



# Haytor View Community Primary School & Nursery

## Attendance Policy 2024 (reviewed FGB 05.24)

*Learning together - enjoying success - aiming high - celebrating difference – enriching community*

### **Rationale**

Haytor View Community Primary School is committed to providing a full and quality educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. We recognise our responsibilities within Keeping Children Safe in Education, in supporting the safeguarding of children through ensuring regular school attendance. Any difficulties that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and we aim to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, which can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are difficulties which affect a pupil's attendance we will strive to work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

It is the responsibility of the whole school community to promote regular attendance at school.

This policy applies to children all children on the school roll, both those attending full and part time.

### **Objectives**

- To support children and parents/carers in understanding the importance of school attendance;
- To encourage full attendance and punctuality of all children on roll;
- Support parents & carers to reduce absenteeism and address Persistent Absence;
- Liaise directly with children and their families to support effective communication to address issues of attendance;
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to target any areas of concern;
- To minimise the occurrence of absenteeism;
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance;
- To reward 100% attendance;
- To acknowledge and reward improvement in attendance of individuals;
- To ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to attendance and the monitoring of;
- To work with the appropriate members of the school, the education welfare service and appropriate agencies in developing and maintaining a school attendance policy;
- To encourage parents to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance;
- Implement the legislative requirements regarding the employment of children. This may include visiting employers and families where it is alleged that the child is working illegally;
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children of compulsory school age.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act (1996)
- The Education Act (2002)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **Statutory Duty of Parents**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

### **Statutory Duty of Schools**

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

### **Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. Attendance will be an important feature of the school Improvement Plan. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place.

### **Strategic Lead:**

Scott Hampton – Head Teacher is the lead for Attendance, parents / carers can request to speak with him in order to discuss attendance by making contact with the school office.

### **Day to Day Arrangements:**

Parents / carers can speak with the school's admin team or their child's class teacher regarding their child's attendance, absence or any general information they wish to review.

### **REQUESTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND INFORMING SCHOOL OF UNEXPECTED ABSENCE**

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us of a pupil absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.

Parents are expected to inform us of their child's absence before 9.00am on each day of absence providing the reason for absence and when their pupil will be returning to school. We will contact parents or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made – see 'Following up absence' below.

## **REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

### Appointments

As far as possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to us prior to the appointment.

Pupils must attend before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the pupil's record. Should a pupil arrive late following an appointment, they should report to the school office to be signed in by a member of the admin team.

Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code.

### Religious observance

Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

### Illness

In order to make informed decisions about their pupil's fitness for attending parents are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'Is My Child Too Ill for School?'. Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence, however this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be notified of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is a serious concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'serious concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or 3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the pupil's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' are not required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

In some cases, a pupil may be absent for long term due to an illness or injury. We will liaise with families to ensure children return to school quickly and that there are no safeguarding concerns. On occasions where this is not possible, and the section 19 threshold is met, we will make a referral to the Local Authority Medical Panel which provides educational opportunities for pupils who are unable to attend their regular school.

### Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

### Requesting leave in term time

Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional." Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: 'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:

- Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and school holidays. We will rightly prioritise attendance.
- The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
- If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
- We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.
- We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities.

Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the pupil to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The school routine can offer a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. Relevant members of staff will work with parents to decide what is in the best interest of the pupil.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### START AND CLOSE OF THE DAY

- The school day begins formally at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm. Doors to classrooms open at 8.35am when children and families are welcome to join their children, starting the day with 'Time to Think'. This is an inclusive session which may have a range of focuses, enabling children to transition into their learning day.

### ATTENDANCE REGISTERS:

- The attendance register is called at the beginning of the morning session (8.45am) and afternoon session (12.50pm);
- The attendance register identifies whether each pupil registered at the school is present or absent, if a child is absent a reason is sought for their absence;

### LATE CHILDREN BEFORE THE REGISTER CLOSES 8.45am – 9.00am:

- If a child is late before the register closes (9.00am), where known the reason for the lateness is recorded on the electronic register record for the child as a LATE mark.
- Where there are a concerning number of late marks before the close of the register, the parents/carers of the child will be asked to meet with Teacher of the child, where the impact of lateness on a child's learning will be explained to the parent/carer;
- Where punctuality does not improve the parent will be asked to meet with a School Leader to discuss the issue of lateness and impact on learning and well being, and to explain the next steps in the school's aim to improve attendance.

