



# HAMPRESTON CE (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

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*To love God and to love one another*

Policy Agreed: October 2023

Review Date: September 2024

## Attendance Policy



### Why is regular attendance so vital?

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low achievement. Government figures show that:

- Of pupils who fall below 50% attendance, only 3% will achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE (including maths and English)
- Of pupils in the 80%-90% range, only 35% will achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE (including maths and English)
- Of pupils below 95%, only 73% will achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE (including maths and English)

We want the children at Hampreston CE (VA) First School to have the best possible life chances, so will do all that we can to encourage attendance of well above 95%.

### First Day Absences

Any phone calls regarding absence are on school systems. Parents must ring in before 9.20am on the first day of their child's absence from school. Children's absences must be written on the daily 'Absentee Log'. If a parent has not phoned the school by this time, then by law, the school must contact the parent to ascertain the reason for absence. The First Day Absence Log must be completed, recording school actions and the reasons given by the parent for the absence. If the school cannot contact the parent, and they do not phone the school back before 9.30am, the school may choose to carry out a welfare check or request a welfare call be made to home by the attendance workers/Police.

If children leave school during the day, other than on a school trip, their name must be recorded in the Pupil Signing In/Out Book, noting the time they left school and the reason why. Similarly, if children are late to school (after registers have closed), this must be entered into the Pupil Signing In/Out Book, stating the time they arrived at school and the reason for the lateness.

When a child returns to school after any absence, a letter/email should be sent by the parent/guardian confirming the reason for absence. This is then filed within the pupil's admissions folder. The Management Information System (MIS) is updated twice daily, for both morning and afternoon registration. This enables access to many types of information – trends, particular age groups, numbers of any particular type of absence etc.

The school monitors attendance and this is also carried out by Local Authority Attendance Team. If we have a concern about attendance and/or lateness, we will use the following to inform parents about their child's attendance.

- Concerns about lateness
- Letter of concern (children below 95%)
- Invitation to attend a meeting with the school and/or LA Attendance Team

### Lateness

Parents should make sure children are in school by the start time. If a child is late, they must report to the office, so that the registers can be updated.

### Appointments during the day

Parents should avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day, wherever possible. However, if this is unavoidable, parents should telephone, email or send a note giving details of the appointment. When collecting children for an appointment, parents should bring a copy of the appointment card or letter. Children should only be taken out of school for **their own** appointments.

Siblings **will not** be excused because another family member etc. as an appointment.

## Leave during term time

The Department for Education, in 2013, stated that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances AND current attendance is at least 95%. An example of exceptional circumstances may be that a family member is returning home from service duty in term time. There is now no such thing as a 'holiday request form'. Requesting Leave of Absence must be done in writing to the Headteacher, but will only be considered under **exceptional circumstances**. It is impossible to present an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances. Individual cases will be considered.

If leave of absence is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised. If the overall attendance level continues to be below expected standards, parents may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

## Penalty Notices

It is an offence if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school where they are registered and the parents are at risk of prosecution unless absences have been authorised. As an alternative to prosecution, parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine (£60) which is issued under Local Authority guidance and is payable to the local authority. This can only be issued by a Senior Leader or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head authorised by a Senior Leader), a local authority officer or the police.

Following amendments to regulations, which came into effect on 01/09/2013, each parent will be fined £60 each for each child if the parents allow the child to take unauthorised leave within term time.

The regulations make it clear that the Headteacher may only grant leave of absence in term time under "**exceptional circumstances**".

*The definition of "parent", includes all biological parents, whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a biological parent, has the parental responsibility and/or any person who, although not a biological parent, has care of a child or young person.*

*"Having care of a child or young person" means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.*

Fines will be issued under the discretion of Senior Leaders.

Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

## The Law

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013.

Amendments remove previous references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments also reduce timescales for paying a penalty notice from 28 days to 21 days. The Attendance Policy has been amended to reflect the changes to the 2013 Law.

## Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been reviewed with the equality impact considerations as laid down in the school's Equality Policy.

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