

Federation of Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary School

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2024

All staff at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors, and the Local Authority, to building schools which serve the community, and of which the communities are proud.

School staff, along with the Local Authority, believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We will encourage and support families in ensuring their children maximise their educational opportunities through regular attendance, and that any difficulties that impact upon attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school;
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Provide medical evidence on the fourth day of absence if the absence is related to sickness.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- Monitor every pupil's attendance;
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence;
- Encourage good attendance;

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare Service.

GRANT FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The taking of leave during school time is not a *right* and can only be taken with authorisation from the Governing Board. A request for leave of absence during term time form can be obtained from the school office and a minimum of 14 days' notice should be given before the start of the absence.

The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Board, will only authorise leave in exceptional circumstances. The request for leave during term time form will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the school's Educational Welfare Officer ("EWO"). If appropriate, evidence of flights, holiday destination and address must be attached to the form. If leave is requested due to a family member being sick or sudden death, medical evidence or evidence of the funeral should also be submitted.

If leave is taken without authorisation, then consideration will be given to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The fines are issued to each parent, for each child, and are: £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days, in line with the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The Federation of Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- By celebrating and rewarding good and improved attendance;
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the EWO if the irregular attendance continues.

At the end of every term we may offer rewards to children who have excellent attendance. These may vary from term to term. When rewarding excellent attendance, we will take steps to ensure that children who have missed school to attend hospital appointments will not be disadvantaged.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or phone call is received reporting the pupil's absence by 9.30 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact the parent/carer. If the pupil is still absent for a second day, the school will attempt to speak to the parent/carer on the telephone and/or call the emergency contact numbers provided for the pupil.
- If by the morning of the third day the pupil is still absent with no known reason, a letter will be sent and the EWO will be notified to schedule a welfare check to the pupil's home address. If the school is unable to contact the parent/carer and/or the pupil, a welfare check will be carried out and may result in a referral to the Local Authority as a child missing in education.
- Persistent non-attendance, where absences cannot be justified in law, may result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. In addition, the school will support the Educational Welfare Service in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.
- If there are any safeguarding concerns the matter may be referred to the Local Authority for further investigation and/or the Police.

PUNCTUALITY

The school register is taken at 8.50 a.m., when pupils are expected to be present. Pupils arriving after 8.50 a.m. must sign in at the school office, they will then be given a late mark on the register. The school register closes at 9.15 a.m..

Children in Year 3 to Year 6 will be given a detention if they are late to school. They will be given 2 minutes for every minute that they are late.

The Education Welfare Service will complete regular late checks, should there be a pattern of continued lateness, a parent/carer may be asked to attend a meeting with the EWO.

If a pupil arrives after the close of the register, they are given an attendance mark for health and safety reasons, but are regarded in law as being absent. If a child persistently attends school after the close of the register a referral to the school's EWO will be made for consideration of prosecution. Lateness not only affects the learning of the pupil in question, but also affects the learning of others.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

We understand that children do become unwell and may need to stay at home to recover. This is perfectly acceptable and we ask that parents/carers telephone us and tell us if this is the case. If you do this, we can then authorise your child's absence. If a child is absent for more than four days, medical evidence will need to be provided.

Should you fail to inform the school of your child's absent we will be required to follow the procedures set out in Responding to Non-Attendance.

The Government classes children who fall below 90% attendance as persistently absent. If your child's attendance drops to this level, you will be placed on our cause for concern register and you will be invited in to school to discuss this further.

Persistent non-attendance, where absences cannot be justified in law, may result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in accordance with the Local Authority's penalty notice protocol. In addition, the school will support the Educational Welfare Service in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

A parent/carer is required to advise the school if they wish to leave. Please ask the school office for a Leaving School Form and include the date of the child's last day of attendance, new home address if applicable and confirmation of an in-year transfer application. If the child/ren are moving abroad, we will also request evidence of flights/tickets leaving the UK. A child will not be removed from our school roll until the Local Authority has authorised this and given us permission to remove the child/ren.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.

In the event the school has not been informed of the child's move, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and your child/ren may be reported to the Local Authority as a "child missing in education".

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Leadership team, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- Adopt the whole school policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence;
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWO and appropriate access to attendance data;
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- To work in close collaboration with the EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- Set whole school attendance targets;
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWO.

Office Staff:

- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually;
- To record all reasons for absences in the register;
- To liaise with the EWO regularly;
- To reinforce good practice at staff meetings;
- To share concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the EWO to the Headteacher.

Class Teachers:

- To complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- To record all known reasons for absences in the register;
- To inform the headteacher of concerns;
- To be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head of School.

School Website & Newsletters:

Publicise the following:

- Information about school holiday dates
- School session times
- Breakfast and After School Club details
- Attendance and punctuality policy
- Rewards