



HIGHSHORE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1. Aim

At Highshore we firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular attendance. The aim of this policy is to minimise the amount of time lost due to absence in order to maximise the educational potential of every pupil. This can be achieved with the support of parents by ensuring absence, including holidays, are not taken during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'

At Highshore School, in order for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 95% or above:

- 100% Excellent attendance
- 97% Very Good attendance
- 95% Expected attendance

All pupils should aim for 100% attendance. The Department for Education (DFE) expect pupils to attend 95% or better. 85% attendance means that a pupil is missing 1½ days of education every fortnight. 80% attendance all the way through secondary school is the equivalent of missing a whole year of education. From September 2015 pupils with 90% attendance and below are classified by the DFE as Persistent Absentees.

At Highshore we take a whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of Parents/carers, pupils and all staff members to ensure that pupils attend school. We actively work with families to ensure that any issues or circumstances which may lead or might lead to poor attendance are given attention and appropriate support.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

In accordance with our whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance the Governing body will:

- Annually review the School attendance policy

- Ensure that the importance of pupil attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant School policy
- Nominate a Governor who will take a lead role in monitoring attendance

Senior Leadership Team

In accordance with our whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance the SLT will:

- Actively promote the importance of excellent attendance to pupils, Parents and Carers for example certificates in assembly
- Work with the Governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness
- Ensure that they are up to date with Government legislation on attendance, of any changes and how to implement change
- Maintain strong multi-agency relationships to help and support families
- Provide regular reports to the Governing body
- Ensure that appropriate training is provided as required
- Be available for parents who may wish to discuss specific problems which their child is experiencing
- Ensure the monitoring and implementation of the agreed policy and procedures

Teaching and Support Staff

Form tutors/teaching assistants are ideally placed because of their regular contact with students to assess whether the explanation received for a child's absence are reasonable, or if the child is at an early stage in developing a pattern of absence.

In accordance with our whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance the school staff will:

- Actively promote the importance of excellent attendance to pupils, parents and carers
- Ensure that they are fully aware of the Schools attendance policy and support this policy
- Ensuring that an accurate and timely register is taken twice a day
- Publicly praising those students who attend well, or make an effort to improve their attendance
- Using the school registration system accurately to record authorised absences
- Referring unexplained absences or patterns of absence to the attendance lead

Administration staff

In accordance with our whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance the administration staff team will:

- Contact parents on the first day if there is unexplained absence and maintain contact until the pupil's return to school
- Discuss with parents any problems with attendance and punctuality
- Liaise with the Early Help Service through fortnightly school meetings with our link Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Refer students with poor attendance to the EWO for additional support
- Determine the correct absence code following DFE guidelines
- Provide information to the school's Senior Leadership Team

Parents and carers

By law parents have a duty to educate their children by ensuring regular attendance at school or otherwise. In order to facilitate this parents with a child at Highshore School are expected to:

- Inform the school by phone (0207 708 6790) on the first morning of any absence before 9 am providing a reason for a child's absence
- Ensure that their child gets to school on time
- Not to take term time leave unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences for example making dental/medical appointments in School holidays/start or end of the school day so that their child can attend for most of the day
- Keep us informed of any circumstance which may affect their child's attendance
- Work positively with us if their child is having problems regarding attendance
- Not to take their child out of school during term time. If Parents/Carers wish to make a special request for this they must **write to the Headteacher**
- Promote the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Attend any necessary meetings and respond as quickly as possible to any letters and information about their child's attendance

Pupils

In accordance with our whole School approach to maintaining excellent attendance we ask that Pupils where possible:

- Speak to their the class teacher or another staff member if they are experiencing difficulties which may impact on their attendance
- Be aware of when they are required to attend. This is communicated through Staff/Parents/carers and the school calendar/timetable/school council
- Achieve recognition for excellent attendance for example 100% attendance certificates

3. Categories of absence and procedures

- 3.1 Absences are treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school in writing/by telephone. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences. Staff make clear through the school register whether an absence is authorised or non-authorised
- 3.2 Most absences due to ill health are short term. Parents/carers need to keep the school informed as to the duration of their child's absence. The reasons for pupils absence are recorded in the register
- 3.3 Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure that medical/dental appointments are made out of school time. When this cannot be avoided Pupils should attend as much of the day as possible. It is helpful if appointments can be made early or as late in the day to facilitate this
- 3.4 There may be other exceptional circumstances where absences will be authorised for example a family bereavement
- 3.5 Pupil Exclusions are treated as authorised absences
- 3.6 Highshore recognises that there are times when pupils of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of School holidays and will allow authorised absences for these times
- 3.7 The DFE has issued new advice regarding absence from school and prosecution making it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If leave is granted the Head teacher can also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

The Head teacher will therefore consider requests for absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis taking into account individual circumstances, such as a particular family situation, the child's attainment and previous attendance, and the proximity of key dates for tests and examinations.

Requests for term time leave must be made prior to making any travel or accommodation bookings. Parents/carers must complete a request form, available from the school office and may be required to attend an interview with the Head teacher and the EWO to discuss their request.

Those prevented from taking term time leave may include:

1. Those students whose attendance has been below 95% for the previous 20 school weeks
2. The student already has unauthorised absence
3. The period of leave coincides with the first two weeks of the start of term, or exams, or other significant events in the school calendar

If the Head teacher does not authorise the leave of absence and the parents take their child out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence i.e. truancy and will be referred to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. This will result in a fine of £60 per parent.

4. School Action: following up absences

Class registers are passed to the school office and the end of registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences the school will contact the Parents/carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges our Family Worker will contact the Parents/carers to discuss this and may request a meeting with the Parents/carers to look at ways to help.

Our Family Worker holds meetings with EWAS (Education Welfare Service) and both offer advice, support and information for Parents.

Eileen Ollieuz
July 2015
Reviewed November 2016

.....Julia C. Field..... Chair of Governors 22/11/16 date

.....Eileen Ollieuz..... Headteacher 22.11.16 date

This Policy will be reviewed annually

