

HADLEIGH INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy 2019-2020

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Version History Log for this document

Version	Date Published	Details of key changes from previous version
2		Wording in Paragraph 1 on page 3. Wording in Paragraph 1 on page 6. Changed all references of Missing Education and Child Employment Service to Attendance Compliance Team.
1	June 2018	New policy was created which supersedes all previous versions.

Policy Overview

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 school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Introduction and Background

Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance both play an essential role in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the *Head Teacher (Mr. S. Proctor)*, not the parent, who can authorise the absences.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence can have a serious affect their academic outcomes and personal development. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law, persistent absences from school may result in prosecution.

This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Outlining the school's rewards system to promote good or better attendance.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers termly on their child's attendance.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or better attendance.
- Work together to improve the attendance of children.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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 Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. 5 days unauthorised absence will lead to a penalty notice being triggered by the Local Authority.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the attendance register.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Celebrating their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time without leave
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

School Attendance and the Law

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Head Teacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Head Teacher or his designates (Mrs. K. Strickland/Miss. C. Ryan) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school (this can be found in APPENDIX A). Where a parent removes a child (for ten sessions within a ten week period) when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school. During the month of September, the threshold for absences is reduced to 6 sessions.

At Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are “rare, significant, unavoidable and short”. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

We will not agree leave during term time:

- At any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- During assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at the earliest opportunity. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse, Local Authority Officers or Child and Family Support Worker.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, we will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Local Attendance Adviser, Home School Liaison Worker, Local Authority, Family Solutions or Social Care. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must adhere to the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before *9.00 am*. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or call into

school personally and speak to the office staff. Alternatively, you can email the school directly on absences@hadleigh-inf.essex.sch.uk.

- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below **95%**.
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our School Pastoral Officer and/or Head Teacher, if your child's attendance is consistently under **95%**.
- Consider whether the School Welfare Officer and/or Child and Family Support Worker should become involved in the process, if absences persist.

Local Authority Involvement

Parents 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 resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. Local Authority Officers work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see APPENDIX B for the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

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, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45 am** when children can begin to come into school. Registers are taken at **8.55 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. Children arriving after **8.55 am** are required to come in to school via the school office accompanied by a parent or carer. The parent/carers will complete one of our 'Late Record Slips' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after 8:55am and before 9:30 am they will receive a late mark (L) in the register. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Pastoral Officer and/or Head Teacher. This meeting is designed to support the family in ensuring that the child arrives at school, on time, everyday. If the number of lateness marks does not improve, you may be invited to meet with the School Welfare Officer and/or Child and Family Support Worker. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School, other than at the end of year 2, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils.

Rewarding good or better attendance

Weekly class reward

Each classes' attendance is recorded in the weekly newsletter. The class that has the best attendance receives 'Hadleigh the Bear' as well as an extra 10 minute fun activity in the following week.

Attendance HERO award

Each week an attendance HERO is chosen from each class. To be entered into the draw the child must have been present everyday of the week. The winner has their name recorded in the newsletter and receives a small pocket toy. This reward is designed to give individuals a chance of winning an attendance prize even if their overall class attendance is low.

Half termly certificates

Each half term any child, whose attendance is above 96%, receives a silver certificate. Any child that has recorded 100% attendance during the half term receives a gold certificate. The name of every child that receives a gold or silver half termly certificate is entered into the Half Termly attendance award. Two children are picked at random who win family oriented activity prizes such as a voucher for the cinema.

These rewards were designed in conjunction with staff, children and parents and are reviewed annually.

APPENDIX A

FOR PUPILS AGED 5 AND ABOVE

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child regularly attends school. ***This responsibly is also set out in the Home-School Agreement, the school's rules and the school's attendance policy (all of these documents are available on the school's website and copies are available to collect from the school's main office).*** Holidays should be taken during the school holiday period. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days. In order for our children to fully utilise their years in education, we believe it is vital that every message they receive reinforces the importance of school. Holidays in term time interrupt continuity of teaching and learning, disrupt the educational progress of individual children and create disruption to classes.

The school and its Governors fully understand that on occasions ***exceptional circumstances*** may arise that require children to miss school sessions. If the request is deemed to be exceptional circumstances, leave will be authorised. It is down to the school and Mr Proctor.

Please complete and return this form if you want to ask Mr Proctor to authorise a leave of absence during term time. You must ask well in advance and you are strongly advised to request leave of absence before you confirm your holiday arrangements. Under no circumstances will absences for family holidays in term time be authorised after they have happened.

If you take your child out of school without the approval of the school for a period of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 whole days) within a 10 week period, you will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance. This period is reduced to 6 sessions (equivalent to 3 whole days) during the month of September. ***Each parent will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent.*** The Penalty Notice is for £60 (per parent for each child who is recorded as absent) if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served with a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

If the absence exceeds 20 days, your child's name will be removed from the school roll and you will have to reapply for a place upon your return.

