

HEBER PRIMARY SCHOOL **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Regular and punctual attendance is a prerequisite for effective learning.

“Most parents want their child to get on well in life. Nowadays it is more important than ever to have a good education behind you if you want opportunities in adult life. Children only get one chance at school, and your child’s chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly”

(Is Your Child Missing Out DfES 2002)

The same considerations also apply to pupils who are regularly or intermittently late.

Their learning is disrupted. Their late entrance also disrupts the learning of others.

Improving attendance and punctuality is therefore a key element in the drive to bring coherence and continuity to teaching and learning and to raising levels of achievement.

By having a whole school policy, agreed and implemented by all staff, the school aims to support individual pupils, improve the continuity of teaching and learning for all, maintain a positive school ethos and promote Equality of Opportunity for all pupils.

Why is improving attendance and punctuality important?

Attendance

Regular attenders, who are valued, noted and rewarded for their effort are learning valuable lessons of personal and group responsibility.

The re-appearance of poor attenders may disrupt the planned delivery of teaching and learning for other children.

Pupils miss important teaching and learning experiences, which cannot always be fully repeated for the returning absentee.

Pupils’ self-esteem may be damaged if they perceive themselves to be falling behind due to poor attendance, which can lead to a decrease in their effort and motivation.

A pattern of poor attendance can be self-perpetuating, leading to possible school-refusal and/or truanting at the secondary-stage of schooling.

Punctuality

Pupils who arrive late miss the valuable start to the day when teachers are usually introducing the maths or literacy lesson of the day. Pupils entering the classroom after the start of the day cause disruption to the lesson for other children who have arrived punctually.

Repetition of instructions for late-arrivals deprives teachers and learners of lesson-time .

Pupils who arrive after the register is completed cause additional administrative tasks for teachers. Again this distracts from teaching and learning time

Pupils who arrive after the register has been sent to the office, cause additional administrative tasks for the school secretary and Learning Mentor. This can detract from time which should be being spent to be on other school business.

What can school do to make a difference?

Factors outside the school, such as family circumstances, social and cultural perspectives and expectations, rates of mobility and levels of socio-economic disadvantage can have a determining influence on school attendance and punctuality.

However, there are school factors affecting attendance and punctuality, including all the features of a school that contribute to effective learning: the school ethos; the quality of relationships between staff and pupils; the involvement of parents and the community; and the quality of teaching and learning.

By focusing specifically on attendance and punctuality; by making it a stated priority. and by the implementation of clear policies which are understood by the whole school community, school can have a substantial influence on rates of attendance and punctuality.

Improving attendance and punctuality is a collective responsibility

Pupils, parents, teachers and the Education Welfare Service, with the support of Governors and the Local Education Authority all have roles to play in improving school attendance and promoting good punctuality. A whole school approach aimed at improving attendance and punctuality should keep issues of attendance and punctuality high on the school's agenda, encouraging a sense of collective responsibility among staff, and promoting a sense of commitment to the school among pupils and their parents.

The aims of our Attendance & Punctuality Policy

1. To improve pupils' attendance and punctuality so that they have full access to the National Curriculum and the wider curriculum, in order to maximise their achievement.
2. To clarify staff roles and responsibilities: -
 - The pastoral role of the class-teacher, who has responsibility for registration;
 - The pastoral and administrative role of the Learning mentor who monitors attendance and punctuality on a daily basis and is in constant communication with families.
 - The administrative role of the school secretary who compiles regular attendance and punctuality returns on the office I.T. system and instructs new teachers as to how registers should be filled in.
 - The Pastoral role of the Senior Management team who present certificates for attendance and punctuality weekly in assembly.
 - The co-ordinating role of the head who has general responsibility for attendance and punctuality.
 - The Head and the Learning Mentor review attendance and punctuality a minimum of twice every term.
3. To clarify procedures for keeping registers, monitoring attendance and punctuality, recording reasons for absence and lateness, and taking action on absenteeism. This includes the role of the Education Welfare Service. (See current Attendance Action Plan. This is renewed every year.)
4. To promote strategies for raising the profile of attendance and punctuality in School. Parents are kept informed of attendance issues and successes via the half termly Newsletter.
5. To clarify procedures for ensuring that information on attendance is included on pupils' records and reports to parents. To underline the importance of attendance and punctuality to parents .