#### LATE CHILDREN AFTER THE REGISTER CLOSES 9.00am:

- If a child is late after the register closes (9.00am), the reason for the lateness is recorded on the electronic register record for the child as an UNAUTHORISED absence due to lateness.
- Where there are a concerning number of late marks after the close of the register, the parents/carers of the child will be asked to meet with class teacher or phase leader, where the impact of lateness on a child's learning will be explained to the parent.
- Where punctuality does not improve the parent/carer will be asked to meet with the Co-Head Teacher to discuss the issue of lateness, where this does not improve punctuality a meeting will be arranged with the Education Welfare Officer for them to explain the impact of lateness on learning and progress and the action they are going to take. The discussion will be recorded on the child's electronic communication log.

#### FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE – Also refer to **SAFEGUARDING** section below

- First day call is used to ascertain why a child is not in school;
- Where the office is not able to contact a parent/carer of an absent child, the absence is recorded as UNAUTHORISED;
- The Head Teacher may seek to undertake a home visit where there are concerns relating to a child's attendance;
- Parents/ carers are required to either contact the school office or to send a letter into school, when a child has been absent – otherwise the absence is recorded as UNAUTHORISED;
- Where there are safeguarding concerns relating to the child, a home visit maybe undertaken by a school leader to ascertain as to the well being of the child;
- Where a child is open to Social Care a phone call/email is sent to the child's allocated Social Worker on each day of the absence in order that they can take appropriate action;
- Where a parent/ carer has not sent a letter into school or made contact with the school office informing them of the reason for the absence, the office or class teacher will make contact with the parent/carer to seek to establish the reasons for the absence;
- Where a parent/ carer is subject to individualised attendance procedures, they will be reminded of this by the office in order to have the attendance authorised;
- Where a parent/ carer is subject to individualised attendance procedures and they do not provide this evidence a decision will be made by the Co-Head Teacher as to whether the absence will be recorded as UNAUTHORISED;

#### INDIVIDUAL PUPIL MONITORING & FOLLOW UP ACTIONS:

All attendance matters including lateness, holiday absence and illness are managed on an individual basis with the parent and child, in order to support a personalised approach to good attendance within the framework of the policy:

- There is a half termly whole school analysis undertaken of all children attendance below 95%, the attendance patterns and reasons for absence are reviewed on an individual basis. This analysis also includes identifying children with 10 absences or more, in order that appropriate measures can be taken;
- There is a report which is shared with class teachers every half term of priority children and discussions to be held with parents/ carers. Teachers are supported in directly their energies, through a relational approach, in making contact with parents where concerning levels of attendance are seen.
- In Key Stage 2, where appropriate, children are engaged in discussion regarding addressing attendance concerns within the relationships that they hold with key staff members;

- Fortnightly TAPAS leadership meetings provide an opportunity to review issues and actions for individual children;
- Where there are concerns regarding the volume of absence or patterns of absence, a meeting may be arranged with the class teacher or Head Teacher and parents / carers. The focus of the meeting will be the impact of the child's attendance on their learning and progress, the number of sessions missed will be explained to the parent;
- Where there are unusual patterns or volume of absence, parents/ carers will be informed that their child's absences will no longer be automatically authorised. Authorisation for absence will depend upon individual circumstances, in this situation where parents are able to provide evidence of the reason for the absence such as a medical appointment card, PCR confirmation of test or e-consult, the absence will be authorised. It is at the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether absence is authorised on an individual basis;
- Where a child's attendance falls below 95%, further scrutiny is undertaken as to the reasons for the high level absences and Parents/Carers maybe requested to provide medical evidence in order to have absences authorised. A meeting will be held with the class teacher or Head Teacher;
- Where attendance does not improve for a child with attendance below 95%, a follow up meeting or discussion will be held with the Head Teacher;
- Where a child's attendance falls below 95% there will be scrutiny undertaken by the administration team over the preceding 6 month period, if there are 10 unauthorised absences over this period the Education Welfare Officer will be informed in order that they can undertake appropriate action;
- The school in partnership with the Education Welfare Service will hold meetings and initiate Fast Tracking procedures in an effort to improve attendance. Where this is not successful in improving attendance, legal advice will be sought.
- The reason for the absence is recorded on the electronic register and is recorded as either UNAUTHORISED or AUTHORISED according to criteria outlined above;
- Where there have been significant improvements in a child's attendance, the child's achievements will be celebrated on the newsletter and they will receive an individual certificate in assembly;
- When teachers and school leaders meet with parents/Carers, they refer to the Pupil Absence % table to demonstrate impact on learning time for children.

#### EARLY HELP

- Where meetings take place between school leaders and where Fast Track procedures are being considered, the Parent/Carer will be offered Early Help via the Early Help Lead Practitioner;

#### HOLIDAY ABSENCE

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, all schools are unable to authorise any requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. This has been brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

These changes reinforce the government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absence by the school, in exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other unavoidable causes.

