

# Hovingham & St Hilda's, Ampleforth CE VC Primary School

## Attendance Policy (Pupils)

### Rationale

At Hovingham and St Hilda's, Ampleforth CE VC Primary Schools Federation we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### Attendance Targets

The school's attendance target is at least above 97%. School's attendance records and figures are monitored by the governing body.

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence:**

- *An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.*
- *Only the headteacher can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.*

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- *An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.*

- *Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.*

## **Implementation of policy**

### ***Procedure to follow if a child is absent***

1. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
2. The school office check the electronic registers at 9.15am and will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian on the first day of absence
3. The school office check the registers every Friday and send home letters to parents of children who have been late or have unexplained absence with a reply slip attached for them to state a reason. If the problem persists the headteacher will request a meeting
4. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment
5. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child

## **Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

## **Holiday requests**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers were also able to grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional

circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

See Also appendix 1

### **Long term absence**

When children have an illness which means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Repeated unauthorised absence**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school's weekly newsletter, on the school website, and in the annual governor's report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this should be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

### **Disability Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Disability Equality Scheme. Assessment will include consideration of issues

identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.

***Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be made to the headteacher***

#### Appendix 1

### **APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME**

A form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances; otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

**No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- 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
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

**Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional**

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a

decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.