

*"We Care."*



## **Hamstel Infant School and Nursery Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Policy Document Details**

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<b>Persons responsible</b>	<b>Laurie Soane / Lisa Clark</b>
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**Headteacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair of Governors** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

'Where appropriate all Hamstel Infant School and Nursery policies adhere to the articles of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).'

The Attendance Policy recognises;

- Article 28: Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's human dignity. Wealthy countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

For more detail and information on UNCRC please see the 'Rights Respecting School Policy'.

At Hamstel Infant School and Nursery we believe Nurture is significant in our children's lives, therefore the whole school promotes the Nurture Principles:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of well-being
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

## Aim

Hamstel Infant School and Nursery is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils. We will ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Hamstel Infant School and Nursery actively promotes the value of regular attendance and recognises that a high attendance is effective in promoting a positive attitude throughout the whole school.

## Statutory framework

Under Section 44 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. Hamstel Infant School and Nursery has set a minimum attendance target of 95%. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.

## Roles and responsibilities

The various stakeholders for school attendance and punctuality have the following roles and responsibilities.

## Academy Responsibility

The Academy has the following statutory duties in relation to school attendance:

- To ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept;
- To ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DfE and the LA, including informing the LA if a pupil has been continuously absent for 2 weeks or more (without informing the school);

In addition the Academy will adopt the following strategies, which are recognised good practice:

- The Academy agrees attendance targets to help the school to further improve attendance.
- The Academy ensures that attendance is monitored and evaluates the success of the academy's attendance and punctuality policy, as part of school self-evaluation. The results of this process are reported to the Local Authority and DfE, who monitor attendance and

punctuality at the school on a termly basis. The Head Teacher's termly report to the Trust provides attendance data and an analysis of this data.

- Trustees are encouraged to ask questions about:
  - the attendance of different identified groups within the school;
  - trends in attendance over time.
- The Academy has appointed Attendance Leads with specific responsibilities for school attendance matters.

### **Head Teacher Responsibility**

- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and publishes attendance figures.
- The Head Teacher ensures that all staff provide a positive approach to attendance across the school, using agreed strategies.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of the Home School Agreement.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring the school rigorously monitors attendance and for taking action to further improve attendance.
- The Head Teacher has a duty under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a pupil has been absent for more than two weeks.
- The Head Teacher ensures that the school works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues, e.g. Specialist Services (Social Care), Health Services and Traveller Education Services.

### **Attendance Leads - Office Administrator and Manager for Wellbeing Responsibility**

- The Office Administrator will contact the parents/carers on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence if the school has not been notified, and subsequent days after that, until a reason is provided.
- The Manager for Wellbeing will review whole school pupil attendance weekly and identify pupils with below 95% attendance. Parents/carers of these pupils may be sent a Pre-level 1 letter highlighting attendance issues.
- If there is no improvement a Level 1 letter may then be sent identifying irregular attendance. In the letter a target of 100% will be set to be achieved in the next 3 weeks. If this target is not met then a new target may be set or it may be escalated to a Level 2 telephone conversation with the Manager for Wellbeing. During this conversation an achievable target will be set for the pupil and a date set for a review meeting between 2 – 6 weeks. The length of the review process will depend on each individual case. If parents/carers fail to engage a Level 2 telephone conversation targets will be set in their absence and a letter sent to them informing them of the outcome.
- If there is no improvement in attendance at Level 2 then a Level 3 letter will be sent informing parents and a weekly telephone conversation will take place with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion. During the conversation a target will be set and reviewed. The length of the review process will depend on each individual case.
- Telephone conversations are conducted at Level 3, however if a child's attendance is a cause for concern i.e. a sudden drop in attendance and/or a vulnerable family and they are not Level 3 a telephone conversation may be conducted.
- If a child has been absent for more than two weeks (10 working days) and no known reason has been given then a 'Child Missing in Education' (CME) report is completed by the Manager for Wellbeing and forwarded to Early Help Contact Point where investigations are made as to the whereabouts of the pupil. This may result in the pupil being taken off roll.

- If there are any safeguarding concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Head teacher) and the Assistant Head (Inclusion) will be informed on the first day of absence.
- Pupils arriving after 8.50am are recorded as late and will need to report to the school office where their name, class, lunch option, time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded. This will be recorded as a (L) in the register. All staff are made aware that any child arriving late MUST report to the office for purposes of fire regulations.
- Children arriving after 9.20am will be marked in the register as a (U) indicating that they have arrived after the registers have closed.
- Punctuality is reviewed on a weekly basis and letters sent to parents/carers of pupils arriving late at least twice in one week.
- Reception children who are not school age will receive a Reception attendance letter as the expectation is that they will attend school every day while on roll as this is vital for a child's achievement, success and social wellbeing. Absences will be given an authorised mark until a child reaches school age.
- Parents/carers of pupils being collected late without prior knowledge need to come to the school office. The child's name, class and time being picked up late is recorded. This will be monitored on a regular basis and a letter sent to parent/carers who frequently collect their children late.
- Class teachers are provided with the name of any child in their class who receives a letter, is moved to Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 on a weekly basis during the staff meeting. This is in order for them to be aware and to support improvement.
- Whole school attendance figures are provided to teachers in the staff meeting from the beginning of the academic year to the Friday preceding the staff meeting and for the week preceding the staff meeting.

