



Hurworth Primary School

Attendance, Lateness and Holiday Policy

Policy Version Control	
Policy type	Hurworth Primary School
Policy prepared by (name and designation)	Rebecca Kukielka Office Manager
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Introduction

Attendance at school is a statutory requirement and is, therefore, closely monitored, not only by the staff in school but also through regular register checks conducted by the school's Education Support Officer.

By law schools are required to record in the attendance register once at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon whether the pupil is present. Schools are also required to monitor punctuality.

School's responsibilities

Hurworth Primary School recognises its responsibility to expect and encourage good patterns of attendance and punctuality from all pupils to enable them to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons can leave children vulnerable to falling behind.

Poor attendance and lateness have been demonstrated to be barriers to effective learning for a small number of our children. We hope that by working together we can quickly remove these barriers and also help our children to understand the importance of these behaviours beyond school.

Good patterns of attendance and punctuality are issues that will be important to our children as they grow up and enter the world of employment. Establishing good habits is best achieved by showing young children the importance of these issues. All pupils and parents/carers will be clearly informed of expectations regarding punctuality and teaching staff will set a good example in their own timekeeping. School will endeavour to give as much help and support as possible; however, ultimately it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school and is punctual.

At the beginning of the school year all parents/carers and teaching staff will be provided with dates of school terms and professional development days and updated through the year of any changes or amendments.

The School Day

Our school day begins promptly at 8.55am and ends at 3.15pm for Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 and 3.20pm for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. This ensures all children receive the statutory number of teaching hours.

- We expect all children to arrive between **8.45am** and **8.55am** at the school gate, from where they will then go directly into classrooms.
- Parents/Carers should contact school in advance if they know children are going to arrive late for school. The attendance register will be kept open between 8.55am and 9.20am, however, children arriving between this time will need to enter via the reception entrance and will incur a **late mark** if there is no medical evidence of an appointment for the doctors, dentist or hospital.
- Registration will close at **9.20am** and any child arriving after this time will be allocated a U mark in the register (Unauthorised late mark after registration closed) unless medical evidence is provided for example doctors, dentist or hospital appointment card.
- Once the first day of absence report has been produced, a member of staff will endeavour to contact parents/carers of those children who are absent without reason (Code N), no later than 9.30am by either a phone call and/or text message and they will update the attendance register accordingly with the relevant code e.g. – I (Illness), M (Medical).

Attendance

Attendance at school is a statutory requirement and parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure their children attend school regularly and to keep absences to a minimum. Hurworth Primary School will record pupil attendance in the attendance register each morning and once on the afternoon after lunch. On each occasion the register will show whether every pupil is:

- ✓ Present
- ✓ Attending an approved educational activity
- ✓ Absent or
- ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If there are any absences Hurworth Primary School will follow them up to:

- ✓ Ascertain the reason
- ✓ Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not and
- ✓ Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Hurworth Primary School is committed to maintaining an effective and carefully monitored absence reporting system. Our Education Support Officer meets with key staff members in school on a regular basis and monitors attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis. The Education Support Officer will request printouts of children at fixed meetings, who have attendance below 94%, and will monitor those children carefully. If there is no improvement the Education Support Officer will contact parents by phone or a home visit, to inform parents of their child's current level of attendance and discuss the reason for the absence and provide any support.

Our school data shows there is a strong link between the progress children are making and their attendance patterns.

- Hurworth Primary School therefore encourages open communication between home and school and requests that absences are reported to school prior to the start of the school day.
- Children who attend appointments during the school day are encouraged to attend school before the appointment and to return to school afterwards. Parents **MUST** sign their child in and out of school at reception, as part of the Health and Safety procedures in case of an unplanned fire evacuation.
- When the school is open but extreme weather prevents a child attending, parents must inform the school so that the Head of School can justify authorising the absence to the LA. However, if parents assume that the school is closed, but it is actually open, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the Head of School is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by the parents will be classified as authorised. For example, a parent takes a child out of school to go to a family event will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Examples of Authorised Absence

- Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor's note will be required).
- Emergency medical/dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement).
- Approved sporting or musical activity/competition/examination.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Families registered as Traveller/Gypsy /Roma who are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason (i.e. without permission from the school) even if the parent is supporting the absence.

The school will refer to the Local Authority if there are 10 unauthorised absences within a 6 week period. Parents will be notified of this.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence.
- Holidays
- Day trips
- Birthdays
- Looking after siblings or sick parents
- Unexplained absence
- Children arriving to school after 9.20am will be recorded with the U code for the morning session (Late after registration has closed)
- Families registered as Traveller/ Gypsy /Roma travelling for over 200 sessions in a 12 month period

The DfE guidance states that pupils who are unable to get into school as a result of severe weather conditions should be marked in the register using the absence code 'Y'. It explains that marking a pupil absent in this way will ensure that his/her absence does not affect the school's absence figures.

However, if the Head of School believes that a child could have travelled to school, his/her absence should be recorded as unauthorised using code 'O'.

