the most appropriate intervention to improve attendance: Click here to enter text.
3. Has pupil been previously referred to the Attendance Team? Please give details of interventions: Click here to enter text.
4. If you are applying for a repeat FPN within a 12 month calendar period, please specify reasons as to why it is appropriate to repeat an intervention that has not been previously successful in improving attendance: Click here to enter text.
I agree to support the full process of Fixed Penalty Notice, including providing witness statements and S566s if cases proceed to prosecution and Headteacher is in agreement where referral is completed by a member of staff other than Headteacher. I can confirm that our school attendance policy clearly lays out the expectations for pupil attendance and what regular attendance means.
Referred by: Click here to enter name Role: Click here to enter role Signature: Date referred: Click here to enter referral date.
We no longer accept postal referrals. Please email referral form and supporting evidence to: cscourt@norfolk.gov.uk
If you have any queries about the FPN process, please discuss with your allocated ASE0.

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