

## ***Policy & Procedure***

# **Huncote Community Primary School Academy Trust**



## **Attendance Policy 2016-2019**

This policy is reviewed every three years and was agreed by the Governing Body of Huncote Community Primary School in June 2016 **and will be reviewed again in June 2019**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Non-Statutory Policy***

*Huncote Community Primary School***Attendance Policy****CONTENTS**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Huncote Community Primary 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 has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Huncote Community Primary 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  
The Office Manager 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 monthly 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 and the Office Assistant are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

**REGISTER CODES**

| <b>CODE</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>   | <b>MEANING</b>                      |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| /           | Present (AM)   | Present                             |
| \           | Present (PM)   | Present                             |
| <b>B</b>    | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>C</b>    | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>D</b>    | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)                         | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>E</b>    | Excluded (no alternative provision made)   | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>F</b>    | Extended family holiday (agreed)   | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>G</b>    | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)                    | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>H</b>    | Family holiday (agreed)  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>I</b>    | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)                                    | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>J</b>    | Interview  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>L</b>    | Late (before registers closed)   | Present                             |
| <b>M</b>    | Medical/Dental appointments  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>N</b>    | No reason yet provided for absence   | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>O</b>    | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)                     | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>P</b>    | Approved sporting activity   | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>R</b>    | Religious observance   | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>S</b>    | Study leave  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>T</b>    | Traveller absence  | Authorised absence                  |
| <b>U</b>    | Late (after registers closed)  | Unauthorised absence                |
| <b>V</b>    | Educational visit or trip  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>W</b>    | Work experience  | Approved Education Activity         |
| <b>X</b>    | Non-compulsory school age absence  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>Y</b>    | Enforced closure   | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not yet on roll  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| <b>#</b>    | School closed to pupils  | Not counted in possible attendances |

- ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and **1.15 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 **9.05 am** and **1.20 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive after 8.55am but before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.6 on page 8).

#### 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 absent 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 Head teacher.
- ii) Huncote Community Primary 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 at Huncote Community Primary School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children'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) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
    - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
    - 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,
    - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see para 5 on page 8 and 9 for the school's policy on term-time holidays and Appendix 2 for the Absence Request Form)
  - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

- (c) 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);
  - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
  - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
  - (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. 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:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
  - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
  - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
  - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
  - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
  - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
  - 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 student 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 Office Manager 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 Office Manager 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 year group, class group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Huncote Community Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- 4.2 Huncote Community Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The Office Assistant telephones parents to seek clarification and informs the Head teacher if further action is required.
- 4.3 First-day calling  
Parents are asked to telephone school by 8.55am on the first day of absence, indicating the reasons and likely length of time of the absence. If this telephone call is not received, Huncote Community Primary 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 pupils who do not have a good reason for absence. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.
- 4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence  
The Office Manager is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Huncote Community Primary School intervene in non attendance at an early stage.  
  
Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence 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. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.  
  
Huncote Community Primary School will organise Attendance / Governor Panels to intervene in levels of non attendance when parents will be invited to discuss the issues of the attendance.
- 4.5 Referral to Attendance Improvement Services  
If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Improvement Service. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every

pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

#### 4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school 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. 2.4.(iii) on page 5) 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 (in this case, the absent mark will be changed to a late mark). A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as a pupil with an emerging pattern of absence. (See para. 4.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Service.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be marked late.

4.8 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 school office. **It is important that all pupils / students arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils / students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day leave with an approved adult from the main foyer; having informed the office staff or Head teacher that they are leaving. Parents should not take children from school unless either of these members of staff (or their replacements) have been informed.

## 5. Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

Huncote Community Primary 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 Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the law states that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless:

- ✓ An application has been made **in advance** by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides AND
- ✓ The Head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Huncote Community Primary School will consider authorising holidays for (exceptional circumstances):

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays out of term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;



- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Huncote Community Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Huncote Community Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: SATs examinations.

## 6. Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Huncote Community Primary School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- 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);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- 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

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 Huncote Community Primary School.

Huncote Community Primary School expects parents / carers will:

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

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Huncote Community Primary School on the first day of absence by telephone or in person at the school office;

- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, supporting with homework and writing in Home-School Diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Huncote Community Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns following the procedures set out in our Complaints Policy.

## 8. Pupils' responsibilities

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 a trusted adult in school. For pupils of Primary School age, the main responsibility for attendance rests with the parents.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school, and their parents have not telephoned the school, they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence.

## 9. Governors' responsibilities

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.

## 10. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring successful outcomes for pupils –

### **being healthy –**

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

### **staying safe –**

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

### **enjoying and achieving –**

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

### **making a positive contribution –**

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

**achieve economic well-being –**

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

**Inclusion**

Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

***Equality Statement***

At Huncote Community Primary School, we seek actively to encourage equity and equality through our work. No gender, race, creed or ethnicity will be discriminated against. The school's Disability Equality Scheme will be followed and the use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

## Appendix 1

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS****1. When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and the afternoon register at **1.15pm**.

**2. What happens if my child is late?**

Registration finishes at **9.05am** in the morning and **1.20pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives after **9.05am** he/she will be marked as **absent** (unless a good reason for lateness is provided, in which case the mark will be changed to **late**)

The vast majority of pupils in a primary school remain on the site at lunchtime but, if your child comes home for lunch and arrives back at school after **1.15pm** he/she will be marked **late**

If your child arrives after **1.20pm** he/she will be marked **absent** (unless a good reason for lateness is provided, in which case the mark will be changed to **late**)

*[Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office to sign in with the office staff who will adjust the class register as necessary. If a pupil is late on 4 or more occasions, a meeting will be arranged with the Head teacher to discuss reasons/ difficulties for lateness]*

**3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. Parents can leave a message on the answering machine indicating the reasons and likely length of the absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If telephone contact is not made, a letter explaining the absence on the first day of return to school will be required otherwise the absence will be unauthorised.

**4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- *Emergency* dental/medical appointment  
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the Holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

**5. What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays etc. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised (a holiday request form must be completed well in advance).

**6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?**

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

**7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's class teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's Phonics or SATs examinations (Year 1, Year 2 or Year 6). You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Head teacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a Home-School Diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and support them with their reading or homework as necessary.

**9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher, or Key Stage Leader teacher, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Attendance Improvement Officer. The school may also refer you to an Attendance Improvement Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Attendance Improvement Service is based at: Attendance Improvement Service, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RF.

Appendix 2 - **Huncote Community Primary School Academy Trust**

# REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Child's name: .....

Class: .....

Child's name: .....

Class: .....

I am requesting permission for my child(ren) to be absent from school for the period:

..... to ..... (inclusive)

Please indicate the reasons for this absence. If this is for a holiday, please indicate why this holiday could not take place in the course of the normal holiday pattern (please see the attached – guide for parents before writing your reasons)

.....  
.....

Please note:

Head teachers have a discretionary power to refuse requests if your child already has a poor record of attendance or if national tests are taking place at the time of the holiday / absence

Signed.....  
Parent/Carer

Date.....

*for office use only* THIS **ABSENCE REQUEST** IS

Authorised

Not Authorised

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Absence Dates Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Head teacher Date \_\_\_\_\_

SIMS

REGISTER

NOTE

## Term-time holidays – A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

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- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.