



Hamsey Green  
Primary School

# **Hamsey Green Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Review Date: January 2019**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Hamsey Green Primary School good attendance is considered a high priority. Parents are informed of school hours and school expectations in our prospectus, at their induction meeting and our attendance information leaflet which is sent to all parents. Good attendance is rewarded. Poor attendance and lateness adversely affect both pupils and staff.

It is the parents' responsibility and their legal duty (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure that their child receives full time education. We seek a partnership with parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

**The school attendance policy reflects that pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher (or delegated person in the school)**

### Legal responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually.
- The LA has a legal duty to ensure that parents carry out this responsibility
- The school has a legal duty to record absence of registered pupils in compliance with the regulations
- The governing body has a legal duty to ensure the school register is kept in accordance with regulations and must set attendance targets which are then forwarded to the LA.

### Registers

The register is a legal document and is confidential. It may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. The registers are completed twice daily using the SIMS Attendance module, at the start of morning school and immediately after lunch break. A hard copy of the registers is printed every four weeks.

The register should be completed and saved in SIMS by 9.00am each morning and within 5 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.

### Lateness

Children who arrive late must report to the office and parents/carers must complete a late form.

**Children who arrive after 9.25am at the Lower School and 9.20am at the Upper School in the morning without good reason are recorded as an unauthorised absence.**

To minimise disruption at the beginning of the day, when children are late parents must leave their children at the office; they must not accompany them to the classroom. Persistent lateness will result in a letter from the headteacher and a meeting.

A class teacher who has any particular concerns about attendance or punctuality should refer the child to the headteacher. Registers are monitored by the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) at least half-termly.

## Absence from school

Parents are instructed to inform the school of all absence by personal contact, letter, e-mail or telephone. Notification of the nature of the illness and the expected length of absence is also expected. A record of absence messages are kept on the child's personal file.

For medical or other appointments during the school day notification is required **in advance**, where possible these should be arranged out of school hours. Appointment cards must be shown to school.

The office will make contact with the parent/carer of any child who is not in school for whom we have not received an absence message for by 9.30am. If no reason is received for the absence this is recorded as unauthorised.

For persistent unauthorised absence a telephone call is made to the parent/carer on the first day of each non-attendance.

If an explanation for absence is unsatisfactory parents will be contacted to discuss any difficulties with school attendance.

If a pupil's attendance **is not satisfactory** a letter is sent home highlighting this to parents. If attendance continues to fall then a meeting with the headteacher will be arranged. If **attendance does not improve** parents are notified that any further absences for illness will be unauthorised without medical evidence.

## Categories of Absence

Absence is authorised when:

- i. The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- ii. The day is set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- iii. The headteacher has been notified of, and given permission for an expected absence.
- iv. Appointment card or letter has been provided to confirm the pupil has to attend for medical or dental appointments.
- v. Requests of leave for **exceptional** circumstances
- vi. Exclusions

## Requests for Leave of Absence during term time

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children out of school during term time. No holidays during term time will be authorised. The Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Exceptional circumstances will be decided by the Head Teacher.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must complete an application form and submit it to the Headteacher. The forms are available from the school office. (See Appendix 1)

## **The role of the Education Welfare Officer**

The Education Welfare Service is part of the Local Education Authority which has responsibility for promoting, encouraging and enforcing regular school attendance. The EWO visits the school to note absence patterns and lateness. **Children whose attendance is a concern will be referred to the EWO.**

## **Penalty Notices**

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority **must consider a prosecution of the parent/carer in the magistrate's** courts for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason, ie **after 9.25am at the Lower School and 9.20am at the Upper School.**

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

To be reviewed January 2019

## Hamsey Green Primary School

### Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child’s attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

**Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child’s leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

**Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice**

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council’s Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Name of child:</b>  | <b>Class:</b> |
| I am applying for leave of absence for my child for<br>.....                   |               |
| from:  | to:           |
| Number of school days:   |               |
| The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:                    |               |
| Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year?      YES / NO |               |
| If YES, please give dates and details:   |               |
| <b>I also have children at...</b>  |               |
| Signed: (Parent/Carer)   | Date:         |
| Address:   |               |

**To be completed by the Headteacher**

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| Approved     |  | The absence will be recorded as authorised.   |
| Not approved |  | The absence will be recorded as unauthorised. |

Explanatory notes:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_