### **Class Teacher and Nursery Key Worker Responsibilities**

The Class Teachers and Nursery Key Workers have a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our school.

- They ensure that registration periods are orderly and calm and that registers are called promptly and correctly.
- Electronic registers will be completed and closed at 8.50am.
- Paper registers (if applicable) will be returned to the office as soon as the registration period is finished so that they are available for inspection, information and data reading processes.
- The Class Teachers and Nursery Key Workers are responsible for welcoming pupils back to school on their return from absence. They are the first point of contact for informal discussions about attendance and punctuality with parents/carers and they can often sensitively alert them to our concerns in order to effect improvements. They will also notify other staff members as soon as possible if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties that has led to absence.
- **During COVID-19 restrictions Class Teachers and Nursery Keyworkers will conduct weekly telephone calls to their pupils. If Class Teachers or Keyworkers are unable to speak to a pupil, they will (if able) leave a message for the parent/carer(s) to call back. If after two attempts, contact is not made and parents/carers have not called back Class Teachers and the Keyworkers will message the parent via Seesaw. If no response, Class Teachers and Keyworkers will refer to the Assistant Head for Inclusion to contact the parent/carer. If after one week no contact is made via the above and the child has not and is not accessing Seesaw a Doorstep visit may be conducted by the Wellbeing Manager and one other member of staff.**

## Parents and Carers Responsibility

Hamstel Infant School and Nursery wishes to work in partnership with parents/carers to achieve good school attendance. Parents and carers have responsibilities, which are outlined in the Home-School agreement.

- Parents should ensure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Parents should provide the school with up to date information about points of contact and those with “parental responsibility”.
- Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of a pupil’s absence before 10.00am. They should state the reason for their absence and also the date on which they are expected to return to school.
- Pupils with a vomiting and/or diarrhoea bug should be kept off for 48 hours after they were last sick or had diarrhoea.
- On the pupil’s return to school the parent/carer should write a note to explain the absence, to be given to the Class Teacher or Nursery Key Worker, in addition to the original telephone call.
- **If pupils display any symptoms of COVID-19 they must not be sent into school and parents/carers should contact the NHS to have their child tested. Children can often feel ‘under the weather’ and we know it may be difficult to decide, however we recommend that parents/carers keep their child off from school until they decide if they need a test for COVID-19 or not. This is for everyone’s health and well-being at school.**
- **If a pupil becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms at school we will contact parents/carers to collect them and ask parents to contact the NHS to have their child tested. Parents/carers must advise the school of the outcome of the test as soon as it is known. If the test is positive then a pupil must self-isolate for 10 days (the rest of the household must self-isolate for 10 days), after this time they can return to school if they feel well enough. All of the pupils and adults who have been in close contact within the class will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with current Government guidelines. Other members of the household do not need to self-isolate unless someone in that household is also displaying symptoms.**
- When an appointment has been made for medical reasons, the appointment card should be shown in advance to the Office Administrator where a photocopy can be taken for evidence of absence. Parents/carers should also ensure that their child is properly equipped and fit for a learning environment.
- Parents should inform the school of any relevant factors (e.g. bereavement) which could affect the child’s attendance and behaviour.
- Parents are not permitted to take leave of absence during term time unless deemed for exceptional circumstances and agreed a month in advance.
- If unauthorised leave is taken parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

## Pupils Responsibility

- Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared and equipped for learning.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

- Hamstel Infant School and Nursery will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school’s ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- Induction and yearly transition meetings for parents/carers make clear the school’s expectations in terms of attendance and punctuality and the effect that issues relating to both can have on a child’s educational outcomes are made clear. This is further supported by the

Home/School agreement in which parents/carers make a commitment in relation to attendance and punctuality.

- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupil's needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
- Good attendance incentives will be awarded at the end of each half term to those pupils achieving 95% or above.
- Certificates will be awarded for those pupils achieving 100% attendance at the end of each term.
- A weekly Attendance Trophy is awarded in assembly to the class with the highest attendance in each year group.
- Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The Manager for Wellbeing will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters and a school attendance leaflet, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The Head Teacher will report annually to the Trust on attendance matters.
- The Manager for Wellbeing, when appropriate, will liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Specialist Services (Social Care) and other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

### **Attendance concerns**

When a pupil of Hamstel Infant School and Nursery is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to the Safeguarding, Child Protection, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. The Class Teacher and Nursery Keyworker will have a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole school staff.

### **Leave of Absence during term time**

Under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, Hamstel Infant School and Nursery seeks to minimise the number of absences taken in term time and will only agree to these in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include a funeral, wedding, religious observance for which time will be granted for only the event or an Embassy visit for immigration purposes. Leave of Absence forms are available from the School Office and should be completed at least a month prior to the leave of absence. If unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time you may be issued with a penalty notice. The Manager for Wellbeing will monitor attendance for 4 weeks on their return.

Should the pupil fail to return without informing or contacting the school, following notification to the School Attendance & Child Employment Service, they may be taken off roll. Similarly, if extended leave is refused by the school, and the child is absent for 10 days or more the child can also be removed from roll following guidance from Pupil Services. Parent/Carers should consider this carefully before taking extended leave as they may have to reapply for a school place on their return. (Education Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 S. 9 (e)