

Policy for Attendance and Punctuality



HEADLANDS CE (C) J I & N SCHOOL

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To improve the quality of school life and create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to children, parents and staff that good attendance is valued by the school, and to recognise that regular attendance is an achievement within itself.

Introduction

Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School is a happy school where children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about the welfare of each child.

At Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School we believe that good attendance is essential if children are to:

- Take full advantage of the opportunities that school offers
- Learn effectively and acquire the appropriate skills which will prepare them for life.

The school aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance by operating an Attendance Policy within which staff, children, parents and the local community can work in partnership. The school will closely monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage excellent attendance and liaise with home and other agencies when this is appropriate. Excellent attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Communication

Information about lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in home-school communications to Parents. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including children, parents and staff.

Children

All children are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Children who experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher. Individual children with excellent attendance are rewarded in an end of term praise assembly.

Parents

The role of the parent/guardian in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, either in writing or by telephone call. A child's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from parents.

At Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School we intend to maintain close, effective and positive links with parents and ensure that they are informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance record along with the pupil report in the Summer term.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of children in their class, monitoring attendance and punctuality is an integral part of the class teacher's role. Class teachers are responsible for taking the register twice daily at 8.55am and 1.15pm and keeping a check on attendance and lateness. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher.

Following up absences (and lateness)

The Office administrator will contact parents if school has not received any explanation for a pupil absence. Patterns of attendance and lateness will be monitored by the office administrator in conjunction with the headteacher. If Class Teachers are concerned about a child's absence and/or punctuality they should discuss these matters with the child. If there is no improvement then the parents/guardian should be contacted. If there continues to be no improvement after contact with the parent/guardian then the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Key Stage Manager (Urgent concerns should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher).

Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for supporting all staff in developing strategies to improve levels of attendance.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School will work to provide an environment in which children feel valued and welcome, that children feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all children. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to children's needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and checked.
- Attendance awards for individual children:
 1. termly - 100% attendance - certificate
 2. annual - 100% attendance - certificate and voucher

- Parents will be reminded regularly via Newsletters, School Prospectus, Parents' Evenings etc of the importance of excellent attendance.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be given suitable support upon their return.
- The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies eg Educational Psychological Service, Social Services etc when this may serve to support and assist children who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Registration

Registers will be taken promptly at 8.55am and at 1.15pm in the classroom. Registers will close at 9.00am and at 1.20pm. Children who arrive in school after this time will be recorded as late.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School record absences according to DFE guidance.

Term Time Absence

Headlands J, I and N School follows the DFE and Kirklees guidance which only allows leave of absence to be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning/end of term

Head teachers are asked to determine if each request is reasonable and on a case by case basis. The guidance allows penalty notices to be issued if parents take children out of school for unauthorised absences. The following procedure should be followed before booking leave of absence in term time.

- A leave of absence request form should be completed before booking leave of absence in term time.
- An explanation should be included on the request form giving details of why it is necessary to book the absence during term time and why the request should be considered 'an exceptional circumstance'. If the leave of absence request form does not supply sufficient detail for an informed decision to be made then a more detailed explanation will be sought. Parents may be asked to provide proof (eg passport entries, flight tickets) of dates and times of departure and arrival home.

Leave of absence request forms are available in the office and on the school website, and should be returned to school when completed. The office will then notify parents of the decision made and whether the request has been authorised or not. Absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the request is declined and the absence goes ahead. The situation is monitored closely from year to year and penalty notices will be issued if any unauthorised absence occurs.

Consequences of unauthorised leave of absence

When term time leave is taken without permission from the school, the absence is unauthorised and could result in the following consequences. The school follows LA and DFE guidance on this issue.

- The possibility of a penalty notice being issued (to each parent for each child)
- The possibility of losing the school place, and the likelihood of being re-admitted to the school
- The possibility of prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised leave of absence
- The possibility of a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for non-payment of a penalty notice should the case go to court.

Truancy

All the staff at Headlands Junior, Infant and Nursery School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher is notified, who then contacts the parent, either by phone, or by home visiting if possible. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Head Teacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken. If a child leaves the school site without the consent of school staff then parents and the police will be notified by phone.

Monitoring Procedures

1. With the support of the office administrator the Head Teacher will have overall responsibility for monitoring Attendance Registers.
2. Termly and annual attendance figures will be sent to the DFE and LA, as part of the national and local monitoring of attendance.

Referral to Education Social Work Service

One of the main objectives of the Educational Social Worker is to maintain and improve regular school attendance. Educational Social Workers monitor school attendance registers, hold regular consultations with the school staff responsible for attendance and obtain referrals from school.

Education Social Workers may follow up referrals by:

- Communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) by letter or phone
- Seeing a pupil in school
- Arranging a number of home visits
- Liaison/referral to other professionals/agencies

The outcome of any intervention is communicated back to school.