

Hassocks Infant School

Attendance Policy

Introduction and background

Hassocks Infant School recognises that good attendance and punctuality is central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Late arrival at school may also adversely affect a child's ability to settle at the start of the school day.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance and punctuality is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters and the school website
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance. This is sent out with their child's annual school report
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- Promote good attendance to the children through discussion and praise

Arrival and Registration

The school day starts at 9am, with gates opening at 8.50am. The law requires all schools to have an admissions register and an attendance register. The attendance register is taken twice daily, each morning and afternoon. A day counts as two attendances or sessions – one morning and one afternoon session. Morning register is taken at 9am and the afternoon register is taken at 1pm. If a child arrives after registration for either of these sessions, they will be marked as late in the register. All children arriving and leaving with a parent/carer outside the registration times are signed in/out at the school office. The class registers are amended to reflect a child's attendance. It is vital this is kept up to date in case of a fire.

- Registers are checked by the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEI) of the Local Education Authority to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of absences. They are legal documents and can be used in court. At the *end* of every half term the school is required to report on each child's individual attendance to West Sussex County Council and the DfE.

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.

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 causes. Examples of authorised absences would be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative – 1 or 2 days depending on location
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
- Close family wedding – 1 or 2 days depending on location
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse.

Before a parent/carer requests to withdraw their child(ren) from school we ask them to consider the following:

1. There are 190 school days in a school year so this means there are 175 days left for holidays/days out
2. Missing one day a fortnight means a child will miss over a year's education by the time a child finishes their schooling
3. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Referral to the 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Childcare Settings' is used when advising on acceptable absence for a diagnosed illness.
4. Family holidays are *not* considered exceptional circumstances. Consequently, absence for holidays will not be authorised and will be marked as unauthorised.
5. The government considers attendance below 95% as unacceptable.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given 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 we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence is affecting attainment.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the procedure below:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence between 8.30 and 9.30.
- Or call into school and report an absence to the school office.
- Contact the school office for every other day of absence unless the initial notification stated how long the absence would be for e.g. recovery from sickness or diarrhoea is for 48 hours from the last incident.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEI) if attendance moves below 90%.

Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEI)

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 Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team (PEI) from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PEI themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss valuable self-initiated time with their friends, the background to that day's schoolwork and often specific information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Holidays in Term Time:

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Education Authority and School.

Since the 1st September 2013 the Department of Education announced that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. Authorisation will also not be given for Fridays and Mondays of long weekends or for individual days out.

Holidays of any length cannot be authorised by the school. If a family wants to take an extended holiday of more than four weeks then their child would be taken off roll and they would have to reapply for a place on their return. School places cannot be held open for a child on an extended holiday or for visiting family abroad.

Family holidays will not be authorised and leave for exceptional circumstances will not be considered during May for Year 2 pupils and the middle two weeks of June for Year 1, when assessments are taking place. Fixed penalty notices may be issued during your child's school life if a pupil has more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences in a ten week period. Absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Headteacher and the Governing Body

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.

Updated date November 2017

Next review date November 2018



Hassocks Infant School
Request for Absence In School Time

To: The Headteacher of **HASSOCKS INFANT SCHOOL**

I am notifying the school that my child will be absent as follows and understand this will be classified as unauthorised.

Name of Child Class

Dates (inclusive): from to

I will also be seeking permission for absence for siblings attending other schools:

Name of child at School

Name of child at School

Please give the reasons which prevent this holiday being taken during a school holiday period

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Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. Parents must be aware that as their child proceeds to other schools within the locality they may well be fined for taking holiday in term time.

Authorisation will also not be given for Fridays and Mondays of long weekends or for individual days out.

There are only 190 days in a school year so this means there are **175 days left for holidays/days out.**

Please remember that by missing one day a fortnight means missing over a year's education by the time your child finishes their schooling.

The school is charged for any school meals ordered and not taken by the children, therefore can you please complete the section below, so that a meal is not ordered.

My child normally has : ☐ a hot school meal ☐ a packed lunch

Signed (Parent/Carer)

Date

School Use Only

Attendance during last academic year current academic year