



***Hoyle Court Primary School believes that every child is a learner and can achieve. Our family ethos ensures that everyone is welcomed, respected and valued. We strive to provide citizens of the future who are able to make a significant contribution to the community and to ensure that they are prepared for life in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain.***

POLICY TITLE: Attendance and Holidays in Term Time		
COMPILED BY: Tim Phillips, Isobel Sheard	DATE APPROVED: 19.9.19	DATE TO BE REVIEWED: 19.9.22

## **Rationale**

- This document sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors; and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.
- The aim of this policy is also to minimise the amount of time lost to term-time holidays in order to maximise the educational potential of every child. This can be achieved with the support of parents/carers by ensuring holidays in term time are not taken in school time unless there is exceptional circumstances. There are 175 days each year when your child is not in school. Absence for any reason during term time interrupts a child's education and disrupts educational progress.

## **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

- Hoyle Court Primary School believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

### **Parents and Carers**

- If the child(ren) is/are absent to inform the school office or class teacher on the first day of absence and provide a reason for the absence. Alternatively, please email Mrs. Sheard, our Pupil-Parent Support Manager:  
***I.Sheard@hoylecourt.bradford.sch.uk***
- If the child(ren) is/are absent for more than 1 day, to inform the school office of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly.
- To advise the school, by contacting the school office, immediately if they become aware of problems with attendance.
- Ensure the child(ren) in their care attend school regularly and punctually.

### **Pupils**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.

### **School Staff**

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate.
- The Headteacher is also responsible for liaison with individual families and the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance Service to ensure appropriate support is given where attendance concerns are identified and for liaison with the Local Authority and DFE to ensure that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

## **Procedures for registration**

- Morning Registration is between 08.50am and 9.00am
- Afternoon Registration is between 1.00pm and 1.10pm
- Each class teacher is responsible for marking children present in the register on SIMS at morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed by 9.00am and 1.10pm to avoid discrepancies between classes.
- The class teacher must ensure that the marked register, plus any notes received regarding absence, is returned to the school office by 9.10am/1.10pm via SIMS.
- The school office is responsible for in putting absence codes following contact from a parent.

## **Late Registration**

- School doors are locked at 09.00am. Pupils requiring admittance to the school after these times must inform the school administrator in the school office.

- If the school office does not hear from parents, reporting a child's absence by 9:30am then the school will contact them to establish the reason for the absence.
- The school office is responsible for maintaining a signing in/out book. This must contain details of name, class, time admitted/time released, reason for lateness/absence and supervising adult (for signing out). After 9.00am/1.15pm an entry must be placed in the signing in book before a late pupil is admitted.
- The attendance registers are closed at 9.30am. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registration period (8.50 to 9.00am) but before the registers are closed will be given a late mark (L) in the register. This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school.
- Any pupil who arrives after the registers have closed but before the end of the morning session will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session. The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling; putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including consideration of the use of legal sanctions, in just the same way.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

- For extended medical absence school may request confirmation from a healthcare professional to confirm the child's medical condition and reasons for absence.
- The school office is responsible for maintaining records of reason and length of absence, the Headteacher is responsible for analysis and patterns of absence for all children.
- Parents/Carers are requested to contact the school office before 9.00am on the first day of absence advising of the reason for the absence and expected return date; if known.
- Where a written note is received this should also be kept in the class absence envelope or handed to the school office.
- Where the absence is for several days, the Parent/Carer is responsible for informing the school office of the continued absence and updating them as to the reason for the absence on a regular basis.
- If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the family, the school office will contact the family on the first day of absence by phone or text message. Other adult contacts are then perused. If contact cannot be made the Headteacher should be informed in the case of prolonged or repeated absence without justification being given. A home visit may be arranged at this stage to determine reasons for absence. Headteacher will determine whether the Education Welfare Team should be informed.
- The Headteacher is responsible for determining what is classed as authorised and what is classed as unauthorised absence.
- For religious festivals Parents / Carers must request the absence required in advance in writing. Failure to do so will result in a religious festival absence not being authorised.
- The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register. Where they are not certain whether an absence is authorised or not they should seek advice from the Headteacher.
- Whilst any child may be 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. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to the Headteacher or the Pupil-Parent Support Manager

in school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home.

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time** **Regulations and Guidance**

- Requests for holidays in term time must be made 2 weeks prior to the holiday and in writing on the holiday request form which is available from the school. It is strongly advised that you do not book your holiday until approval has been given.
- **The Headteacher is only able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher.** The Headteacher would not be expected to class **any** term time holiday as exceptional.
- **No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from the school and on the website. The Headteacher will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

**The following are examples** of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

1. Service personnel returning from active deployment
  2. Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
  3. Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where the head teacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

**Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**

Parents may be required to attend an interview to discuss their request for a term time holiday. Your child's attendance and progress will be considered as part of this process. Parent/carers will be notified in writing of the decision for a holiday in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

Hoyle Court Primary School will take the following into account should a request for a holiday in term time be made:

- Your child's attendance is below 90%
- You have previously had a holiday request approved or an unauthorised absence
- If the holiday in term time is agreed it will be recorded as 'H' on the school attendance registers (authorised absence).
- If the school does not agree to grant the leave for the holiday and the parents/carers take their child on holiday then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence 'G' (family holiday not agreed)

- Should the child fail to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date the school will implement its' *Child Missing in Education Policy*.
- Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid.
- Parents have the right to appeal the Head teacher's decision if they feel the decision is unfair or not reflective of the school's policy. Parents must put this in writing to the school's governing Board explaining the reason(s) they are appealing the decision and hand this to the school office so this can be provided to the Governing Board. A panel of three members will review the appeal and the parent will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within 10 school days.

### **The Education Social Welfare Officer**

- If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to The Education Social Welfare Officer. They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

### **School System for dealing with concerns about Lateness and Absence**

- The school office is responsible for advising the Headteacher of pupils who are persistently late or absent as issues arise.
- The class teacher is also responsible for raising concerns about lateness or absence of class members to the Headteacher as issues arise.
- In addition to this the Headteacher will use electronic systems to monitor the attendance of individual pupils at least once every half term.

Once concerns have been raised:

- The Headteacher will discuss the matter informally with the family (including the pupil).
- The Parent support advisor will send letters regarding attendance issues to parents of all pupils whose attendance raised a concern. This will be done on a termly basis.
- If lateness/absence persists, and school procedures fail to provoke the required level of improvement, the Headteacher will contact the Education Social Welfare Officer who will arrange meetings with the family and Headteacher as appropriate and determine whether any interventions are required. These interventions will include consideration of the use of legal sanctions.

### **School System for reintegrating pupils who have had long term absence**

- When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the Headteacher, class teacher and other support services will liaise with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.