



# HANNAH MORE

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Policy Title:** Attendance Policy

**Date Drafted:** 05/2019

**Date Ratified by Governors:** 20.06.2019

**Effective From:** 01.09.2019

**Date for Renewal:** 01.07.2022

**Signed by the Headteacher:** 20.06.2019

The Attendance Policy is one of a group of documents that come under the umbrella title of 'Safeguarding at Hannah More'. The other documents in this group should be read in conjunction with this policy to give the full picture of safeguarding arrangements at Hannah More. These are:

- Anti Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Educational Visits Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Guidance on Safer Working practice
- Health and Safety Annual Audit
- First Aid Policy
- Annual Safeguarding Audit

## **Rationale**

Hannah More Primary School is committed to providing all its pupils with a full-time education, which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential. The school will do its best to provide a welcoming, nurturing environment, where all members of the school community feel secure and valued. The school will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Research shows children and young people who attend school at least 95% of the time are more likely to achieve good results. Patterns of attendance tend to be set in early years. Local data capturing children's progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage shows a clear correlation between attendance and achievement. Good attendance develops the essential life skills necessary for young people to be responsible and successful citizens and is important for personal, social and emotional development and self-esteem.

## **Principles**

- Our respect and understanding for our diverse communities will support us in improving attendance
- We will celebrate good attendance and punctuality
- We will establish a good working partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to help and support good attendance and punctuality
- It is parents/carers responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. This includes not taking extended holidays during term-time.
- Where necessary, we will challenge poor attendance and punctuality
- Appropriate legal action will be taken where parents continually fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

### **Pupils are responsible for:**

- Arriving in class at the right time ready for learning
- reporting to reception if they arrive at school after registration
- attending school whenever they are well enough to do so

### **Parents are responsible for:**

- ensuring that their children arrive in school before the start of the school day (8:45)
- ensuring that the school has a current telephone number and address where they can be contacted throughout the school day in case of an emergency
- notifying the school on the first day of absence no later than 9:30am.

### **Teachers are responsible for:**

- keeping accurate and timely registers

- keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, in particular poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for non-attendance offered by children and parents/guardians
- informing the Deputy about concerns and acting on them
- providing background information to support referrals
- monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to address attendance concerns
- emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- following up absences with immediate requests for explanation
- discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings

**Office staff are responsible for:**

- following up specific requests from the Deputy for information about individuals
- contacting families on the first day of a child's absence if an explanation hasn't been received
- contacting families where concerns are raised about absence
- monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's education welfare officer (EWO)
- providing a point of contact between individual teachers, the Deputy and the school's
- including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter
- regularly informing the Deputy Head on a formal and informal basis of patterns of attendance
- promptly processing registers on a daily basis
- collating weekly attendance percentages for the Deputy
- attend weekly attendance meeting

**The Deputy Head is responsible for:**

- overall monitoring of school attendance
- monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought
- liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWO meetings are carried out
- chairing weekly attendance meeting with office staff
- liaising with and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance
- 3 meetings a year with the EWO
- termly meeting with parents of children with poor attendance – parenting contracts
- feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases
- promotion of attendance issues during assemblies
- monitoring and distribution of class trophy awards and stars for children
- reporting termly to the governing body, via the head teacher's report, on progress against targets and cases of persistent non-attendance
- meeting with parents who have requested a term-time holiday.

**The governing body is responsible for:**

- asking searching questions about trends in attendance — particularly in relation to persistent poor attenders
- ensuring that the attendance policy is carried out.

## **Pupil Absence**

### **First-day Calling / texted**

The school implements a first-day texting policy. Parents are requested to call school before 9:30am if their child is to be absent. Where no call is received, office staff will text parents/carers that morning to request them to contact the school to explain the reason for absence. All texts are to be sent out by 10:30am at the latest. If, the parents/carers make no contact, then a follow-up phone call is made following afternoon registration and further calls are made at intermittent intervals until contact is made. All families who do not respond to initial text will be phoned by 2:30pm.

Where a pupil is in care, the member of staff responsible for CiC is informed of his/her absence if no valid reason is given that morning.

If the child does not return to school the next day the office continues to make reasonable efforts to make contact with the family through phone calls, text and email.

The school will refer any child, if no response is received, after 5 days absences to the Education Welfare Service. Information about this referral process can be found on the BCC website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare) . Office staff make a record on SIMS of all phone calls made and explanations given.

