

# Headcorn Primary School

## Attendance Policy



This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, and at any other time if changes are required to comply with changes in legislation, regulation or national or KCC advice. Any amendments will require the approval of the full Governing Body.

Date of approval by Governing Body	December 2019
Signature of Chair of Governors	J Keeler
Signature of Head Teacher	S Symonds
Date Due for review	December 2019 (3 years)

The KCC Attendance Service model attendance policy (December 2015) has been adopted by the Governing Body of Headcorn Primary School.

## Statement of Intent

Headcorn Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents and carers have a duty to promote full attendance at Headcorn Primary School.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' and carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents and carers should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.**

The two pupil gates on Kings Road open at 8.30am to allow children and parents and carers to arrive before the start of school at 8.50 am. **All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.**

## The Role of the School Staff

At Headcorn Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance but is specifically supported by the Administrator and the Inclusion Lead.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Head Teacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the School Administrator (Attendance Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents and carers are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.

- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents and carers requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes).
- Parents and carers informed annually of child's attendance figure.

### **Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance**

- 95 - 100% attendance – Class teacher to investigate and notify the Head Teacher of concerns alongside School Administrator monitoring generally and notifying the Head Teacher of concerns. School Administrator to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance – monitored by Head Teacher and School Administrator. School intervention letters/meeting with parents and carers – consider Penalty Notice or Early Help Notification.
- Below 90% - School Administrator to Advise Attendance Service of child's attendance and consider Attendance Service. Where the absences have not been authorised consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer (SLO) and a referral to PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service may be considered.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### **Lateness**

At Headcorn Primary School the register is taken at 9.00 am and 1pm for Year R/1, 1.15pm for Years 2/3 and 1.30pm for Years 4/5/6. Pupils arriving for the morning session after 9.00 am must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed at 9.10 am (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.10 am and 1.10pm (Years R/1), 1.25pm (Years 2/3), 1.40pm (Years 4/5/6). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will result in parents and carers being asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher where the issues can be discussed and may be referred to School Liaison Officer (SLO).

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent or carer's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

At Headcorn Primary School we ask that parents complete a form requesting any Extraordinary Leave of Absence such as holidays, family events etc. (see Appendix 1). These request forms must be completed prior to absences. Parents and carers will receive notification of whether these absence requests are authorised.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents and carers will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and carers and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

## **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- 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 pupil'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.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a pupil in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

## **Leave of Absence/Holiday**

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents and carers are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the pupil was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the pupil, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a pupil being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service.

### **Appendix 1      Extraordinary Leave of Absence Form**

**Appendix 2      Late letter (Code L)**

**Appendix 3      Late letter (Code U)**

<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>Absence Letter</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b>	<b>School Attendance Meeting Letter</b>
<b>Appendix 6</b>	<b>Traveller Absence Letter</b>
<b>Appendix 7</b>	<b>Traveller Absence (CME)</b>
<b>Appendix 8</b>	<b>Kent School Referral Pathway</b>

**Appendix 1 Special Circumstances Absence Request Form**



**Headcorn Primary School**  
Kings Road, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9QT  
Phone: 01622-891289  
Website: www.headcornschool.kent.sch.uk  
Email: admin@headcorn.kent.sch.uk  
Head Teacher: Miss S Symonds



**Extraordinary Leave of Absence Request – Exceptional Circumstances**

Dear Parent/Carer,

This form is for the purpose of applying for a short leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. This request form should be submitted at the earliest possible date; preferably at least two weeks prior to the planned absence.

**PLEASE NOTE - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** states that the Head Teacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**PLEASE FILL IN SECTION A and return this form to the School Office.**

**SECTION A:**

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates(s) of absence: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days: \_\_\_\_\_

Please state reason for absence below:

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Carer Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For office use only:

**SECTION B: Extraordinary Leave of Absence Request – Exceptional Circumstances**

To the parents/carers of: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Your request for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ is

**AUTHORISED / NOT AUTHORISED**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Head Teacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2 Late letter (Code L)**

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been arriving late at school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late. (Code L)

At «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and at «Time» pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our Inclusion Lead, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher



### **Appendix 3 Late letter (Code U)**

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has arrived after the register has been closed. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late. (Code U)

At «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and is closed at «Time» am for the morning session and taken again at «Time» pm and closed at «Time» pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «Name» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

## **Appendix 4   Absence Letter**

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «Name»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our Inclusion Lead, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 5 School Attendance Meeting Letter

Dear «Name»

**Re: «Pupil's name»**

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «Name»'s attendance at school is currently «Number» % which means he/she has missed «Number» sessions. or «Number» days. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «Name»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card.) If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for «Date» at «Time». It is important that you and «Name» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

«Name»

«Name»

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on «Telephone number» so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «Name»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## **Appendix 6 Traveller Absence Letter**

Dear «Name»

### **Traveller Absence**

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «Name» has been absent from school. Since «Date», Name has missed «Number» half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «Number»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «Name»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

If «Name»'s attendance does not improve and a referral is made to the Attendance Service, you could be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court unless you can prove that:

- the child has no fixed abode  
OR
- because of the nature of your trade or business (work) you have to travel from place to place and your child has attended school as often as possible  
AND
- your child has attended for at least 200 sessions in the past 12 months (for children aged 6 years and over)

If you would like to speak to me about «Name»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## **Appendix 7 Traveller Absence (CME)**

Dear «Name»

### **Traveller Absence**

Thank you for contacting me to say that «Name» will be absent from school from «Date» as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «Name»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «Name» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer «Name» to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days absence, the Local Authority may give me permission to take «Name»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 8 Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

