



HARTWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Hartwell Primary is a Voluntary Controlled academy and, recognising its historic foundation, works to preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England. This includes the active promotion of Christian and British values and the respecting of those of other faiths or none.

'Believe, Aspire, Grow'

Contents

1. Statement of Intent
2. Aims
3. Definitions
4. Requests for leave of absence
5. Reporting Absence
6. Procedures relating to attendance
7. Promoting good attendance
8. Whole school attendance targets
9. Monitoring and review

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 We believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is ensuring that children are happy in school and therefore want to be in school every day. The law requires that children attend school for 190 days each year and every day is important. Attendance at school is essential for children to gain most benefit from the learning opportunities offered to them in the classroom.
- 1.2 When absent from school for any reason, children can miss important elements of their learning which can make future learning more difficult. Persistent absence can leave many gaps in a child's learning, making it difficult for them to keep up with their peers in the classroom.
- 1.3 At Hartwell we promote excellent attendance with a range of rewards and incentives and by highlighting attendance concerns as early as possible with parents and, where necessary, with the Education Entitlement Team. We also make the best possible provision we can for children who, for whatever the reason, are prevented from coming to school.

2. Aims

2.1 We aim to...

- Promote daily, punctual attendance at school as essential for children's learning
- Identify attendance or punctuality issues as early as possible
- Support parents/carers in ensuring their children attend school every day, on time
- Ensure that pupil leave during term time is only authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Follow up all incidences of unauthorised absence with clear and robust procedures

3. Definitions

3.1 Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child is absent for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised, parents and carers do not have the authority to do this. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carer will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours: the school would deem this absence as unauthorised.

3.2 Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of both the school and the parent/carer.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even if this absence is supported by a parent/carer.

3.3 Where absence cannot be avoided, for example, where a child is too unwell to attend school, it is important that the time missed is kept to a minimum. We expect parents to ensure that their GP is involved in any ongoing medical issues which cause regular absence from school and to keep school informed of such matters. If a child has had sickness and/or diarrhoea, there must be a minimum of 24 hours following the last incidence of sickness/diarrhoea before returning to school.

4. Requests for Leave of Absence

4.1 There are some reasons where occasional absence from school is unavoidable and would therefore be recorded as an authorised absence.

4.2 Authorised Absence

Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness/medical emergency
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (although these should be taken out of school time wherever possible)
- Days of religious observance (kept to a minimum)
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- External examinations
- When Traveller children are travelling with parents as part of their trade
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- COVID-19 related absence where self-isolation is a requirement

There may be other reasons for absence, which could be recorded as authorised absence, at the discretion of the headteacher.

4.3 Unauthorised Absence

Unfortunately, there are some occasions where parents/carers choose to remove children from school for reasons which do not justify time out of school. As it is essential to discourage such absences, these will not be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

The following examples are some of the reasons which will not be authorised:

- Shopping (this includes shopping for school items, such as shoes)
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Lack of childcare provision before or after school
- Difficulties in transporting a child to or from school
- When COVID-19 is given as a reason where this does not follow the current government guidelines

4.4 Term Time Leave

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child however, the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and come into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence will not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday, this includes visiting family that live abroad. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and it is only for the headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional.

School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for any activities other than school.

In assessing an application for term-time leave for the purposes of a family holiday under exceptional circumstances, the following factors will be considered by the Headteacher:

- Previous Attendance - minimum 97% attendance is required for the previous 12 months
- Previous Term Time Leave - one full academic year with no leave requests must have passed
- Assessments and Testing – Reception and Year 1 have an assessment period between March and June (leave will not be authorised in any circumstances during this time) Year 2 and Year 6 have Statutory Assessment

Tests/Tasks which they are routinely assessed against throughout the year (leave will not be authorised for children in Year 2 or in Year 6)

- Time of Year – Leave will not be authorised for any pupil at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. throughout September)
- Retrospective Applications – Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised
- Academic Concerns – Leave will not be granted where there are concerns regarding a pupil's learning and progress as time out of school will certainly be to the pupil's detriment

All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the headteacher by completing the school application form. A parent/carer who the child lives with must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply us with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school reception for us to copy.

If a leave request has not been authorised and the leave is still taken, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Extended leave will not be authorised except in extremely rare circumstances and an appointment must be made to speak to the headteacher regarding such an application.