The Legal Duties of the School

Every school is required to provide information on attendance; either for publication in comparative tables of school performance, or for inclusion in the School Prospectus.

Attendance information relates to rates of *authorised* and *unauthorised* absence.

The School is required by law to report on poor attendance to the LA

Headteachers are under a legal obligation to provide Governors with the information for the school to comply with the law.

Parents / carers of children who are not attending school regularly will be spoken to / written to or visited by the School Learning Mentor, or in some cases a member of the Education Welfare service.

(See Attendance Action Plan for procedures)

Class teachers have a duty to complete registers accurately and in full so that the correct information about attendance can be easily obtained. The attendance register must be completed at the beginning of each a.m. and p.m. session.

Legal Duties of Parents

It is the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure that children of statutory school age receive appropriate education. For most parents this is by sending them to school and parents of school pupils have a duty to ensure their regular attendance, and that absences are for bona fide reasons.

Parents are expected to notify school of the reasons for absence, which are now categorised according to Government regulation.

The School will not authorise absence due to family holidays.

Monitoring Attendance & Punctuality

The key document for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality is the class register. It is a legal document. Registration is the responsibility of the class teacher, and therefore all teachers need to be aware of the correct way to fill it in.

The Role of the Class Teacher

KS2

- Morning register should be completed by 9.00 a.m. (Bell rings at 8.50 am)
- Afternoon register should be completed by 1.55 p.m. (Bell rings at 1.45 p.m).

KS1

- Morning register should be completed by 9.05 a.m. (Bell rings at 8.55 am)
- Afternoon register should be completed by 1.10 p.m. (Bell rings at 1.00 p.m).

The way in which registration is conducted not only influences the maintenance of accurate attendance and punctuality records, but also helps promote good attendance and punctuality among pupils. Teachers' practice should be consistent and give clear messages about the positive value the school attaches to punctuality and good attendance.

Teachers should maintain the following agreed procedures:

1. Be in the playground 5 minutes before the bell goes, ready to welcome children and lead them into class when the bell goes.
2. Have set routines for promoting a calm start to the day (e.g. pupils sitting on the Carpet).
3. Use registration time to welcome pupils to class (e.g. saying good morning to each child as the register is called).
4. Welcome back and always comment on the return of pupils who have been absent. Pupils should understand that if they are absent, they will be missed and that they will be asked the reasons for their absence on their return.
5. Show that punctuality is expected by always commenting on lateness.
6. Use the closing of the register to comment on the day's attendance, i.e. congratulating the class when attendance is high.
7. Develop strategies for supporting children who have been absent for a long time (e.g. who have been hospitalised), by re-introducing them to the class; talking about what has happened in their absence; sharing their news

Action on Lateness

Procedures in regard to lateness are contained in the Attendance and Punctuality Action Plan

At the end of the day

KS2: The school day finishes at 3.30.pm. Children are escorted to the playground and should arrive by 3.35 pm at the latest.

KS1: The school day finishes at 3.20.pm. Children are escorted to the playground and should arrive by 3.25 pm at the latest

Children who are uncollected (and do not have permission to make their own way home) are supervised by Office staff until 5.00 pm. They are then supervised by members of the SMT.

The School will immediately contact parents or other contacts given by parents. If no contact has been made by 4.00 pm, Social Services will be rung. (See Child Protection folder)

A standard school letter will be sent home to parents whose children who are regularly late in being collected.

The time of departure of late children is noted in the Evening Late Book.

For children who are regularly left at school long after school has ended, the school will make a referral to the EWS Service.

Action on Absenteeism

Every instance of absence is followed up by the Learning Mentor. Parents are instructed to call in when their children are unwell and to give the specific reason that they are off. Procedures are given in the Action Plan for Attendance and Punctuality

In line with Government Policy, the End of Year Reports for Parents require teachers to record percentage attendances and to categorise absences into authorised and unauthorised absences.

The Role of the Education Social Worker

The Education Social Work Service exists to help parents and the LA meet the obligations and duties placed on them by successive Education Acts.

Education Social Workers have the power to approach a pupil's family to make enquiries when it is thought that the pupil is absent from school without good reason. They also play a supportive role between home and school and provide a useful liaison with other support agencies.

Referrals are made by the Learning Mentor. Trigger points and Procedures for referral are given in the Action Plan for Attendance and Punctuality.

October 2nd 2013