



The Quercus Federation

Attendance Policy

Hurst Green Church of England Primary School and Nursery

This policy was adopted on September 2020

This policy is due for review on September 2021

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Signed (Head of School)

Date:



This policy reflects the vision and aims of Hurst Green Church of England School and Nursery by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. These need to be supported with medical/ other evidence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.



Following attendance dropping below 95%, a meeting will be held to discuss any issues and support that may be required and the Head of School may begin '10 in 10' where 10 unauthorised absences within a 10 week period will result in a fixed penalty.

Procedures

**Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend regularly.
Parents are also responsible for ensuring that children arrive on time.**

The Beginning of the Day

- Children who walk to school, or those who are dropped off, should not arrive before 8:45.
- The gate is opened at 8.45 each morning, Reception and Key Stage One parents can accompany their children to the classroom in term 1. Key Stage Two children should walk to their class on their own.
- Registers are called at the start of the morning session at 9.00 am.
- Children are marked 'Late' if they arrive after the register has been called.
- The 'Late' is marked as an "Unauthorised Absence" if they do not arrive by the official 'close' of registers at 9.15 am.
- ***After five 'L' late marks, you will invited in for a meeting to discuss the school will reducing the complimentary 15 minutes allowed before close of registers and any further arrival after 9am will be marked as 'U' unauthorised.***
- ***10 'Unauthorised Absence' marks within a 10 week period will result in a penalty being issued.***
- Children arriving late must report to the school office to be signed in.
- If a child has not arrived by the time of morning registration - and we have not received any advance notice of their absence - parents will be contacted by 9.30 to confirm that their child is supposed to be away.

The End of the Day

- School finishes at 3.15pm each day for all classes except nursery who finish at 3.00pm.
- Parents who know they are going to be late collecting their child should contact the school as soon as possible.
- Children whose parents are late must wait in foyer by the office, if your child is not collected by 3.25pm they will be put into tea time club and a charge may be incurred. We reserve the right to change this to 3.20pm if your child is regularly picked up from school late.
- **Parents must inform the school office if another adult is collecting a child.** This must be in writing if this is a regular agreement. Parents must confirm in writing if a child is permitted to walk home.

COVID-19 Arrangements

- The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the school to introduce staggered starts, break times, lunch times and ends to our school day. As stated in our COVID-19 Policy it is important that parents and children adhere to the staggered start and finish times for the safety of all.



- Parents/carers who do not arrive in the morning within your allocated time slot will not be able to go in until the last group of parents have left. This may result in children getting a late mark or unauthorised absence mark for that session.

From September 2020, it is expected that all children will attend school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. This means:

- It is a parent's duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- The school is required to record attendance and follow up absence
- The school is able to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the local authority code of conduct

Absences for Medical Reasons

- Parents should notify the school at the earliest opportunity - and in advance if possible - if their child is going to be absent, by calling the absence line.
- If we do not receive confirmation of the reason for an absence it is marked as "Unauthorised".

Absence for Holidays

Parents are strongly requested not to take holidays in term time.

In line with East Sussex County Council Guidance, absences are only authorised in exceptional circumstances – holidays are not considered an exceptional circumstance. Examples of exceptional circumstances are detailed below.

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Procedure for Term Time Holidays

1. Parents to complete and return a 'Withdrawal from Learning Application'.
2. The Head of School makes the decision and school returns the completed form to the parent, keeping a full copy on file.
3. If the absence is unauthorised and subsequently taken, the 'Withdrawal from Learning Application' will be forwarded to the Legal Interventions Team at East Sussex County Council.



4. A fixed penalty notice may be issued to the parent/carer.

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- Weekly attendance awards for classes shared weekly in collective worship and in the school newsletter.
- Termly 100% attendance awards certificates for individual children.
- Termly letters to parents informing them of their child's attendance.
- **Meetings with parents if attendance declines below 95% where the school will discuss the implementation of '10 in 10'. An agreement will be issued that results in a fixed penalty being served should your child have 10 unauthorised absences in 10 weeks.**
- Support Plans and Local Authority intervention if attendance falls below 85%
- Attendance of children on the Child Protection Register are monitored closely by the Head of School.
- Attendance is reported to governors each term.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Allison Flack – Headteacher

Katie Withycombe – School Secretary

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.