

HAMPTON LAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL: ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

- 1.1 Hampton Lakes is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises that 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 have optimum life chances enabling them to achieve well and enter their next phase of education successfully: high attainment and strong progress depend on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community - children, parents and carers, teaching, support staff and governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence. Staff will work to provide an environment in which all children are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day.
- 1.3 All absence affects that pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. We will also promote and support punctuality to lessons.
- 1.4 Hampton Lakes is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all children. A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. **Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.**

2. Legal and National Context

The following documentation has been used to inform this policy:

The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011;

School Attendance (Guidance) November 2016;

Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016;

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;

The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 & 2013,

Children Act 1989 & 2004;

Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance September 2016;

Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance (September 2018);

Regional Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols & early Help Pathways;

Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance.

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- 2.1 *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’*
- 2.2 Absence from school is a safeguarding concern. A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. *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. The welfare of the child is always paramount.*
- 2.3 Hampton Lakes has a Service Level Agreement with the LA Attendance Service and are able to escalate concerns to this service for further support and/or legal action.
- 2.4 Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Heads of School may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Hampton Lakes upholds these regulations, and applications for holiday or leave during term time will not be authorised. To avoid difficulty or disappointment, parents are asked to refrain from such requests.
- 2.5 Amendments have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2013. The amendments described below came into force on 1st September 2013
- Penalty notices (fines) may be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Hampton Lakes adheres to the LA Code of Conduct and Section 23 of the AntiSocial Behaviour Act 2003 in the use of Penalty Notices for unauthorised single periods of absence and persistent absence.
- 2.6 Hampton Lakes has a duty to work together with parents/carers and other agencies to prevent a prosecution being necessary, however if the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, academies will be required to collate evidence of non-attendance and report the information to the LA. The LA will then fulfil their statutory duty of prosecution under Section 444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

3 Implementation

Hampton Lakes will:

- Remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children’s regular, uninterrupted school attendance and punctuality
- Actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term-time and ensure that school advice with regard to term-time holidays is clearly stated on the school website and is regularly communicated to parents
- Unequivocally remind parents that they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted and that all leave is granted at the discretion of the Head of School (or those authorised to exercise discretion on their behalf)

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- Advise parents that absence that is unauthorised or an attendance that is 90% or less could result in parenting contracts, or legal enforcement including Penalty Notices, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution. In these circumstances, guidance will be obtained from the LA Attendance Service.
- Inform the Local Authority of any child who is going to be deleted from the register where they are to be home educated, have ceased to attend the school, have a medical condition where the school medical officer certifies they will be unfit for school, are in custody or are permanently excluded
- Inform the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend regularly and is missing for 10 days or more 'a child missing from education'
- Monitor patterns of attendance carefully, notifying parents at the earliest opportunity, where attendance is beginning to raise a concern
- Enable parents to monitor their child's attendance via the parent portal, MCAS
- Provide attendance data on school reports
- Report on attendance to Governors.
- Pass on attendance data at key transition times, as required

4 Understanding types of absence

- 4.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- 4.2 **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.
- 4.3 **Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been authorised. This includes:
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
 - truancy before and 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 not authorised as exceptional circumstances
- 4.4 Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child as soon as possible.

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5 Persistent Absence (PA)

- 5.1 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we will seek full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.
- 5.2 Absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and parents are informed of this immediately.
- 5.3 PA cases may be referred to our Link Peterborough City Council Attendance Officer.
- 5.4 PA pupils are tracked, monitored and supported through our pastoral system. Additional support may be obtained via a single referral or an Early Help Assessment

6 Lateness

- 6.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children missing the start of the day will miss lessons and will not spend time with their class teacher working on key skills and collecting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.
- 6.2 The management of lateness:
Any child arriving after the register closes without a verified reason will be marked as 'unauthorised late' and coded as 'U', acknowledging the child is in school. A 'U code' constitutes an unauthorised absence due to missing the legal registration period; legal action may be taken for continued U code absences.
- 6.3 Parents of a child with a persistent late record will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem. Parents are encouraged to approach the school, at any time, if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

7 Leave of Absence

- 7.1 Taking leave of absence will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence; we expect parents to support us by not taking children away in school time.
- 7.2 There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday.
- 7.3 All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence.
- 7.4 Absences may only be **authorised in exceptional circumstances**.
- 7.5 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may lead to sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

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8. Promoting Attendance

Hampton Lakes Primary School uses opportunities as they arise to remind parents and children of the importance of attendance, for instance through parent information evenings, assemblies, emails and letters. Attendance and punctuality are also celebrated through assemblies, and awards.

All staff have a responsibility to act as role models in terms of their own punctuality and attendance. In addition the following personnel have a key role in supporting good attendance.

8.1 Parents should:

- ensure that their child's leave for school on time every day
- provide a written explanation for their child's absences from school (this includes medical evidence if requested)
- endeavour not to take children out of school in term time
- notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance, and
- if no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school each morning the child is absent

8.2. Children should:

- arrive punctually every morning and every afternoon
- make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences
- sign in if they are late arriving for school
- sign out if they leaving school at any point before the end of the day
- tell Student Services or their class teacher if they are having any problems attending school

8.3 The Head of School will:

- oversee administration of the Register system;
- streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures;
- keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised
- send letters when attendance becomes a concern or when there is an improvement in attendance
- liaise with the LA Attendance Officer regarding any poor attendance, arrange and attend meetings, where appropriate
- support the work of the Class teacher by:
 - providing regular attendance information
 - contacting parents on first day of absence
 - monitoring attendance and punctuality
 - alerting Leaders when concerns arise
 - monitoring the accuracy of record keeping
 - keeping Leaders informed of attendance issues
 - keeping Leaders informed of inaccurate marking of registers
 - monitoring applications for leave.
- give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events
- monitor attendance targets and record keeping
- implement system of rewards and sanctions, including giving praise to those who arrive on time

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- meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified
- meet regularly with the Attendance Officer, and LA personnel, where appropriate
- ensure work is provided for excluded children and long-term absentees
- look for patterns of absence and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes
- lead on strategies to improve attendance of pupils who are identified as being a concern through meetings with pupils and parents
- ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school due to short-term illness are provided with work to complete at home as appropriate
- work with appropriate internal senior staff and external agencies with regard to providing packages of support for children whose attendance is causing concern. This could include attendance reports, regular meetings and re-integration meetings
- support children with medical needs in accordance with relevant LA medical needs guidance
- Maintain oversight of whole school attendance including data relating to persistent absenteeism

8.5 Class Teachers will:

- maintain an accurate class register through the Management Information System, following internal procedures if a pupil is missing
- praise pupils for their punctuality to school
- alert the Head of School if there are concerns over pupil absence.

9.0 The Local Authority Attendance Officer

9.1 Parents/carers 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 from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service (in accordance with the Service Level Agreement). S/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 absence persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

9.2 Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance Officer 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 Peterborough City Council Attendance Service

<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/attendance/>

9.0 Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of two penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);

