



# Hanley St Luke's C of E Aided Primary School

*Learning, Laughing, Loving at Family St Luke's*

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## Hanley St. Luke's CE Aided Primary School

### School Attendance Policy 2019/2020

Hanley St Luke's is committed to raising the achievement of all pupils. One of the ways we do this is by promoting excellent attendance and punctuality. We expect our pupils to attend school regularly, so that they benefit fully from all the opportunities we provide for their education, progress and achievement. We are particularly sensitive to issues of linguistic difference in matters of communication and of cultural differences in perception regarding attendance.

Hanley St. Luke's and parents all have crucial roles to play to achieve excellent attendance and the impact is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

#### **Parental Responsibility**

Under section 444 of the Education Act of 1996, parents, or those who have parental responsibility for children of compulsory school age, are required to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education. Children are required to attend and to stay at school. This responsibility also extends to ensuring that the children arrive to school on time, suitably dressed in school uniform and in a fit condition to learn. It is also the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reasons for their child's non-attendance before 09.30 on the first day of absence.

## **Procedures for Reporting Absence**

- By telephone, no later than 09.30am on the first day of absence.
- By letter, no later than 09.30am, delivered to the office on the first day of absence.
- In person, no later than 09.30am at the office
- By showing an appointment card or letter in advance, at the office.
- By completing an application for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances in term time, which is available from the office.

It is requested that reasons for absence are not sent as a message via a child, another parent/carer or via Class Dojo.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers.

We aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 96%.

If a child's attendance drops below 96% the school may contact parents/carers to discuss why and to agree strategies to raise attendance to above 96%.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory age attend school regularly.

Parents/carers of children who are not yet of compulsory school age are strongly encouraged to ensure their child attends school regularly in order to establish good habits of attendance and punctuality for later years. The school and the Local Authority work together to ensure that parents/carers meet their responsibility.

Attendance issues are dealt with in the first instance by the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who works closely with the school on school based interventions in the first instance. If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, it is followed by a referral to the EWO, who can provide an important link between school and families but who can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

## **Definition of Absence**

"Authorised absence" is absence with permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absence for which an acceptable explanation has been provided (e.g. illness) by a parent or carer. It will not include instances which are explained, but considered by the school to be parentally condoned truancy e.g. shopping, treats etc.

"Unauthorised" absence" is absence without permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This will include all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as any holidays taken during term time and instances where the explanation provided is unsatisfactory.

### "Persistent Absence"

Following the Department For Education (DfE) guidelines, the Persistent Absentee (PA) rate is attendance which is 90% and below.

If a pupil's attendance drops to 90% and below, parents/carers will receive notification and invite to attend a meeting in school to discuss.

Further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence. Medical evidence is any medicine or prescription with the child's name and date on, or a note from the doctor or hospital with a current date stamp.

## Statutory Action

### **Level 3**

After 6 days unauthorised absence (12 unauthorised sessions), penalty warning letters are issued which state that parent/carers have 20 school days to improve attendance.

During the 20 day period, EWO conducts a home visit or telephone contact takes place.

If there is no improvement and further unauthorised absences occur in the 20 day period, a fine will be issued (£60 per child, per parent).

Parent/carers have 21 days to pay (£60 per parent, per child) if the fine is not paid after 21 days the fine will double to £120 per parent, per child unless not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the matter will proceed to court.

### **Level 4**

The matter would move to level 4 if previous fines haven't worked or if parents/carers have previous convictions for non school attendance. Warning letters 1 and 2 are sent.

Attendance review meeting is held with the EWO, the EWO manager, the Head teacher and parents/carers.

The case will proceed to court; this then carries a heavier fine and possible custodial sentence. If a parent/carer is found guilty in any cases that proceed to court, it results in a criminal conviction.

Families are advised of the above by letter following the meeting.

### **Leave of absence during term time**

As a school we aim to raise attainment and attendance to meet National requirements, therefore any absence during term-time will not be authorised. The Law states that parents DO NOT have an automatic right to take their child out of school in term time. If the leave in term time is **not authorised** and/or exceeds the 6 days that may be granted by the Head teacher, then a referral form will be completed for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued at £60 per pupil per parent.

