

HEATHCOTE

Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy was adapted by Headteacher Lara Jeffries and based upon Warwickshire County Council's model. It will be presented in draft version to the full staff compliment for discussion and revision. The final version will be presented to Governors for consideration, approval and adoption.



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Attendance Policy

1 As a school we aim to:

- Increase the attendance rate and maintain a level above 97% or higher (top quartile) and reduce incidences of lateness
 - Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and non-lateness
- Positively reward good attendance and punctuality in school
- Actively discourage lateness, poor attendance and any holidays in term time

2 Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

3 Parents should support their children and the school by:

- Telephoning school on the first morning of all absences by 8.30am with the reason for the absence
- Arranging dentist and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a signed and dated note (or completing the 'school absence slip') explaining the reason for absence on a child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping the school updated by telephone each day if a child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls not received by 8.30am
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus.
- Publish our attendance rate in the school prospectus and newsletters
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality through certificates
- Publish your child's attendance rate as part of her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or lateness
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and track those pupils whose attendance falls below 95%
- If attendance falls below 95% it will be classed as persistent absence and a referral may be made to the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Services (ACE), who review and support on attendance matters

HEATHCOTE

Primary School

4 Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, a family bereavement or religious observance. We realise that there are occasions when there might be a particular problem that might cause a child to be absent.

5 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair-cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Any unauthorised Absences that occur are reported to Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Services (ACE) who may consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences. The Headteacher may choose not to authorise absence where reasons given are unsatisfactory or there is doubt over the reasons given. The School Attendance Officer continually monitors levels of attendance and lateness. Any pupils with below 95% attendance will be monitored by Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service (ACE). Warwickshire County Council’s Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service (ACE) carry out regular checks on pupil attendance and lateness.

6 Punctuality

- Children are permitted on site at 8.30am. Morning registration starts at 8.55 am, the doors open at 8.45
- It is very important that children are on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If a child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DFE guidance.
- All late marks, before and after registers close, are monitored on a weekly basis and letters are sent to inform parents when their child has been late. If punctuality continues to be an issue parents are then invited in to discuss the situation with the schools Attendance Officer and a Casework Officer from the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service.

HEATHCOTE

Primary School

- Children who remain uncollected at the end of the school day time will wait at the office if no message has been received. The school reserves the right to charge for childcare after the end of the day at the rate of £25 per hour or part of.

7 Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- ← Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- ← Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- ← Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- ← The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- ← Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- ← Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- ← All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- ← The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- ← If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996. Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Headteacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress

HEATHCOTE

Primary School

- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

The regulations do not state how or what form a request for Leave of Absence must be received, however we strongly encourage parents to complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence for a school pupil in term time in exceptional circumstances only' form (see appendix b). If a verbal request is made the school will keep accurate notes of any conversations with parents including detail of the exceptional circumstances suggested, along with dates and time of those conversations and what was discussed. The school will respond to all requests using only the documents provided by the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service (ACE).

8 Leavers

If a child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to their secondary school, parents must:

- Give the school full information about their plans, including date of move, new address, new school and start date when known.
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- Inform the new school of the child's previous school so that the new school can easily contact us and records can be transferred. A 'leavers form' must be completed.

9 Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and parents have not given us the above information, and the school cannot contact parents, a child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child.

10 Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DCSF and the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

Appendix A – Attendance / Absence process

Appendix B – Leave of Absence request form example

Appendix C – Example letter