



# New Haw Community School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY



## **Information for Parents** **“Attendance matters...”**

***Parents should be aware that there is no entitlement to time off in term time and parents should not expect leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday to be granted as of right. The expectation of this school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for the absence, approved by the Headteacher.***

### **We aim to:**

- maximise attendance of all children, thus supporting achievement in learning;
- provide an environment which encourages excellent attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all; and
- maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying; and
- regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return;
- arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks where possible;
- keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

### **We shall:**

- follow up unexplained absences with phone calls and letters as soon as possible;
- remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school brochure and the Home-School agreement;
- publish our attendance rate in the school brochure;
- acknowledge and reward good attendance;
- publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report;
- report on attendance at Parents' Evenings and Governor Meetings;
- let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance; and
- make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer if we continue to have concerns.
- Warn parents of their liability to receive a Penalty Notice

## Rewards

- Children who achieve 100% attendance in a term will be rewarded with a termly sticker of attendance.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance across the school year, will receive an award at the end of the summer term.
- Every Friday the class which has achieved the highest attendance receives special recognition at assembly.

## Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

We realise that there are **exceptional** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

## Illness

Parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence **by 9.30 a.m.** to provide the reason for absence. Please also ensure that you contact the school on each subsequent day of absence. Parents are asked to send in a written explanation of the absence on their child’s return to school. The school office will contact the parents on the first day of absence if no notification of absence is received by 9.30 a.m.

## Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”.

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- going for a family day out
- sleeping in after a late night
- where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Should attendance fall below 90% within the academic year, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made.
- celebrating family events e.g. birthdays
- family holidays

**If your child’s absence is not authorised, the Education Welfare Service may look into the specifics of the case. Additionally, it may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice (please see below).**

## Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8.45 am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.00 am. If a child arrives late, they must be accompanied to the school office by a parent/carer and signed in.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.

- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. ***We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.***
- Registration closes at 9.10 am. Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfES guidance but will certainly be marked as late.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be directed to Owls after-school club and a fee may be charged. The school office will attempt to make contact with parents. Please note that the school office closes at 4.30pm.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence**

There are approximately 195 school days each year and 71 days of school holidays. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Headteachers from granting leave of absence during term time except where an application is made in advance, and the Headteacher considers that there are **exceptional** circumstances.

- Application for term time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent/s on the 'Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances' form available on the school website or from the school office (Appendix 1).
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to exceptional circumstances.
- If the absence is not authorised but is taken anyway, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent and the Education Welfare Officer notified.

### **Leavers**

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to

- give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving;
- confirm the school has your current contact details; and
- let us know when you move.

### **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Childrens Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **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 prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notice 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 becomes law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher 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 Headteacher, **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 85% and there are no less than 10 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.

**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.**

### ***Legal Note***

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

***"Every day counts..."***

Policy Reviewed:	September 2019
Next Review:	Summer Term 2021