



# Heathside Preparatory School

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Staff expect full and punctual attendance from all pupils.**

### Principles

- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.
- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (ie illness or other unavoidable cause),
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.
- Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.
- Parents are expected to contact at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the LEA. S/he will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this officer can use court proceedings to persecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for advice. They are independent of the school

### Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

#### **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 08.30am.

When the pupil returns, he or she must bring a written note, signed by the parent for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.

### **Holidays**

All holiday leave in term time is at the discretion of the . Provided the request is made in advance in writing. Leave for up to ten days per school year may be granted, provided that the pupil's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory. Leave may be refused where children have already missed a lot of work or at crucial times of the year (e.g. during examinations). Requests for leave beyond 10 days will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Pupils who take a holiday in term time will be expected to complete extra work to make sure they do not fall behind.

### **Lateness**

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. A late mark is awarded if arrival is between 9.00 and 10.00am. (9.15 – 10 am for Lower School) Absence mark is given if arrival is after 10.00am.

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