

HEMLINGTON HALL ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy underpins our Academy ethos and aims:

- To maximise attendance of all pupils, ensuring the widest range of learning opportunities.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Attendance Officer and Local Authority.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school on time each day, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence, or later arrival, disrupts teaching routines and so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall into the 'Cause for Concern' category.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance with a weekly Attendance Award and certificates.
- Report to parents/carers about each child's attendance with their end of year school report.

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ABSENCE

Every half day absence is recorded as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' and this is reported to the Local Authority and DfE. Illness, from time to time, cannot be avoided but any other absence during term time will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances' and at the Head Teacher's discretion. Medical / dental appointments should be made outside of school hours: where this is not possible, an appointment card / letter will be needed in order to authorise the absence.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

There is no entitlement to leave of absence in term time and no leave will be authorised unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. 'Exceptional circumstances' are defined as events that are beyond the control of the requesting party, and that cannot be arranged within the 13 school holiday weeks set out in the school calendar.

We adhere strictly to Government and Local Authority guidelines, which stipulates that any child missing from school for 10 or more sessions (5 + days) could be issued to a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Governors at Hemlington Hall Academy have agreed that any parent who disregards the Head Teacher's non-authorisation of Leave of Absence (holiday) for more than 10 sessions (5 full days) will receive a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice and will be fined.

All applications for leave of absence must be made to the Head Teacher at least 14 days in advance of the required leave and the 'exceptional circumstances' clearly outlined on the application form.

In making a decision, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The exceptional circumstances to be considered
- The time of year / term
- Whether the child will miss preparation for tests or the actual tests
- The child's previous attendance record over the past twelve months

If an application for leave of absence is refused, the Head Teacher will inform parents of the reasons. Teachers will not provide work to be done during a leave of absence as the vital teaching input will have been missed.

If Parents do not inform the Academy of an absence and their child does not attend for a period of time, phone calls and one or more home visit will be made to establish the whereabouts of the child. If a parent reports an illness, confirmation from a medical professional will be needed in order to authorise the absence.

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From September 2015, any Parent taking a child out of school for five or more days without authorisation will be referred in the Local Authority, in order for a penalty Notice to be issued which will be £60.00 per parent, per child taken out of school. If subsequent holidays are taken within the school year, court proceedings will be instigated.

UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. If a child is removed for a leave of absence without authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Educational Welfare Service and Local Authority, who have the authority to issue Penalty Notices and, in repeated cases instigate legal proceedings.
2. Where a pupil does not return to Hemlington Hall Academy immediately after the end of a period of authorised absence, then the whole of the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
3. In both of the above instances, parents may be advised by letter of the need to make an appointment to speak with the Head Teacher before the child is returned to school.

If a pupil has been continuously absent from Hemlington Hall Academy for a period of 4 weeks, and both the Governing Body and our Attendance Officer have failed after a reasonable enquiry to locate the pupil, or the pupil has failed to return from unauthorised leave, then the pupil will be regarded as 'Missing from Education' and their names will be removed from the Admissions Register at Hemlington Hall. The L.A. and Police will be informed in order that they can investigate to ensure the welfare and safety of the child(ren).

N.B. If return tickets are not purchased at the time of planning the leave, failure to acquire return flight tickets would not be considered a reason for non-return within the four week period.

The effect of the removal of a pupil's name from the Admissions Register will be that when the pupil tries to return to Hemlington Hall Academy, he or she will no longer automatically have a place. Parents are free to re-apply for admission but places are not guaranteed. Additionally, if places are available it may not be in the same class as before the absence.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

If a child is absent due to illness, parents should notify school by telephone on the first day of absence. Attendance is carefully monitored by our Learning Mentor and PSA who follow up any unexplained absences on the first day.

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Patterns of absence are closely monitored and parents are notified by letter if attendance becomes a 'Cause for Concern'. If this becomes a 'Serious Concern' our Attendance Officer will also be involved through home visits or discussions in school with parents.

Attendance definitions will be reviewed annually in line with DfE guidance.

PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss vital teaching and information. Pupils arriving late can also disrupt lessons. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and beyond.

Monitoring Lateness

The school day starts at **8.55 am, however, the doors open at 8.45am. We** expect all children to be ready to come into school when the bell rings at 8.55am, following which, the cloakroom doors will close. Registers are completed once the children are in the classroom.

Children arriving after this time enter school via the Main Entrance and have their names recorded for monitoring purposes and are marked late in the register. The registers close at **9.25 am**. Any child arriving after this time will be marked Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed – unauthorised absence

Punctuality is monitored weekly by our Family Liaison & Attendance Officer and where this becomes a concern parents are informed by letter. If lateness continues, parents are invited to come into school to discuss this further and plan actions for improvement. Persistent lateness or absence will trigger the involvement of the School's Educational Welfare Officer and may result in Fixed Penalty Warning and / or Fixed Penalty Notice being issued if no improvement is observed.

Author: K.Edmenson in consultation with L.A. and National documentation

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