If absence reaches 20 days then a child's name may be removed from the school roll, unless there are extreme exceptional circumstances, e.g. the child is seriously ill.

5. Reporting Absence

- 5.1** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the SIMs electronic register using the code 'N'. This register is then saved and closed by 9:05am every morning and 1:30pm every afternoon.
- 5.2** The office will endeavour to contact a parent/carer (first response) in order to ascertain an explanation for the absence, if the parent/carer has not already notified the school. If there is any doubt or concern about the whereabouts of a child school's safeguarding procedures must be followed.
- 5.3** If a child is absent a telephone call is expected from the parent/carer to explain the absence. A note/completed form may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, eg if the child has a medical appointment/a music exam.

6. Procedures relating to attendance

- 6.1** Attendance is monitored closely on a weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis. This is to ensure that school attendance is to a good standard as well as attendance of individual attendance. It also gives an opportunity to promote attendance at school (see section 7 for further details).
- 6.2** At Hartwell Primary School we follow Northamptonshire County Council's recommended procedure for persistent absenteeism (when attendance falls below 90%), see the Attendance Monitoring Form (Appendix 1).
- 6.3** However, we also take the following proactive steps prior to absence becoming persistent:
 - The headteacher, either personally or delegate the duty, will contact the parent to discuss absence concerns. It will be through the headteacher's regular monitoring that concerns relating to attendance will be identified. We consider any attendance rates below 95% to be of concern.
 - If a leave of absence request form is submitted by a parent/carer for term time leave that falls into the category of being unauthorised according to this policy, the headteacher will contact to the parent/carer and offer to further discuss this matter.

7. Promoting good attendance

7.1 In order to promote attendance with our whole school community, thus embedding the importance to a child's learning of being in school every day (as long as the child is fit and well to do so), the following practices are in place and followed:

- Good attendance is celebrated periodically on the school newsletter.
- 100% attendance is celebrated every half term for individuals with a certificate and reward.
- For every half term a child has 100% attendance they receive a numbered badge which they can accumulate over the half terms. For example, on half term with 100% attendance, the child will receive a 'one' badge; if a child has 100% attendance for two consecutive half terms they will receive their 'two' badge.
- At the end of the year children with 'good attendance' of 97% and above will be awarded a certificate (see Appendix 2) and children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole academic year will receive a special certificate and reward.
- **Bullets points 2-4 have been suspended during COVID-19. Families are supported on an individual basis during this time to ensure good attendance where the absence is not COVID-19 related.**

8. Whole School Attendance Targets

8.1 The school sets a whole school attendance target each year. The target is agreed by the Headteacher and the Governors. This target is challenging yet realistic, and based in relation to national primary school attendance data.