### **Where There Is a Cause for Concern**

Where no explanation is received, or where there is an emerging pattern of poor attendance, the following procedures are followed:

- Discussion on an informal level with the pupil/parent and a reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Details of discussion recorded on CPOMS. (Teacher)
- Where an absence is unexplained, a letter is sent home requesting a return of the slip explaining the absence (Office)
- If no letter is returned or explanation given, further attempts are made to speak to the parent. If no contact is made, the absence is recorded as unauthorised and parents are informed. All letters are recorded on SIMS and pupils file. (Office)
- If attendance remains erratic and a cause for concern a meeting is arranged with the parents to draw attention to the pupil's attendance. In this meeting reasons for erratic attendance are discussed and ways to improve agreed.

- If there continues to be lack of cooperation and the attendance record does not improve, a further meeting is arranged where the parents complete an Attendance Contract with clear targets and timescales. Details of discussion recorded on CPOMS .(Deputy Head)
- If there continues to be lack of cooperation and the attendance record does not improve, the school will make a referral to the EWS. The parents will be informed of this referral in person and by letter. (Deputy Head)
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the LA's attendance policy.

### **Marking of Registers**

Teachers are instructed to complete attendance registers by 9am (morning) and by 1.10 (KS1 pm) 1.40 (KS2 pm). Any children who arrive after these times need to report to the office through the front entrance.

Registers are marked electronically using SIMS. If, SIMS is not working then the office staff will print paper registers.

Registers will be marked in accordance with the DFE attendance codes issued in Sept 2012. Link below.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/564599/school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf)

### **Requested Authorised leave of Absence**

We do not routinely authorise leave during term-time. We only grant leave of absence where there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers who want to take their children out of school during term time must arrange a meeting with the Head teacher or Deputy. This gives parents the opportunity to explain why they feel the absence is unavoidable. During this meeting the parents/carers will be asked if the child will be staying with anyone other than themselves and the school will ascertain whether there are any safeguarding concerns for the child whilst away from school.

We will not authorise holiday during term-time. However, where there are particular extenuating circumstances, consideration will be given where families have experienced particularly challenging times such as a recent bereavement or serious illness.

If the school does not agree absence and the pupil is absent, absence is unauthorised. If parents/carers keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. The school may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness.

When considering an application for leave of absence, the school we will take into account:

- the age of the pupil
- the time of year proposed for the trip
- nature of the trip and parental wishes
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil
- the pupil's stage of education and progress.
- safeguarding arrangements

It has been agreed to authorise absence for the following:

- Absence for bereavement
- Serious illness in the family
- Funerals - 1 day
- Close family wedding
- Attend graduation ceremony of parent
- To spend time with a terminally ill parent/sibling
- To spend time with a parent returning from active duty abroad
- Citizenship ceremony
- Religious observance up to 2 days

### **Penalty Warning Notice**

The school has the right to use a Penalty Warning Notice for prolonged absence. The guidance is as follows:

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1st September 2013 and amended the 2006 regulations removing the reference to 'holiday', 'extended leave' as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amended regulations state the head teacher (or authorised person) may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" that apply to that application. The head teacher and governing body consider each application on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits. It is at their discretion if the exceptional circumstances warrant the authorisation of the leave and should also determine the number of days the pupil should be absent for.*

*A Penalty Notice may be issued when leave of absence has been taken but the school have not received and authorised a request in advance. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the fine is not paid you may be prosecuted.*

### **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments**

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is an authorised absence.
- Pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attender.
- If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence needs to be recorded for that session.
- The school will keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.
- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWS can consult the School Health Service, or the pupil's GP.

### **Days of Religious Observance**

- Parents/carers may request two days authorised absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.
- Parents/carers must give advance notice and any absence for longer than two days will need to be considered by the Headteacher.

### **Dual Registration involving Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) or Special Schools**

- The law allows for dual registration of pupils at both a PRU or special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education.
- Where a pupil is duly registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil authorised absent while they are attending institution Y and vice versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child.
- Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.

### **Exclusion**

- A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.
- Teachers are responsible for setting work for a child that remains on-roll
- If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the pupil takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised.

### **Safeguarding**

It is a statutory requirement that all children over the age of 5 attend school. The school has a responsibility to ensure that any child is safe when not in school during term time.

- All families wishing to travel abroad and request leave from school will need to meet the head teacher.
- During this interview the Head teacher will explain the legal responsibility for parents to ensure all children over 5 are in school. The Head teacher will then explain that their priority is for the safeguarding of the child in question and that this will obviously also be of concern to them as parents.

- During this meeting the parents/carers will be asked if the child will be staying with anyone other than themselves and the school will ascertain whether there are any safeguarding concerns for the child whilst away from school.
- If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practising or affected community then the head teacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether parents intend to have this undertaken during this holiday. The head teacher will then take the information from this meeting and use the Bristol FGM Risk Assessment to make a decision on whether to refer to local CYPS or Police.