



Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure our children/young people are appropriately safeguarded this policy is included under the safeguarding umbrella.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School’s roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader: A member of the Senior Leadership Team (headteacher) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration:
- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (Appendix 1).
 - ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55am** and **1.10 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
 - iii) The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.15 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **U: arrived late in school after registration closed**).

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.
- ii) Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example

- a) a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- (b) A pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- (c) In **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see page for the school's policy on term-time holidays);
- (d) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (e) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand; parents will be asked to supply evidence, such as a copy of the child's appointment details.
- (f) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- (g) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the

religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

- (h) The pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (i) The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (j) In other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- (a) No explanation has been given by the parent;
- (b) The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- (c) The pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- (d) The pupil is shopping during school hours;
- (e) The pupil is absence for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- (f) The pupil is absence from school on a family holiday.
- (g) The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3 Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team; parents and the governing body (see para. above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School and is regularly discussed at assemblies, in classes and with the governing body. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and monthly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school newsletters, and the class with the highest attendance for the half term will win the Mary Kerslake attendance trophy.

4.2 First-day calling

Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupil who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.3 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4-week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.4 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes are monitored for frequency of lateness. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give adequate reason. If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the EWO is informed.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.**

4.8 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the main school office.

4.9 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

5. Term-time Holidays

5.2 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will consider every application individually; its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the **most exceptional circumstances**. Norfolk County guidance does not allow Headteachers to authorise any holiday. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **at least two weeks in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

5.4 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS

5.5 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will NOT authorise a holiday if attendance is below 95% in a preceding term.

6. Extended leave of Absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will take account of the following:

6.1 A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'

6.2 Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;

6.3 Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);

6.4 The reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;

6.5 Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School.

7.2 Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School expects parents / carers will:

- (a) ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- (b) support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- (c) not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- (a) Notify Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School on the first day of absence, by contacting the school before 9.00am, or by speaking to the school secretary whilst dropping off siblings.
- (b) Insure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- (c) Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- (d) Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Hethersett Woodside Infant and Nursery School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or classroom assistant.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

9. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

This policy will be reviewed in July 2019.