At Hadleigh Infants and Nursery School, we fully recognise the importance of family holidays and activities, but believe these opportunities must be provided as well as school, not instead of. These trips and activities should be arranged during the 13 weeks holiday that your child has from school.

APPLICATION FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY LEAVE FROM SCHOOL



**Annual Holiday is classed as any one period of between
1 to 10 days in each academic year**

Name of Child(ren):	
D.O.B:	
Class:	
Siblings (including other schools):	

Date of First Day of Absence:

Date of Return:

Number of Days Requested off school:

Reason for leave –

Signed :

Dated:

***Your application will be considered by the Head Teacher in accordance with the school's policy on absences.
A reply will be returned to you within 5 working days which will outline the school's stance on your application.***

APPENDIX B

ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT

PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a code of conduct.

The Essex code has been agreed following consultation with:

- Essex Local Authority
- Representatives from Governing Bodies and Head Teachers of Essex Schools
- Essex Police Service

in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007, Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) section 23 subsection (1) and Sections 103 to 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Anyone issuing a penalty notice to a parent* of a child of statutory school age on roll at an Essex school, must do so within the terms of this code.

Legislation

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 inserts into the Education Act 1996 Section 444A and Section 444B enabling authorised personnel to issue penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age 'fails to attend regularly' at the school where he is a registered pupil, his parent is guilty of an offence. On the 6th April 2017, in the case of *Isle of Wight Council v Platt* the Supreme Court judgement ruled that the word 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not present during school hours in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusions. Section 105 of the Act enables a penalty notice to be issued under Section 103.

Authorisation to issue penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority (LA). It has been agreed that the Essex LA, will usually issue penalty notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing penalty notices.

Head Teachers (assistant Head Teachers authorised by the Head Teacher) and police, and persons accredited by the police are all able to issue the notices under the Act, although there is no requirement for them to do so. In Essex it has been agreed that the Police will not issue penalty notices to parents of truants, but persons accredited by them may do so. Schools will not generally issue penalty notices but where a Head Teacher (or their designated assistants) or accredited person decides that a penalty notice is to be served, they must contact Attendance Compliance to ascertain if there is any current legal action. A response will be sent within 24 hours. This will avoid a penalty notice being issued when the Local Authority is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age which finishes in year 11.

Essex partners have agreed to use penalty notices for the following circumstances:

Penalty notices for irregular school attendance /leave of absence **

Penalty notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous ten school weeks. This includes unauthorised late arrivals, coded U, which count as unauthorised absence for the whole session.

In addition to the above criteria, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, penalty notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised leave of absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for truancy/unauthorised absence

Discretion will be used to enable up to two penalty notices to be issued to each parent for each child within a twelve month period. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Local Authority legal intervention process will be used.

Pupil identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep

School attendance and exclusion sweeps take place in Essex and children stopped are often with parents condoning the absence.

If the Headteacher does not authorise the absence of a pupil stopped by a Local Authority Investigation Officer and Police Officer on a sweep and there has been at least 10 unauthorised absences for that pupil during the preceding 10 schools weeks, school will issue a warning letter to the parent within 14 days. If there are any further absences that are not authorised by the head teacher, during the next 6 schools weeks the school will complete a request, signed by the Headteacher (or their designated deputy), for issue of a penalty notice and send to the Attendance Compliance Team. The Attendance Compliance Team may then issue a penalty notice.

Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for pupils identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep.

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for pupils identified on a school attendance and exclusion sweep. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team legal intervention process will be used.

Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)

The excluding school must have issued notice to the parent informing them of their duty and warning that a penalty notice could be issued.

Where there is more than one person liable for the offence, a separate notice may be issued to each person.

Where a pupil is present in a public place in the first five days of a fixed period exclusion the Essex Local Authority would issue a penalty notice if the school is in their area. Where the child has been permanently excluded, it would be the authority where the child resides.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for exclusion

Essex will issue a maximum of 5 penalty notices per parent for each child during a 12 month period.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for unauthorised leave of absence. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team legal intervention process will be used.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice (service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post).

All penalties are paid to the LA and revenue generated is retained to administer the system and contribute towards S444 prosecutions.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period Essex Attendance Compliance Team will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1).

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

A penalty notice can be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Where it ought not to have been issued i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct or where the evidence does not support the issuing of a penalty notice.
- The notice contains material errors.
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person or the parent can prove it was delivered to the wrong address.

Co-ordination between the LOCAL AUTHORITY and its local partners

The Attendance Compliance Team and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct regularly.

** All those defined as a parent under Section 576 Education Act 1996 are parents for the purpose of these provisions. This means that all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. Parent means each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to parent in the singular.*

As with prosecutions under Section 444 Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

**** truancy/unauthorised absence is absence from school without permission or good reason and the absence is unauthorised by the school.**

APPENDIX C



Child's name:

Class:

Current address:

Proposed date of leaving current school:

If applicable New home address:

Name of new school:

Address of new school:

Proposed date for starting new school:

Signed: _____

Date: _____