

HURST GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

| Policy for the attention of | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Audience | Key Audience | Optional Audience | Additional/Notes |
| Senior Leadership Team | √ | | |
| Teachers | √ | | |
| Teaching Assistants | √ | | |
| Administrative Staff | √ | | |
| Lunchtime Supervisors | | √ | |
| Site Manager | | √ | |
| Cleaners | | √ | |
| Governors | √ | | |
| Parents | √ | | |
| Website | √ | | |
| Local Authority | | √ | |

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Responsibility of | School Improvement Committee |
| Review frequency | Every two years |
| Previous version | 5 February 2018 |
| This version agreed | 3 February 2020 |
| Next review date | Spring term 2022 |

Attendance Policy

It is a legal requirement that all parents ensure that their children attend school regularly. They should also ensure that they arrive on time, correctly dressed and in a condition to learn. It is only the School within the context of the law that can approve absence, not parents. Therefore, only the School can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. This has to be recorded in the attendance register against the child's record of attendance.

Parental Support

The role of the parent in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical. At Hurst Green Primary School we work hard to maintain effective and positive links with our parents and thus ensure that they are contacted at an early stage to deal with any unexplained absences of their child. Attendance at Hurst Green is good and the school acknowledges good attendance by rewarding children. Children are rewarded with certificates for perfect attendance, termly and annually.

Marking the Attendance Register

Registers must be marked at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon session. Class teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of pupils in their care; attendance and punctuality is an important feature of this. **The attendance register is a legal document and must be completed accurately and on time.**

- Registers must be completed using the electronic registers.
- Any absenteeism must also be recorded on the attendance sheet (paper copy) and sent to the school office. **It is crucial that this procedure is carried out in the case of an emergency.**
- Doors close at 8.55am. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late and parents have to sign them in at the school office with an explanation for the lateness.
- If a child is unable to attend school, parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence. Please note if we have not been contacted by you, it is part of our school policy for a member of the Admin Team to contact parents on the first day of absence to enquire about your child's absence, which also ensures that your child is safe and has not set out to School and failed to arrive. If we are unable to contact anyone on the contact list for your child we may make a home visit.
- All absences must be followed up. Acceptable methods of communication can be a note, a personal visit from the parent/guardian, or another responsible adult, or a phone call.
- When a satisfactory reason for the absence is received then the absence can be classed as authorised.
- If no satisfactory reason has been received, this should be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy.

Where children miss registration altogether and parents fail to provide an adequate explanation, the child may be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Lateness

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time. Registers open at 8.55am and close 30 minutes after the start of the session. If a child arrives after the register has been taken (i.e. after 9.00am) but before the registers have closed, they are marked as late (code L). If a child arrives after the registers have closed with no relevant reason (e.g. doctors appointment) they are marked as an unauthorised late (code U).

Children arriving to school after the doors are closed must enter through the main entrance and be signed into school by a parent.

Regular lateness will be followed up in the same way as developing patterns of absence. Persistent lateness is also reviewed and a letter sent to parents reminding them of registration times and may be referred to the Education Investigation Service.

Planned Absences

Like all Local Authorities Dudley are concerned about the disruption planned absences in term time cause to a child's education. The key message is that good consistent attendance at school is crucial to giving a child the best chance of success and in fulfilling their true potential.

Parents are asked to note the following:

- Parents wishing the School to consider authorising an absence for any reason should read these notes carefully and complete the Absence Request Form (which is available from the school office and the school website).
- Any request for leave of absence must be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the absence.
- Parents need to consider carefully before making any request for absence as any time away from school can be detrimental to your child's education.
- Each case will be reviewed individually. In considering a request, the School will take account of the effects of absence on your child's education as well as your child's attendance record.
- Parents should not assume that completing the form guarantees that the absence request will be approved and should bear this in mind before booking holidays.
- The School will usually respond in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the form informing you whether your request has been authorised as an exceptional circumstance.
- Should the School decide to grant the leave of absence but the child does not return to school at the time he/she is expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the

School to explain/justify the continuing absence or make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the School could be withdrawn.

- Should the school decide not to grant the leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- This may be subject to a Penalty Notice costing up to £60 within 21 days per parent per child. This will increase to £120 if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period may result in court action. This can include offences committed before the 1 September 2013 for notices issued on or after that date.

Request for permission for absence during term time

2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

For holidays

- If a request is made for a holiday during term time there will need to be exceptional reasons as to why the holiday cannot be taken during the 14 weeks of school holidays.
- The granting of leave of absence for the purpose of an annual holiday in school term time is a matter for consideration and decision by the School.
- Please note that reasons such as cheap holiday offers or it being the only time an adult is available to take time off will not be granted as authorised – there should be exceptional reasons as to why the holiday cannot be taken during the 14 non term time weeks.
- A holiday taken without the permission of the School will be classed as an unauthorised absence and may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent.
- It must be emphasised that holidays taken in term time can be disruptive to a child's education. Children are put at a disadvantage by missing days/weeks of what is a carefully structured programme of work.

The Headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**.

Permission may be refused for an absence if your child's attendance is low – any child with attendance under 90% is monitored on a monthly basis by the school.

There is no automatic right or entitlement for parents to take children out of school during term time.

The school term and holiday dates list is published at least a year in advance on the school website and Dudley MBC's website which allows plenty of time for parents to plan holidays and other planned absences accordingly.

Deciding whether to grant a request

In making a decision the Headteacher will take the following into account:-

- The reason given for the absence (i.e. the “exceptional” circumstances)
- The time of the year and/or term
- The stage of education and progress and the effects of the requested absence
- The child’s previous attendance and punctuality record – including any patterns of absence
- The nature of the trip
- Whether the child will miss any preparations for tests/exams
- Whether the child will miss any tests or exams

Other absences

Leave of absence may be given for the child to attend a medical or dental appointment.

Obviously appointments should be made out of School hours wherever possible and should not normally require more than a few hours/half a day absence from School. Afternoon appointments avoiding morning English and Maths lessons are less disruptive to your child’s education.

Leave of absence may be given for a child to attend a very special occasion such as a close family wedding, funeral or award ceremony.

Children should never be absent from school for the purpose of shopping trips, looking after younger children/parents, birthdays or ‘days out’.

The School will publish details of events on the school website and by newsletter which inform parents of important dates for the term. This will include, where relevant, details of assessment weeks for year groups as well as the week of the statutory end of Key Stage tests for Year 6 pupils. Please note that absences for holidays will not be authorised during these weeks as it is vitally important children are in School to take part in these.

Authorising absence

Authorised absence will be granted when it can be demonstrated that:

- The child was given permission for leave of absence by the Headteacher
- The child was ill or prevented from attendance by any unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s parents belong.