

## **Hodge clough Primary School Attendance Policy**

**Authorised by Governors February 2017**

**To be reviewed by Governors February 2018**

### **Statement of Intent**

The aim of Hodge Clough is to:

- Facilitate pupils' regular attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all of their pupils.
- Clearly inform parents of their role in maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Follow the rule of law and the requirements of the DofE
- Follow advice and guidance from the LA.

### **School Attendance - the Statutory Framework**

Education Act 1944 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.  
Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law". a) From 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended. The amendments remove all reference to the statutory threshold that a Head teacher may grant up to 10 school days leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time.

b) The amendments make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

c) Head teachers should revise the school's policy on the granting or otherwise of term time holiday in line with the new regulations. Should the Head teacher feel that exceptional circumstances are clear in the application for holiday leave then it is up to Head teachers to determine the length of any leave granted.

d) The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that unauthorised absence is investigated and where deemed necessary and appropriate that compulsory school attendance is enforced via the prosecution of the responsible parent. However, to be effective in raising, promoting and sustaining good levels of attendance it is not just the Local Authorities enforcement role that is important; schools have a crucial role in supporting, encouraging and informing parents and pupils of expected attendance levels and school policy and action

including referrals to the LA with the possible outcome of a Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

e) In supporting schools to reduce holiday absence the Local Authority has provision to receive referrals from schools to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday leave during term time. Where the exceptional circumstances criteria has not been met and schools warn parents in writing that the absence will be unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority this provision can be actioned if the school feel this is an appropriate course of action. The Penalty Notice is issued initially at £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days of issue. Should the parent(s) fail to pay this then Penalty Notice fine increases to £120 per parent per child from the 22nd day of issue to the 28th. Subsequently to this if payment is not received the Local Authority will consider initiating prosecution proceedings for the unauthorised holiday absence.

f) In August 2013 the Government reviewed its guidance to schools, academies and Local Authorities regarding attendance matters. This guide gives important information on the use of national attendance and absence codes and of the Local Authority's role to investigate and prosecute unauthorised absence.

g) Please find the link below to the Department for Education's website page to obtain a copy of this guidance.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/f00221879/schoolattendance> Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

## Key Points

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.

Whilst it is right for school to understand pupils and their families have problems, we still expect regular attendance at school.

Lateness will be actively discouraged.

Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation will be required. All unexplained absence will be treated as unauthorised. School will make enquiries as to why the child is absent.

School is not obliged to accept parental notes if there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered. In such cases the absence will be unauthorised.

## Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations in 1991 introduced a further requirement

that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Oldham Local Authority requires all schools to use the standard symbols for marking registers.

In accordance with current legislation, each Class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 8.30 am and 1.30pm (juniors) and 8.50 and 1.20 (infants) the information will then be saved in the school office before being recorded on SIMS.

It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after Class registration has taken place, but before the close of the registers. (between 8.30 and 8.50am)

In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

If a child is continually late for school, the Attendance Officer and then the Head teacher should be informed. The parents will then be contacted to discover any problem or reason for the continual lateness.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses' registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office and sign in where their attendance will be recorded. The pupil's record in the register will be amended as appropriate.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances.

### **Registration Procedure**

Registers will be completed as quickly as convenient, preceding both daily sessions. Only 10 minutes of the school day have been allocated for the registration procedure. Registers will be saved to the school office following this registration period.

Pupils present will be recorded by a diagonal line.

Pupils not present will be recorded by an N and then later amended to the appropriate mark. .

## **Late**

Pupils arriving at school after registration in the mornings must report to the school office and sign in, the entry will be adjusted in the class register. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration.

An explanation note may authorise this absence, e.g. visit to doctor/dentist.

## **Absence**

The school prospectus states:

“Parents are asked to notify the school by telephone or letter if their child is absent for any reason. On the completion of an appropriate LA form, which is obtainable from the office, the Head teacher may grant a holiday of up to two weeks. It must be pointed out that extra work will not normally be set to compensate for extra holiday taken during term time”.