**This is solely at the discretion** of the Head teacher and the Governing Body. Therefore, parents/carers are requested to apply for a leave of absence during term time and must follow these steps:

An '**Application for leave of absence form during term time**' must be completed at least four weeks before the potential absence, which is available from the school office.

A meeting will be arranged to see the EWO, Safeguarding Officer and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to discuss the **potential** leave of absence. Invitations to this meeting will be sent to anyone whom makes an application. If the application is made late the meeting will be held in absences and the information will be delivered to the home address.

Any leave or suspected leave in term time will be recorded as unauthorised (G code). If there are unauthorised absences this will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per adult - per child. During the meeting a number of factors will be discussed, including;

- The impact on achievement the absence could have.
- That pupils will be taken off roll after 20 school days of absence and would then need to re-apply for a place at this school, should a place still be available.

### **School based attendance actions**

A school attendance letter/notification if the attendance falls below the expected 96% will be sent to the parent/carer(s).

If attendance falls to 90% or below a notification letter and attendance clinic invite will be sent to meet with the EWO, Safeguarding Office and/or a member of the SLT to discuss, from this point onwards, medical evidence (appointment letters etc.) will be required for any absences.

Following the attendance clinic if any further unauthorised absences occur, this could result in a Penalty Notice Warning letter being issued by the school in conjunction with the Local Authority.

If attendance still fails to improve or absences cannot be authorised once the Penalty Notice Warning letter has been sent, a statutory referral will be made by the school for a fixed Penalty Notice (fine) to be issued by the EWO (the Local Authority).

### **Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day.**

Parents/carers report to the office. The child is collected from the class by the office staff. The absence is recorded in a book with the reason, time and time of return if applicable.

### **Medical and Dental appointments**

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received via one of the methods already stated. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible.

### **Special Occasions**

A request to attend an occasion e.g. family wedding/funeral must be made in advance by completing a "Request for Absence" form which is available from

the school office. Parents will be notified in writing of the Headteacher's decision.

### **Bereavement**

Hanley St Luke's is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

### **Days of Religious Observance**

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event.

### **Lateness**

Parents are expected to bring their children punctually to school for 08.55 for the start of the school day. Doors open at 08.45 am for Reception, Key Stage 1 and 2. The doors close at 08:55 am so children should be inside the school building before this. Registration is at 08.55 am.

Any children arriving after this time must report with their parents to the office where they will be recorded in the late book. The register will show a late mark. Children arriving after 09.25 am will receive an unauthorised absence for the session unless medical evidence is provided or prior authorisation has been approved. Families who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the Headteacher and/or Safeguarding Officer. Education Welfare will become involved if the problem cannot be quickly resolved.

### **Procedures**

In managing the attendance and punctuality of its pupils, the school will:

#### Keep appropriate attendance records

Teachers are responsible for marking the register twice a day. This must be done at the beginning of each session. Morning registers close 30 minutes after the official start of the school day. Attendance is recorded by the class teacher and absenteeism is entered by the school office staff. Absence codes must accurately reflect the reason for absence.

### Monitor patterns of attendance.

The Headteacher and Safeguarding Officer, in liaison with administration staff and the EWO will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory. All parents will be informed, via the annual report, of their child's overall attendance.

### **Strategies for Improving Attendance and Punctuality**

A special assembly to celebrate good attendance is held each term, to which parents are invited. Children are awarded the following certificates and star badges:

- Gold Certificate and Star - for 100% attendance
- Silver Certificate and Star - for no more than 1 session absence (1/2 day)
- Bronze Certificate and Star - for no more than 2 sessions absence (1 day)

In addition, any child who receives 3 Gold certificates in an academic year (perfect attendance) will be awarded a special prize of a book token, and 100% attendance badge.

Both KS1/Foundation Stage and KS2 children with full attendance and no late marks for the week, are eligible for a prize draw, which takes place each Friday.

Review Date - February 2021