



Hillside Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY DETAILS:

Legal Status: Non - Statutory

Adopted: September 2022

Last Review: September 2022

Next Review: September 2023

Introduction:

Hillside Junior School is a warm and caring environment where children can reach their full potential. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Hillside Junior School expects children to achieve 96% attendance. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report termly on your child's attendance.
- Contact you if we feel that attendance is an issue and is affecting your child's learning
- Contact you if we think punctuality is affecting your child's learning
- Celebrate attendance by sharing class achievements in weekly assemblies
- Reward 100% attendance at the end of term assemblies
- Reward classes who achieve 100% for a week with a non-uniform day
- Monthly prize draw for children who have attended over 96%
- Hold a weekly intervention group for those children who are have persistent absenteeism
- Organise different pupil/parent activities to encourage school attendance

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified and formally recorded by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Lateness may also be considered an absence, particularly if a child arrives after the registers have closed. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason for example illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes which are beyond the control of the parent. Acceptable absence for religious observance will be authorised. SACRE guidance will be observed.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Participation Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers 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
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed and for which there are not exceptional circumstances
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your 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 usually make things worse in the long term.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns to school, promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA

level or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and you will be informed of this. In some circumstances, if a child's attendance falls below 90% and they are absent due to illness the parent may be asked to provide medical evidence that their child is too ill to attend school. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we will inform the Participation Team of all PA cases.

Below is a schedule which may help parents to understand the impact absence has on attendance

Attendance during 1 School year	Approximate Number of Days absence	Which is about This many weeks absent	This means missing Approximately this many Weeks over 4 years at school
95%	10 days	2 weeks	½ term
90%	20 days	4 weeks	1 term
85%	30 days	6 weeks	1 ½ terms
80%	40 days	8 weeks	¾ of a school year

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school by 9.15am on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Participation Team if attendance moves below 90%.

- Parents will be issued with one written reminder requesting a reason for any unexplained absences. Failure to supply a reason for their child's absence(s) within 7 days will lead to the absence(s) being unauthorised.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents for a variety of reasons, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child, by making sure we always have an up to date contact numbers. If we don't have this, then something important may be missed. We endeavour to send out Data Collection Sheets during the Autumn Term of each school year, for parents to check contact information is correct.

The Participation Team:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is almost always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Team from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days). If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or participationteam@hillingdon.gov.uk

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. If any child arrives after 8.55am and the gate has been closed, they will need to be signed in by an adult at the school reception, stating the reason for the lateness, before they can go to their class.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.40 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked at 8.45 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9am the registers will be closed. In the afternoon registers close at 1.30pm. Closing a register is a formal legal procedure. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after these times they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This could possibly result in parents facing a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record we will write to you and you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional and Holiday Leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off during term time to go on holiday.

It is widely known that the link between a good attendance and good attainment is irrefutable. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.

As of 1st September 2013 the government has set a directive to all schools that all holiday leave is to be refused.

Requests for Exceptional Leave must always be in advance and in writing on the form available from the school office or downloaded from the website. The Headteacher will communicate with families applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good attendance habits and the links between attainment and attendance. It is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide on what they feel is a reasonable amount of time for family emergencies and if Exceptional Leave is authorised, work will be set for the child to complete whilst absent from school and will be checked by the Headteacher upon their return to school. Absences are unlikely to be authorised if a child's attendance is below 96%.

All holidays during term time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices will be issued to each parent/carer concerned and for each child's absences. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Participation Team may summon each parent to Court.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress of this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletters and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Hillside Junior School Governing Body

Mr A. Davies, Headteacher

Miss L. Archer, Attendance Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.