Children Missing in Education Procedures

When a child is missing from school for 5 consecutive days, without any reason from the parent, and the following checks have also been carried out:

Hurworth Primary School - Ensured that proper safeguarding actions have been taken, i.e. first day absence report and calling/texting to ascertain the reason for the absence.

Education Support Officer- Phone calls and a home visit has been carried out.

And there is still no reason for the child's absence by the 5th day, then the Education Support Officer will fill in a CME referral form which will be forwarded on to CAP (Children's Access Point) who will continue to search for the missing child.

Once 20 school days have passed and the child is still missing in education, without reason, Hurworth Primary School can legally take the child off role.

Lateness

The school is committed to a positive policy of encouraging punctuality among its pupils. In partnership, our school will work with pupils, parents/carers, and outside agencies to reduce the instances of lateness to school.

Pupils of compulsory school age have their attendance noted twice a day, at these times lateness will be recorded.

School data clearly demonstrates that late arrival significantly impacts on a child's attainment and learning. A pupil arriving late may disrupt not only their own learning but the learning of others.

If Parents/Carers know that their child will be late to school they should contact the school in advance. In the event of severe weather conditions, if it is decided that the school will open, but the road conditions are difficult, parents should also ring the school to advise that they are likely to be late. Reasons for lateness will be noted and explored with a pupil in a positive manner designed to reduce and manage the problem.

For children who are persistently late, late letters will be sent to those parents who have received 10 or more U codes (Unauthorised late after registration has closed) within a 6 week period and this will then be followed up by the Education Support Officer and a possible referral to the Local Authority.

- If a child is late for five sessions parents/carers will be asked to meet with staff in school to discuss why lateness is occurring and how school can support the family.

What Parents can do to help

Please ensure that your children understand the importance of being at school on time. If you know that you have difficulty in getting your child to school on time then please allow some additional time to ensure a prompt arrival at school. Should this be a problem for you then we would like you to discuss the matter with staff so that we can seek a solution together. Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure that children leave home with enough time to allow them to arrive at school punctually.

Our records show a link between the attendance of brothers and sisters. When one child is ill the other child is often absent too. We appreciate it can be difficult to do the 'school run' when one child is poorly, however, we would encourage parents to ensure that the other child does get to school.

Most parents try to make appointments for dentists and doctors outside of school hours. Sometimes this is not possible, particularly where children have hospital appointments or appointments with therapists. In these situations please try to bring your child back to school afterwards, even if it is so that they catch the final hour of the day.

Some children do arrive before 8.45am (time the school gates open) and are left unattended outside the school gates; the school will not take responsibility for any accidents or incidents that occur at this time. If you choose to leave your child unattended at these times you cannot assume school staff will be there to deal with accidents, injury, disputes etc. Matters of this nature may be a safeguarding concern and Hurworth Primary School may therefore need to take further action.

Holiday Leave Entitlement

From September 2014 the Government introduced some significant changes to attendance regulations for pupils at school.

The most important of these was in relation to term-time family holidays. Below is a quote taken directly from the Department for Education Circular:

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

Clearly there are many situations which may constitute exceptional circumstances, but as a generality Hurworth Primary interprets 'exceptional' in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

May I therefore ask that you respect these new regulations under which we must now work, and that if you do need to take your child out of school during term time, you make very clear in your request how the circumstances are exceptional. If this is not clear then under the new legislation, Hurworth Primary will not be allowed to grant leave.

HOLIDAY PENALTY NOTICES

A penalty notice can be issued at the request of the Head of School for any unauthorised absences. A penalty notice is £60 to be paid within 21 days or £120 to be paid within 28 days. There will be one penalty notice issued per child for that period of absence. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in a court date being set.

Once issued by the local authority the penalty notice can only be withdrawn at the request of the Head of School.

Attendance Rewards

At Hurworth Primary School we promote good attendance and try to reduce absence, including persistent absence by giving pupils attendance rewards.

The vast majority of our pupils have good attendance patterns and are always on time and therefore we want to celebrate this and encourage them to keep up the good work. Therefore at the end of every term Hurworth Primary holds an end of term Attendance Assembly for children who have had 100% attendance throughout that term.

The aim, however, is for children to receive their bronze certificate in the Autumn Term, silver certificate by the end of the Spring Term and a gold certificate by the end of the Summer Term as follows:-

- 100% attendance for the Autumn Term = Bronze
- 100% attendance for the Autumn and Spring Term = Silver
- 100% attendance for the Autumn, Spring and Summer Term = Gold

However, children may also reach 100% targets at different points in the year as shown below:-

- 100% attendance for the first time in the Spring Term = Bronze
- 100% attendance for the first time in the Summer Term = Bronze
- 100% attendance for the Autumn and Summer Term only = Silver
- 100% attendance for the Spring and Summer Term only = Silver

Along with their certificates children will also receive attendance rewards.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the local governing body of Hurworth Primary School and will be reviewed every 2 years in the Spring Term.

Signed _____

Chair of Governors _____

Date _____