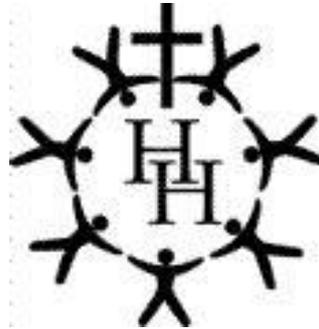


# **Hanging Heaton CE (VC) J&I School**



# **Attendance Policy**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 School regards regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The expectation at Hanging Heaton CE (VC) J&I School is that children should be attending 100% of the time, unless absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The Government expects schools to ensure that all pupils regularly attend school.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

## 1.2 WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the **parents'/carers' responsibility** and if they permit absence from school without good reason they create an offence in law which may result in prosecution.

## 2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE** and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, and all members of school staff.

**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give parents details on attendance and punctuality terms.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.

## 3.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

3.1 Every half day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Leave of absence (formerly known as term time holiday.)

### **3.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **15% (10% from September 2015)** or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carer's will be informed of this immediately.

### **4.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

#### **4.1 If a child is absent parents/carers must:**

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence by phone or e mail providing a reason for the absence;

#### **4.2 If a child is absent school will:**

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them. Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Worker and/or Head teacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service if attendance falls below 85% **(below 90% from September 2015)**.

### **TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

- **It is the responsibility of the parents and carers to inform the school of change of phone number.**

### **5.0 LATENESS**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a 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; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be recorded as late.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Attendance Worker/Learning Mentor or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

## **6.0 LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORMERLY “HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME”**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Revised guidance from the DfE makes it clear that holidays in term time should only be granted in **exceptional circumstances. This is always at the discretion of the Headteacher.**

We **DO NOT** consider the following as **exceptional circumstances**; these are not however an exhaustive list:

- **Parent/s work/holiday rota**
- **A family holiday at a lower cost**
- **Parent/s wedding of a child at the school as this can be arranged during school holidays**
- **Booked by a member of the extended family without your knowledge**
- **Family reunions or gatherings**

In all cases authorisation must be obtained from your child's Headteacher prior to making arrangements. Failure to do so may mean a 'Penalty Notice' is issued. Currently this is £60 per parent and £60 per child; this would mean for one parent and one child this would be £60, one parent and two children £120 and for two parents and two children £240.

If the penalty is not paid within 21 days (from September) then the amount increases to £120 per parent/child

**Non-payment of a penalty notice should the case go to court may result in a fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months imprisonment.**

**Taking unauthorised absence may result in a child losing their school place and not being re-admitted should the space be taken in the meantime.**

**Repeat unauthorised absence may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.**

If a parent takes an unauthorised leave of absence without request, then a penalty notice will be issued.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time must complete the **Leave of Absence Request Form** and return to the Head teacher **before** booking the holiday. The form is available from the school office.

## **7.0 ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/She 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 Local Authority.

## **8.0 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 regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as a high a level of attendance as possible.