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary, on occasion, to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences. Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol. Reporting by telephone, text or e-mail or verbally to a member of staff or by note are all acceptable.

This reason will be logged against the child’s name.

We operate a first day absence system through one of the above forms of communication. On the first day a child is absent, if school have not received a reason for the absence, a phone call or text message will be sent to the primary contact telephone number within SIMs requesting a reason for the absence.

This will be recorded within the attendance part of SIMs.

If we receive a reason as a result of sending a text message, e-mail or phone call the log will show that the reason was received because school had to make contact first.

If a reason is not received after sending a text message, it will be logged against that absence that school did request a reason via text message.

If, after two weeks, no satisfactory reason has been given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

An unauthorised absence is an absence from school without a valid reason by a parent/carer or an absence without the knowledge of the parent/carer. The former is unlikely, as contact will be

made by school to enquire about the reasons for non-attendance if none is received by school on the first day of absence.

An unauthorised absence, which gives cause for concern, will be referred to the Attendance Service. A record of any actions taken will be kept in school.

A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED absence is included at the end of this

Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil school will involve the Attendance Officer.

We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised and unauthorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

### **Religious Observance**

Children are entitled to leave of absence for religious observance in the family faith.  
Requesting Leave of Absence

Parents must request for leave of absence to the attendance officer directly or via the Deputy or Head teacher.

### **Leave in term time will only be given in exceptional circumstances.**

Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the head teacher and governing body.

The following requests for leave of absence will automatically be unauthorised.

Any holidays or general leave.

Leave of absence leading up to year 6 SATs- this is the time children are consolidating learning for their national tests for the end of Key Stage 2.

### **Reporting Absence**

Class teachers will report persistent absences directly to the Attendance officer or via the Head teacher.

A brief record of children's attendance is reported on termly and annual report to parents.

Persistent Absence (currently set at 90% and below or 10 days continuous absence) is reported to the LA every half term.

Only school may authorise a pupil's absence.

All absences must be explained by the pupil's parents / carers.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

We expect that pupils:

Will attend school regularly.

Will arrive on time.

Will be prepared for the demands of the school day.

Will inform staff if there are any problems that may impinge on their ability to attend school.

### **Parents/Carers**

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

Their child attends school regularly (at least 95%)

Their child is on time.

They contact the school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.

Their child is appropriately dressed and equipped for the school day.

### **Class teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class and maintaining an accurate manual register.

If the teacher becomes concerned about absence, then the pupil should be referred to the School attendance officer.

### **Attendance Officer**

Has responsibility for the attendance of all pupils from nursery through to year 6.

Respond to concerns raised by teachers.

Checks the registers on a daily basis and will contact parents and carers on the first day of absence where it is unexplained.

Record reasons of absence on SIMS.

Liaise with families and escalate concerns accordingly through letters, referrals, initial meetings and Fast Track meetings.

To establish any reasons of concern for absence such as poor health or home conditions.

Confirm attendance codes and discuss with the Head if there is unusual or exceptional circumstances.

Updates the electronic registers (SIMS) on a weekly basis.

Reports persistent absence to the LA half termly.

Liaise with the LA attendance service as necessary.

Submit referrals to the LA as per their guidelines of any 10 unauthorised sessions.

To provide incentives for pupils with good and excellent attendance.

### **Head Teacher**

Make any final decisions on acceptability of reasons for absence and then the authorisation or not of the absence.

To be the point of escalation for concerns regarding attendance.

To oversee the Attendance Officer's role and monitor attendance periodically.

### **Referral to LA Attendance Officer**

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When making a referral to the school's Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

Action already taken.

Up to date and comprehensive attendance record including reasons given.

Any SEN needs of the child.

Any other home circumstances and identified challenges with the parents.

Any health concerns or diagnosis.

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**Official registration codes.**

Present (a.m.)	/
Present (p.m.)	\
Educated off-site	B
Other authorised circumstances	C
Dual registration (attending other establishment)	D
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	E
Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	G
Illness (not appointment)	I
Transition time (at other school)	J
Late (before the close of register)	L
Late (after registration closed)	U
Medical or dental appointment	M