

The Harnser Federation: Frettenham Primary, Hainford VC Primary and St Faiths VC Primary Schools.

Attendance Policy

Introduction

The Harnser Federation is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Heads of School and Governors at our schools work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets. These reflect both national and Norfolk attendance targets. The school reviews its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure it is achieving set goals.

Aims and Objectives

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our schools are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a target of 98% attendance for all pupils with an aspiration of 100%, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the schools.

- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education to all parents and carers.
- parents, carers and pupils Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Communicating that any absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our schools will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Attendance Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Norfolk LA and the DfE where requested.
 - All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Head of School or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking the register, during sessions in which they are responsible for, in a timely and accurate manner
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Head of School where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Head of School

The Heads of our Schools are responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised

- Making referrals to the Attendance service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Reporting attendance information to Governors
- Contacting the Executive Leadership Team about attendance concerns

Administration staff

Staff in the School Offices are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Books are completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Heads of School
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registers

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

Registers are completed electronically using Pupil Asset. If for whatever reason the register cannot be accessed, then a paper copy will be taken and passed onto the office.

Lateness

Morning registration takes place at 8.45am in all three schools. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes until 9:15. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, (*Code U: Late after registers have closed*) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

At Hainford Primary Partnership School, the afternoon registration will be at 1.00pm. The registers will close at 1.15pm.

At Frettenham Primary Partnership School the afternoon registration will be at 1:10pm. The registers will close at 1:25pm

At St Faiths CofE Primary School the afternoon registration will be at 1:15pm. The registers will close at 1.30pm.

Late Register

The school operates a 'Late Register' which is located in the main office. Parents/carers who drop off their children after the register is closed are required to complete the register, giving a reason for their late arrival. The late register is monitored by the Head of Schools each week, alongside attendance data so emerging patterns of lateness and absence can be followed up.

Absence

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Heads of School alone have the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of a child's absence before 8.45am. At all three schools they may advise the school by telephone or by email. If the school is not contacted, the secretary at each school will make a telephone call to the parents. If a member of staff takes a telephone call in the morning then a note should be made for the secretary.

The secretary at each school will pass on information to the class teacher and ensure the appropriate information is transferred to the registers.

Third Day Absence

If in the very rare circumstance that a child is away and no contact has been made, then a standard letter is sent. Parents are asked in the letter to contact school that day

Continuing Absence

If there is still no contact from the parents a further letter will be sent asking parents to contact the school. The letter will also inform parents that it may be necessary to make a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff for the local area. (*This is a legal requirement*) The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Absence notes

Any notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept in the correspondence section of the pupil file in the Office. It will be kept for one academic year whereupon it will be destroyed. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Heads of School and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents will be informed of our concerns. There will be opportunities for parents to discuss the reasons for absence and if any support can be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Persistent Absence (PA)

PA is noted as children attending less than 90% from Sept 2015. This is a challenging target set by the government to improve school attendance.

The Attendance Service will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to the Attendance Officer from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Education Welfare Officer visits regularly to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Attendance Awards

The schools will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance;

- An Attendance Cup is awarded each week in each school to the class with the best attendance for the preceding week. This information is published in the school's weekly newsletter.
- 100% Attendance Certificates are awarded at the end of each half-term during the special Celebrations assembly, to which parents are invited.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence

S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-ups as part of our contract with Pupil asset and can be accessed when needed using a secure password.

Governors

Attendance figures are reported ½ termly in the Head of School's report to the Governors.

Action Plan

The school will produce an action plan to show how the school will set about achieving its attendance targets.

Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences.

Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.

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