

Hazeldene Lower School
Attendance Policy

Year: 2016/17

Designated teacher: Head teacher

School target for attendance: 96%

School target for persistent absentees: 2.9%

At Hazeldene School we recognise the importance of regular school attendance and believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also vitally important that children arrive and leave school on time.

Education provides a means of enhancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

High levels of attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

Aims:

Hazeldene School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.

Hazeldene School sees regular school attendance as essential for all the pupils if they are to be successful, aims to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels.

Hazeldene Lower School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The Law

The Education (Pupils Attendance Records) Regulations 2008 and the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 place a legal duty on schools to keep appropriate registers relating to the attendance of individual pupils.

Responsibilities of Parents The School Day

8.40am children filter in to school
8.50am doors closed and morning register taken
9.20am register officially closed

1.00pm afternoon register taken (KS1)
1.30 afternoon register taken (KS2)
3.15pm reception/Yr1 finish
3.20pm Yrs 2-4 finish

No parent or child should arrive at school before 8.30am unless prior arrangements in place ie Rapid Read
Due to our school having a filter in system parents should not leave their child in the playground before 8.40am

At the end of the school day parents should pick up their child by the entrance stipulated. Any child who has not been picked up by 3.30pm and parents have not contacted school to inform us they will be late, the child will be taken to the care club and charged for a full hours care.

There are legal obligations on parents to secure education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise and to send them to school regularly once they are on the school roll.

If the school is to achieve its attendance targets, parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education and support the school in the following ways:

- ensure the fullest possible attendance of their child by keeping requests for their children to be absent from school to a minimum
- when absence is unavoidable, we request that you telephone the school on the first day of any absence to advise us of that absence. Only, if the absence extends beyond five days when you should contact the school again.
- in cases of long term sickness (more than one week) a medical certificate should be obtained from the GP and a copy given to the school
- ensure that their child arrives at school and is collected from school on time

Responsibilities of the School

It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to deal with problems which may lead to non-attendance. The school employs a range of strategies to improve and encourage good attendance and punctuality including responding to holiday request and pursuing unexplained absence with parents. The school will investigate promptly all absenteeism liaising closely with parents. If parents do not call to advise of absence, Mrs Norman the Office Manager will call the parents.

The Importance of Registration/Punctuality

Registers are a legal document and are kept securely. The law requires schools to call the register twice a day:

- at the start of the morning session i.e. 8.55 a.m.
- once during the afternoon session. At Hazeldene the register is called at the start of the afternoon session at 1.00 p.m. for KS1 and 1.30pm KS2

Calling the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by staff, children and parents.

At Hazeldene School children are marked either present or absent in the register. Particular attention is given to accurate registration; staff use consistent rules and coding for registration. It is our policy at Hazeldene to actively discourage the late arrival of children at school. A child who arrives late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but also that of others. A firm line is taken on late arrivals.

When a child arrives after the registration period the parent/carer bringing them to school must sign the Lateness Book at reception; the child will then be registered 'late' for that session. If a pupil arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register, the lateness will be recorded as late after register has closed unless an appropriate explanation is received.

When a child is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. The school administrator enters this information onto the computer on a weekly basis. If this persists the class teacher will inform the Head teacher who will contact the parent/carer. Unresolved lateness will then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO.)

Notification of Absence

All parents are asked to contact school to if their child is absent giving a reason for the absence. This can be done by:

- telephone: the school administrator will then pass the message to the class teacher and enter the reason for absence directly into the register;
- letter: the class teacher will place the letter in the register and enter the reason for absence into the register;
- Personal: an explanation may be given personally to either the class teacher or the administrator when the child returns to school. This will then be entered into the register.

School Responses to Absence

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Where a child is absent at the time of registration the law requires schools to indicate on their attendance register whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Head teacher is ultimately responsible for authorising absence from school.

This will only be done when a satisfactory explanation is received

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or that an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted.

The law requires that absences not agreed in advance to be recorded as unauthorised unless and until a satisfactory explanation is given.

The school will:

- investigate all unexplained absences
- contact parents for an explanation if no message is received after 3 days of continuous absence[where there is a problem with attendance, we will endeavour to make contact on the first day of absence
- contact parents if it has any concerns over attendance
- if a child is absent for more than ten days and no explanation has be given the case will be referred to Educational Welfare Service as a child missing education.
- involve the Education Welfare Officer if parents fail to support the school in ensuring the fullest possible attendance of their children

By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence if they doubt the explanation. If the school is satisfied that the circumstances are both genuine and exceptional the absence may be authorised. Where parentally condoned and/or unjustified absence appears to be a problem the school will involve the EWO at the earliest opportunity.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can disrupt continuity of learning. The school will therefore watch for emerging patterns of authorised absence by individual children.

Examples of Authorised Absence

An absence may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- genuine illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement
- holidays only in exceptional circumstances term time, authorised in advance by the Head teacher.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

The school cannot accept any of the following:

- shopping during school hours
- special occasions e.g. birthdays
- no uniform/shoes
- overslept
- haircut
- at home due to family illness

Annual Holidays

Both in the Prospectus and at the pre-school induction meeting parents are asked NOT to arrange their family holidays within the school term, so that their child's education is not disrupted. The Head teacher will only authorise holidays in very exceptional circumstances.

Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting absence from school which as previously stated should be an exceptional circumstance. The school will respond in writing to these requests stating whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Each case will be looked at individually and takes into account the child's current attendance record.

The Head Teacher may present the parents with a fixed penalty fine if a parent takes their child out of school without permission.

Exclusions

Where a child has been excluded [fixed term or permanent] he or she will remain on the school roll. The absence will be regarded as authorised. Once a permanent exclusion is confirmed the child will be removed from the school roll as per LA procedures.

Communication with Parents

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

School Prospectus: Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

Pre School Induction Meetings: At the pre-school induction meetings held in the summer term for children who will enter our Reception class in the following September, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only child left in the building.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head teacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance will be highlighted along with other school routines.

Parental Concerns

Hazeldene School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All the staff at Hazeldene School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which means they become unhappy, and may not want to attend school. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school, so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved.

The class teacher or Head teacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these will be discussed with the parent/guardian and appropriate action taken.

The Education Welfare Service

Close liaison between the school and the Education Welfare Service is crucial in attempts to improve attendance. The principle function of the Education Welfare Service is to help parents, schools and the LA meet their statutory obligations on school attendance. At Hazeldene Lower School the Education Welfare Officer meets with the Head teacher half termly to discuss attendance issues and offer advice and support.

At these meetings, the registers are monitored, patterns of absence noted and any concerns discussed with the parents/carers. Where appropriate supportive strategies are put in place, improvement targets are set and review meetings planned.

The EWO also acts as a channel to other agencies e.g. Children's Services.

The Role of the LA

The LA is charged in law with enforcing school attendance and must ensure that schools and parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations, including where necessary, the taking of legal action. Fixed penalty notices for poor attendance/punctuality and unauthorised absence in term time may be considered by the school as an early deterrent. Further legal action under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act may also be considered. The LA discharges these legal obligations through the Education Welfare Service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance of pupils will be monitored on a regular basis by the Head teacher and EWO. The Head teacher will keep governors informed on attendance issues through the Head teacher's termly report to the governing body.

This policy and the procedures included within it will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continued high standards in all aspects of attendance.

This policy will be reviewed annually
Helen Ward