Parents are reminded that unauthorised absences may result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Where parents have requested holiday:

- Unless the request can be considered as 'exceptional circumstances', the holiday leave will be unauthorised;
- The parent will be written to by the Admin Team to inform them of the policy;
- Where a family has holiday absence, an analysis will be undertaken by the administrative team, of the preceding 6 months attendance to identify whether it falls below 90% and whether there are further unauthorised absences, which includes other unauthorised absences other than holiday. Where this is the case, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and consideration made of fixed penalty notice or fast tracking procedures;

Where a child is absent from school and it is suspected that they may be on holiday:

- If parents are not able to be contacted absence will be unauthorised;
- A discussion will be held with the parent on their return;

#### PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The DFE thresholds are used to identify children as persistently absent, the school uses its judgement in determining whether the parents of identified children are contacted for an appointment to be held with a school leader or whether the matter is being referred to the EWO for action. Children who are identified as Persistently Absent require immediate addressing.

Where a child is identified as being persistently absent a meeting is held with the parent / carer and Head Teacher;

- 1) Head Teacher will arrange to meet or have a follow up discussion with the parent / carer to discuss attendance concerns, including any barriers to attendance and support the school or other services can provide, including the offer of Early Help – this will be a recorded meeting;
- 2) The meeting will be recorded on the 'record of meeting document' which will be provided to the parent / carer;
- 3) Parent / Carer will be informed of requirements in the event the child has further absences, as these won't be automatically authorised;
- 4) If attendance concerns continue following discussion with Head Teacher, the Education Welfare Officer will be engaged in support of the child or where there are more than 10 unauthorised absences in a six month period;

#### PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Individual termly stickers and certificates are given for 100% attendance and those exceeding 98%;
- Individual 100% attendance across the year are awarded certificate and badge;
- Individual end of year certificates (framed) and awards are given for 100% attendance;
- Children with significant improved attendance will be awarded a certificate.
- Each week a class is recognised in Friday assemblies for their achievements in relation to attendance and receives a certificate in assembly eg. for high or improved levels of whole class attendance
- Where a class achieves 100% attendance the class receives a certificate and a class award;

#### MISSING IN EDUCATION PUPILS:

- Will be recorded on the S2S database via Sims;

#### KEEPING PARENTS/CARERS UPDATED:

- Attendance is regularly featured on the school newsletter, informing parents of arrangements for attendance and their responsibility;
- Meetings / discussions are sought with parents / carers regarding matters of attendance, where appropriate children are engaged in consideration of their attendance and impact on learning;
- Every opportunity is sought to remind parents / carers of the importance of attendance & related procedures;
- The newsletter states the current attendance rate of individual classes;
- The parents of children who have been working to address attendance issues have improvement acknowledged;
- Pupil attendance forms part of individual induction arrangements.

#### SAFEGUARDING

- A record of named children where safeguarding is a concern is kept in the office, in the event that one of the named children is off from school a school leader is informed;
- Where a pupil has a CiC, CiN or CP Plan, the social worker is informed of any absences by email by the school admin team, including the details e.g. explained or unexplained. This is recorded on the attendance registration doc.
- Where a family cannot be contacted, one of the emergency contacts from the pupil record will be called to seek assurance over the safeguarding of the child;

- If there is an allocated social worker, contact will be made to see if they can get assurances over the safety of the child;
- School Leaders may undertake a home visit where they are concerned as to the reasons for a child being kept off from school;
- If no contact is able to be sought, the child has not been seen/located and there are safeguarding concerns, the following will happen:
  1. School Leader will Risk Assess the situation based on known information;
  2. The Police will be contacted on 999 if the child is considered to be at risk of immediate and significant harm or danger;
  3. The police will be contacted on 101 if not at risk of immediate significant harm, but where there are escalated welfare concerns;
  4. If there is no immediate increased risk, contact will continue to be made by the above means. Where this is unsuccessful the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted to undertake enquiries, it will be reviewed as to whether the police will be called on the 101 number;
  5. Where there has been no contact made ahead of a weekend, the police will be contacted on the 101 number.

***A record will be kept of all action taken on the pupil safeguarding file, to ensure there is a robust audit trail.***

#### EVALUATING IMPACT

- A four weekly analysis is undertaken by School Leaders, which has year to year comparisons with school and national data and analysis of individual groups;

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- The Head Teacher implements this policy on a day to day basis;
- Appeals in relation to this policy should be made in writing to 'The Chair of the Governing Board' C/O the School Office