



Hemingford Grey
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY INCLUDING POLICY ON UNREPORTED ABSENCE

Date last reviewed and approved:

November 2017

HEMINGFORD GREY PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY INCLUDING POLICY ON UNREPORTED ABSENCE

The School aims to work in partnership with parents to ensure that all children registered at the School attend both regularly and punctually to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

The School expects attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

1. Parents' Responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend their registered school on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason, such as sickness, they should contact the school by 9.15am on the first morning of absence. If parents are aware that they will not be able to telephone between school opening and 9.15am, to aid early notification, the school telephone has answer phone facilities in order for a message to be left prior to school opening. Parents/Carers are to advise the expected date of return to school as that will be the next date that the office will investigate non-attendance.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should the parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence, the school will record such absence as unauthorised.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school from 8.50am for registration at 9.00am. If a child is late his/her parent should report directly to the school office. "Late" is defined as the child's name having been called and/or registers having already been sent to the office. It is important that the office is informed direct by the parent to ensure that the register is altered and to stop unnecessary telephone calls enquiring as to the child's absence.
- If your child is absent either due to illness or due to an unauthorised absence, they must not attend any event during the school day or on the evening of the day of absence.
- Should your child have sickness or diarrhoea they must not return to school within 48 hours of the last bout of illness.
- You are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term-time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday, and schools will not as a rule authorise leave for such holidays.
- Schools will only authorise leave for term-time holidays in exceptional circumstances. Schools will not generally authorise leave simply because a holiday booked in term-time is cheaper. Schools will look at each request individually and it is extremely unlikely that leave will be authorised if a child's attendance for the previous year is less than 95%. Nor will schools authorise leave near or during exam or test times, if it coincides with the start of the school year or if the school otherwise believes that it may have a harmful effect on the child's education.

- Very occasionally holidays of more than two weeks to visit family living overseas may be unavoidable. Parents should then discuss with the child's school the most appropriate time of year and point in the child's education for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.
- We strongly encourage parents to avoid, wherever possible, making medical and dental appointments during school time.

2. School Responsibilities

- The School will record and monitor attendance in accordance with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- In the event of persistent absence, the following procedures will take place:
 - If attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent home
 - If no improvement is seen during the following half term the Headteacher will telephone the parents/carers and a second letter will be sent home
 - If during the next half term there is no improvement to the child's attendance, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed by the school
- The Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team receives a daily report of children who are not in school and the reason why. If, as a result of this daily monitoring a concern is flagged, it will be addressed immediately.
- If a child is late for 3 or more sessions within a half term or 4 or more sessions within a full term, a letter will be sent home. If lateness becomes persistent with no improvement the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed. Punctuality is monitored on a weekly basis and if a concern is flagged, it will be addressed immediately.
- Registers will be called twice daily (at 9.00am and 1.15pm KS1 & 1.35pm KS2). Registers will close at 9.05am, 1.20pm and 1.40pm. Any child arriving after the close of registering will be recorded as late for that session.
- Teachers will complete registers online in accordance with the guidance. If the teacher has been advised directly by the parent/carer the reason for absence they will enter the appropriate code in the register.

The office will fill in the missing codes as each parent telephones explaining their child's non-attendance. A daily record will be kept of all absences compiled from the Class Registers and kept in the school office. Where no communication has been received from the child's parent/carer, the office will make telephone calls to the numbers nominated by the parent/carer to ascertain the whereabouts and safety of the child. The Headteacher monitors attendance half-termly (see Appendix 1 – procedures for attendance monitoring).

- All absence notes for medical appointments or similar and Leave of Absence forms are filed in the child's file.
- Attendance information is collected daily and this data will be used during meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer and the Headteacher. These meetings will, where

necessary, agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the Education Welfare Officer.

- The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
 - the Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;
 - appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children on their annual report;
 - clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
 - Local Authority parents/carers' leaflets will be sent to all new parents with the School Prospectus;
 - reminders via the Headteacher's newsletter of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

STATEMENT RELATING TO AUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

From the 1st September 2013, amendments to the 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Prior to authorising any absence, advice will be sought. If a request is not authorised and a child is still taken out of school, details of the absence and child's past attendance will be referred to Cambridgeshire Local Authority and a possible consequence could be a penalty fine. Please contact the school office should you wish to receive further information about Penalty Notices.

In light of the new regulations, the Governors at Hemingford Grey Primary School have defined 'exceptional circumstances' as follows:

An exceptional circumstance is a one-off unique situation. The Governors consider the following as examples of exceptional circumstances:

- Absence relating to significant trauma. The length of absence determined on an individual basis.
- Exams
- Nationally accredited educational programmes following discussion with Local Authority, School and the Accredited Body.
- A holiday following significant trauma or bereavement and the absence proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.

Requests for any leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher on the appropriate form at least 2 weeks' prior to the commencement of the absence period.

Please note:

If you choose to take your child out of school without absence being authorised, homework will not be provided for your child during the period of absence. In most cases, homework will also not be provided for a child whose absence is authorised due to exceptional circumstances.

Four weeks of absence per annum may put your child at risk of being persistently absent and may trigger intervention from the Education Welfare Officer.

Most importantly, please remember that any absence will impact on your child's academic and social progress.

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)

To: *The Headteacher of Hemingford Grey Primary School*

I wish to apply to have an 'avoidable' absence authorised, for:

Child's name Class/Year

Child's name Class/Year

Child's name Class/Year

Date from date to(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):

Address:

.....

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought at least 14 days in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren)'s attendance being satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. If the fine is not paid, a possible consequence is that you will be taken to court and this will result in a criminal record.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Office use only			<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised Signed _____ (office)
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable.

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....

☐ Absence authorised fromto (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of/...../20.....

current attendance % as of/...../20.....

current attendance % as of/...../20.....

Signed(Attendance officer or Headteacher)

Date.....

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AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional or unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in British maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

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- Exams
- Nationally accredited educational programmes following discussion with Local Authority, School and the Accredited Body.
- A holiday following significant trauma or bereavement and the absence proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.

Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.