

HITHERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Our Vision Statement

'Our vision is to create a school community where everyone feels valued, has the opportunity to explore and develop their strengths and is able to participate in new experiences. We aim to become an inspirational school to produce good citizens for the future in an atmosphere that promotes confidence, high academic achievement, physical health and emotional well-being.'

Document Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Change Reference
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Feb-08	Laura	Attendance and Punctuality.001_(D)	Created new draft document
Sept-08	Laura	Attendance and Punctuality.002_(D)	Changed name and format and e-mailed to Chris
Nov - 08	Chris	Attendance and Punctuality.003_(D)	Totally rewritten and sent to PP+C committee for approval
Nov-08	Laura	Attendance and Punctuality.003.1_(D)	Made changes
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<u>March 12</u>	<u>Chris and Arlette</u>	Attendance and Punctuality 004	Changes made and reviewed by PP&C

Distribution

Reviewers	Approvers	Distribution
PP&C Committee	Full Governing Body	

Hitherfield Primary School and Children's Centre Attendance Policy

At Hitherfield Primary School, we aim to create a positive and secure environment where children will be happy and safe and be actively encouraged to attend school regularly and on time. Regular school attendance is important, without it children cannot get maximum benefit from the opportunities for learning which are available to them. By law, all children of compulsory school age (between five and sixteen) must receive a proper full-time education. Children are rewarded for 100% attendance per term.

Parental Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. To this end, it is desirable that parents should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school whenever the child is absent and on the first day of absence. A good education will help give your child the best start in life. A good education can only be achieved if your child is attending school. Where a child's attendance drops below **90%**, the school will contact you about your child's attendance. Where attendance drops below **85%**, a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be made.

Registration and Lateness

Twice daily registration is a legal requirement. Registration takes place at 8.55am for all classes and again at 1.00/1.30pm for the afternoon session. The register will remain open until 9.00am and five minutes following lunchtime. Children arriving once the teacher has called the register, but before these times, will be marked as late (authorised). Children arriving after registration has closed will be marked as late (unauthorised). **If a pupil arrives late after registration (unauthorized) up to 10 times, the school will ask Lambeth's Courts officer to serve a Penalty Notice of £60 on the schools behalf.**

Authorised Absence Illness

There will be times when your child is too unwell to attend school. If this is the case, please telephone the school and if necessary leave a message stating your child's name, class and the reason for their absence, on the first morning of absence. Please do this before 9:15 a.m. If a child is absent at registration and no message has been received, office staff will contact the parent or carer to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. If your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, please remember that they need to be kept

at home until symptoms have gone. Where a child has up to or more than 5 days of illness during the term you may be required to provide a note from your GP. Failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorized and could incur a Penalty Notice. **NB: It is the school who authorises absence, not the parent/carer.**

Medical Appointments

Parents are asked to arrange these outside school hours whenever possible. Requests for a child to be allowed to leave school should be sent prior to the appointment. You may collect your child at the appropriate time from the school reception in good time for their appointment. Where possible, they should return to school after their appointment. For emergency appointments, first thing in the morning, please leave a message on the absence line, stating whether you expect them to return to school after their appointment. All appointment letters/cards must be shown to the school office for their records, so that the appropriate mark can be given.

Unauthorised Absence

If a child is absent from school without an acceptable reason, or prior authorisation, this will be considered an '**unauthorised absence**' and marked accordingly in the register. Unacceptable reasons for absence include: birthday treats, looking after siblings, shopping trips, oversleeping, closure of siblings school etc.

Absence Request Form

An absence request form must be handed in at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence where possible. The reasons must be clearly stated on the request form.

- No authorisation will be granted in retrospect
- Holidays during term time will not be authorised
- Authorisation may not be granted if the child concerned has had a high level of absence in the preceding 12 months, even if the reasons were unavoidable.
- Authorisation may not be granted if the school believes the disruption to a child's learning and progress will result in further learning difficulties.

Please think carefully before requesting term-time leave. Whilst we appreciate that holidays taken during term time are less expensive, there is a hidden cost to your child's education. Cheaper fares and lower costs are not considered as 'exceptional circumstances'

Parents who take their children out of school without permission will receive a Penalty Notice and will be liable to pay £60 per child. Penalty Notices*

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27

February 2004. A Penalty Notice is a fine* that is payable to Lambeth Local Authority not the school.

Penalty Notices are issued in the following circumstances:

- (a) overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- (b) parentally-condoned absences
- (c) unauthorised holidays in term time
- (d) excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- (e) persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

The Headteacher may request a penalty notice to be issued in any of the above circumstances

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £60 if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by Lambeth Local Authority.

Attendance will continue to have a very high profile at Hitherfield Primary School and parents will be regularly reminded in newsletters and meetings about the importance of good attendance.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence with or without explanation, the school will write to parents and may invite them to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Educational Welfare Officer

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer

Reviewing the policy

The school and its Governors will review this policy each year with its Education Welfare Officer.