

# **The Federation of Heavers Farm and Heavers Farm Primary Schools**

## **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2021**

All staff at Heavers Farm Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors, and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community, and of which the community is 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

#### **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. All applications for leave must be made in writing to the Head of School.

The Head of School, on behalf of the Governing Board, will only authorise leave in exceptional circumstances. Written applications must be made in advance to the Head of School.

If leave is taken without authority, then consideration will be given to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice in the sum of £60.00 to the parent for *each* child.

## **ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

Heavers Farm Primary School 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 EWO if the irregular attendance continues.

At the end of every term we may offer prizes to children to reward 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 from the parent/carer by 10.00 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If we are not able to get in contact with the family, a letter will be sent.

- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss their child's absence. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the school's Educational Welfare Officer.
- 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.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

The school register is taken at 8.45am, when students are expected to be present. Pupils arriving after 8.50am must sign in at the school office, they will then be given a late mark on the register. The school register closes at 9.15am.

If a student 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 schools after the close of the register consideration will be given to (a) the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice in the sum of £60.00 or (b) a referral to our EWO for prosecution. Lateness not only affects the learning of the student 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 telephone us and tell us if this is the case. If you do this can then authorise your child's absence.

Some parents/carers may be asked to bring in medical evidence every time their child is ill, even it is just ½ day. You will be notified by the school in writing if this applies to you.

If you do not let the school know why your child is absent we will text or telephone you to on the first day of absence to find out why your child is not in school.

If your child drops below 90% you will be placed on our cause for concern register and you will be invited in to school to discuss this further.

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## **CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform our school as soon as possible. A pupil 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 that the school has not been informed of the child's move, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## **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 policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents 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 liaise with the EWO regularly;
- To reinforce good practice at staff meetings;
- To share the class teacher's concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the EWO.

## **Class teachers:**

- To complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- To record all reasons for absences in the register;
- To inform the Head of School 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 Club details
- Attendance and punctuality policy