Hampton Infant School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Version	Date	Comments
1	2010	
2	2013	Addition - Punctuality
3	2015	Updated Attendance figures
4	Jan 2016	Updated Attendance figures
5	April 2016	To include Child Performance Licence
6	March 2017	Updated Attendance figures
7	Nov 2017	Updated to include CME and Summer attendance figures
8	July 2019	Updated to include attendance figures and fixed penalty notice
9	Jan 2022	Updated Covid-19 advice and removed stats
10	Nov 22	Updated Covid guidance and attendance letters home

‘Be the best you can be!’

Regular attendance and good punctuality at school are not only legal requirements but are essential for children to access a broad and balanced curriculum and to fulfil their educational potential. It is our policy at Hampton Infant School to work with the Local Authority to ensure our attendance rates are high and continue to improve.

Attendance is recorded by means of class registers which are called twice per day, once at the beginning of the morning session at 9.00 am and again at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1.10 pm.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- To ensure that all stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate, up to date records and have robust and rigorous systems for analysing attendance
- Identify causes for low attendance / punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them
- To work with other agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them

Absence has a major impact on a child’s learning. Parents/carers are expected not to arrange family holidays during term time and any request for absence should be made in writing in advance to the Head of School. It is at the Head of School’s discretion whether any absence is authorised. Absence for other reasons will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Our school is regularly monitored by the Educational Welfare Officer who identifies families where attendance is below 90% and takes action when appropriate. HISN identifies ‘good’ attendance as being 95% or higher.

Legal Framework

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise
- The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of Absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance

CELEBRATE ATTENDANCE

We celebrate the class with the highest attendance percentage each half term and they are mentioned in the Newsletter.

REPORTING ABSENCE

It is the parent/carer’s responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child’s absence by 9.30 am on the first day of absence. This may be by a personal visit, telephone call (020 8979 1815) or e-mail (office.hisn@hpp.school).

The school will contact the parent/carer (usually by phone) during the course of the morning if notification of absence has not been received by 9.30am. This, however, does not negate

the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of the reason for absence on that day.

These records are monitored each half-term and actions taken by the Educational Welfare Officer. It is a legal duty for all children of compulsory age to attend school every day and on time throughout the school year.

If a child is likely to be absent for longer periods of time, greater than 3 days, then the school may request that the parent provide medical evidence from a doctor / GP. Medical evidence may also be requested if a child's overall absence is less than 90% and further periods of illness occur.

If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If the child does not get any better during the day, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.

If a child has vomited or has diarrhoea then parents should keep them off school for 48 hours from the last period of sickness to ensure that they recover.

For emergency evacuation purposes all children leaving and returning to school during the school day must report to the school office and sign out on the school's Inventry system.

TERM TIME ABSENCE REQUESTS

In line with the school's attendance policy, school based or educational visits may be authorised following a written request.

TYPES OF ABSENCE

There are two types of absence:-

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence may be authorised by the school providing it falls into the categories below. Where possible, medical or written evidence may be requested.

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.

The following should be notified in advance:-

- Sporting event / competitions (documentation of event including place and timings)
- Medical/dental appointments (appointment note required)
- Educational/music examination (email or letter from exam board)
- Visit to other professional e.g. Educational Psychologist/Social Worker (appointment note required)
- Religious observance
- Funeral day for immediate family
- Illness (not medical or dental)
- Additional therapy/counselling (appointment note required)
- Attending the wedding of immediate family member

NB: If overall attendance falls below 90% due to illness, medical or dental this may necessitate a discussion with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) which may in turn result in prosecution.

Medical evidence will then be required for any periods of absence whilst attendance remains under 90%. Weekly letters may be sent updating you on your child's current attendance figure.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

This occurs when either:

- a request does not fit into the authorised absence criteria
- private tuition is arranged within the school day
- extra time off is taken adjacent to the time of a school entrance exam e.g if the exam is in the morning and the child is off for the afternoon
- a parent/carer has not informed the school of the reason for the absence
- holidays
- attendance is under 90% and no medical evidence is received

Persistent occurrences will be notified to the appropriate agency i.e Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) which could lead to fines of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Regular meetings are held with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and school governors to discuss attendance.