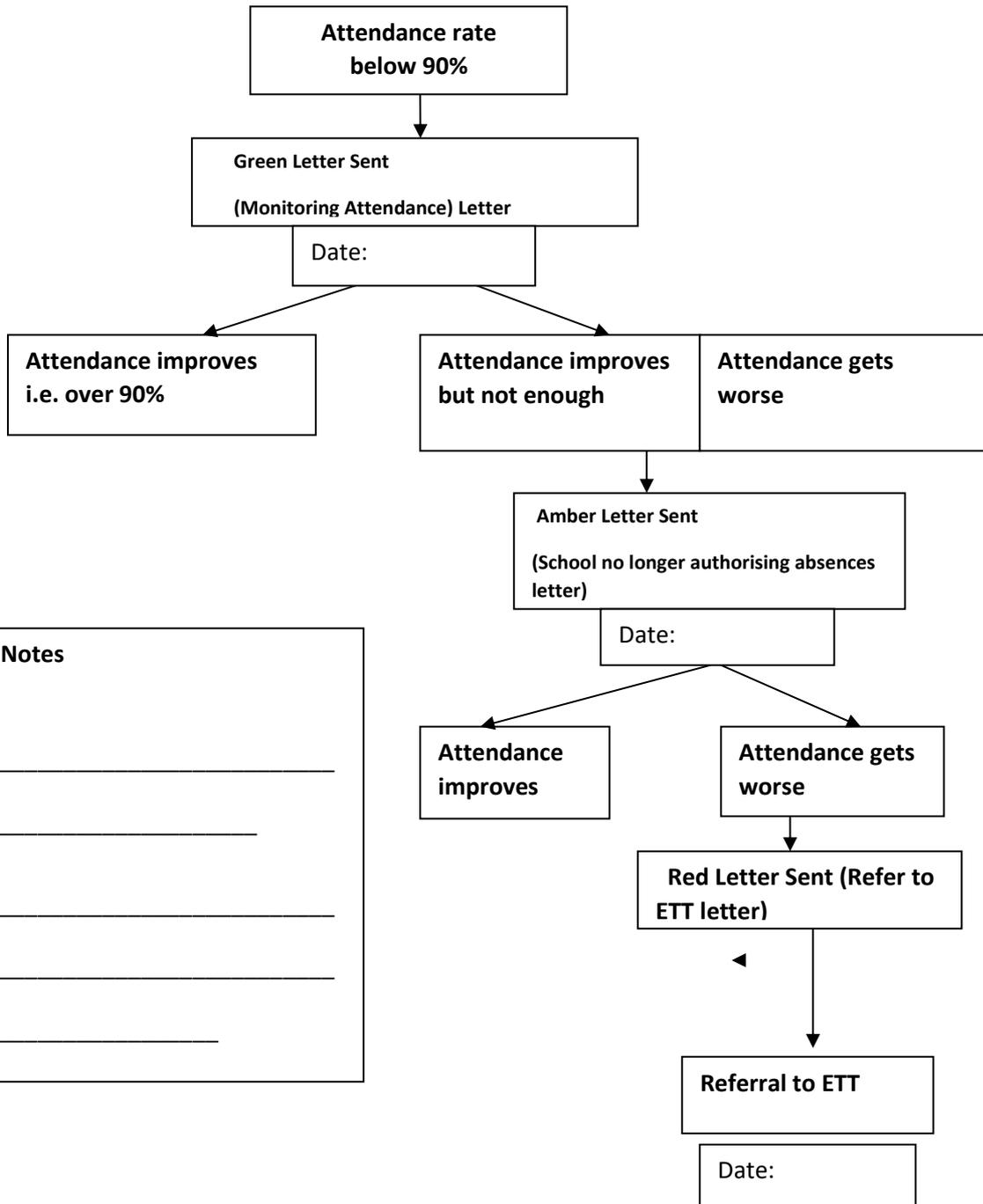
9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 The headteacher reports attendance termly to the governors through the 'Headteacher's Report to Governors'. Governors examine closely the information provided to them to effectively scrutinise that the policy is being followed robustly to ensure that attendance in this school is good or better.

9.2 Attendance records are kept on SIMs, the school's MIS.

APPENDIX 1
Attendance Monitoring Form

Childs Name: _____ Class: _____



Additional Notes

APPENDIX 2

Giving your child the best start in life is every parents wish. The opportunity to learn and make progress is essential to improve their life chances.

How good is your child's attendance?

The percentages in the boxes below refer to the total absence during the year, including sickness, holidays, medical appointments etc.

| | |
|--|---|
| A* (Stage 1) | Your child's attendance is above 97% They are absent less than six days in the school year They <i>are highly likely</i> to achieve their potential, enabling them to continue their studies and raise their earning potential in the world of work |
| Green (Stage 2) | Your child's attendance is 95% plus They are absent less than 10 days in the school year They <i>will probably</i> achieve grades that will allow them to continue their studies and raise their earning potential in the world of work |
| Amber (Stage 3) | Your child's attendance is 90-95% They are missing up to 20 days in each school year – a full month! This equates to 220 days of absence over 11 years of schooling, more than ONE YEAR of school missed. This amount of absence will make progress more difficult and reduce their level of success |
| Amber (Stage 4) | Your child's attendance is between 80-90% This means they are absent up to 40 days in each school year – EIGHT WEEKS!! Missing this much time will make it extremely difficult for them to keep up in lessons and make progress |
| Red Attendance Alert (Stage 5&6) | Your child's attendance is below 80% YOU NEED TO TAKE ACTION NOW! This amount of absence will seriously affect their earning potential and life chances. As a parent you may face court action! |

Your child's future is important. Help us to help them by reinforcing that Every Lesson Counts!