



# HALE CE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance and Truancy Policy

*H*ear of the Community

*A*cepting everyone

*L*ove of God and neighbour

*E*xcellence for all

## ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY POLICY

### Introduction:

At Hale CE VC Primary, we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. 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 that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### Why Regular Attendance is so important:

**Learning:-** 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.

**Safeguarding:-** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### 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 the school will:

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently by following the Pupil Registration guidelines
- Contact parents on the first day to establish reason for absence if none has been given.
- Monitor pupil attendance and punctuality regularly
- Give you details on attendance in our newsletters and letters;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by giving children certificates for 100% attendance;
- Reward good or improving attendance and punctuality
- Work positively with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service and other agencies to support full attendance for all children and/or to support re-integration after a long term absence.
- Refer any concerns about absence to appropriate agencies, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns, including risk of FGM.

### *The Law relating to attendance*

*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

### *The Law relating to safeguarding*

*Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

**To help achieve regular attendance parents/carers are responsible for the following:**

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority and aim to ensure that your child has 100% attendance and is in school on time.
- Contact school on the first day of absence, giving reasons for absence and expected return date.
- Provide a written explanation for absence on your child's return to school.
- Notify the school in advance of any planned absence i.e. medical appointment
- Be aware of your legal obligation in ensuring your child attends school and appreciate that the school and education welfare service may consider "Penalty Notices" for unauthorised absences.
- Contact the school if your child is experiencing difficulties in attending school.
- Ensure that holidays in term time are avoided.
- Ensure that school has accurate contact details.

**Understanding types of absence:**

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. A parent may be asked to provide medical evidence for school non attendance if there are concerns about persistent or unexplained absences.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no consent has been given. 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.

Any problems with poor 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 makes things worse.

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 5% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing 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 mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

**Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we

always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular requests for updated telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The Education Welfare Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer for Hale CE VC Primary. He/she 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, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Our EWO is Jackie Burke. Her telephone number is available from the school office.

### **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.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8:50 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9:00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time 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 may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

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

### **Holidays in Term time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

In exceptional circumstances Hale CE Primary will consider a request for leave of absence.

Please see our Leave of Absence policy for full details.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) S23 (1) introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution.

The Local Authority may consider to issue a penalty notice as an alternative to prosecution.

The Local Authority may consider to issue a penalty notice in the following circumstances:

- Late (U) code for 10 or more sessions after the register has closed.
- Overt Truancy
- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised holidays in school time exceeding 5 school days
- More than 5 school days delay on returning from extended holidays without prior arrangement.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95 % attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

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

Through 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 weekly newsletter and we ask for your full support.

**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.

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 and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

May 2020