Fixed Penalty Notices

As of January 1st 2020, the school will be using Fixed Penalty Notices for specific attendance related cases. Please see appendix 1 for details.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Requests for absence that do not fit into the Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence criteria will only be sanctioned in exceptional circumstances, at the Head of School's discretion and upon receipt of a written request. However, parents/carers must be aware that this will impact on your child's attendance figures and could lead to EWO involvement.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

We recognise that full attendance at school is important to the wellbeing of all our pupils and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely and we work in partnership with AfC when patterns of absence give rise to concern. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The school operates in accordance with statutory guidance 'Children Missing Education' (DfE 2016) Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance

PUNCTUALITY

Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child is in the playground by 8:55am so that they are in time for morning registration at 9am.

All children arriving after 8:55 must report to the school office where their lateness will be recorded. If a child has not arrived before 9:30 when registers close, a 'U' code is registered (unauthorised absence).

Persistent lateness or irregular attendance will result in one or more of the following:-

- Letter, telephone call or meeting with parent/carer to discuss lateness/attendance pattern
- Notification to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) or other services

Children in entertainment

A child under school leaving age who is taking part in a performance (e.g. TV, Film, Modelling work) requires a 'Child Performance Licence' to be issued by the Local Authority. In cases when a performance occurs during the school day. The parents should write to the school to request permission for their child to be absent ensuring that they give as much notice as possible. The school is under no obligation to authorise absence for the purpose of a child taking part in a performance; this is the Head of School's discretion. The Local Authority will not issue a 'Child Performance Licence' for a child if the school has not agreed to the absence. For each performance, a separate request will need to be made.

Appendix 1

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

Regular and punctual attendance at school, or alternative provision, is a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities. Since 2004, Local Authority officers (Education Welfare Officers or EWO), Headteachers (or Deputy/Assistant Headteachers) and the Police have had the power to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absences. Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child's attendance at the school where they are a registered pupil and the absence is not authorised by the school. A fixed penalty notice (FPN) can also be issued if a parent or carer fails to ensure their child is not present in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion. Fixed penalty notices and other sanctions will be used only where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. Hampton Primary Partnership reserve the right to issue FPNs according to the 'Penalty Notices Practice Guidance for Schools' issued by AfC in 2014.

For Achieving for Children's 'FPN Code of Conduct for Schools' please look here:
https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/2286/fixed_penalty_notice

There are two levels of fixed penalty notices which will be issued by the local authority to **each parent/carer for each child** absent from school:

- £60 fine if paid within 21 days
- £120 fine if paid later than 21, but within 28 days

FPNs may be considered appropriate when input from the EWS has failed to affect a return to school and in the following specific circumstances.

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any 5 week period;
- Parentally condoned absence;
- Unauthorised term time leave (includes holidays): any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of more than 10 sessions, (not authorised by the school under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a penalty notice;
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays;

● Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 occasions in any 5 week period (even where attendance for the whole academic year is above 90%).

At Hampton Primary Partnership we define '**good attendance'** as a pupil having an absence percentage of less than 5%.

Who receives a Fixed Penalty Notice?

FPNs are issued to any parent whether married or not, to each parent/carer for each child. Any parent who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act 1989 for a child.

The process within school

All parents and carers will be made aware, through the Attendance policy, that FPN are a possible intervention used when attendance issues arise. All correspondence regarding FPN will be delivered by post.

Stage 1 – A written warning letter will be sent to the parent or carer outlining the attendance concern and the possible issuing of a fixed penalty notice. The formal warning sets a period of 15 school days in which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence. At this stage the Education Welfare office will be informed of the absence and its concern. The letter also provides parents an opportunity to respond to the concern.

Stage 2 –A fixed penalty notice will be issued by the **Educational Welfare Officer** by post after the 15 days if absence continues to be unauthorised and the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

What if I don't pay?

Should a parent not pay the notice within 28 days, the local authority will prosecute for the offence to which the fixed penalty notice relates rather than for non-payment of the fixed penalty notice.

The disposals available to the courts will generally include, for example, a fine of up to £1,000 or a conditional discharge. You may wish to seek your own independent legal advice in respect of this.

Can I appeal against a fixed penalty notice?

There is no right of appeal against the fixed penalty notice, however if you believe it to have been wrongly issued, you should contact the school immediately. Once issued, the fixed penalty notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances.

• Proof has been established that the fixed penalty notice was issued to the wrong person.

• The fixed penalty notice did not conform to the terms of the code of conduct.

• The fixed penalty notice contains a material error.

Should the fixed penalty notice not be withdrawn and you do not pay, you may be prosecuted under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A court will consider the evidence and determine the appropriate punishment.

This process will come into force as of 1st January 2020

Written by the Executive Leadership Team