

HARDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hardwick Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. There is clear evidence of a link between good attendance at school and high levels of attainment. Only by attending school every day available to the pupil and being punctual will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents/carers, school staff and governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance.
- 1.3 This policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance/statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff at Hardwick Primary have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. Staff will work together to provide an environment in which all 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 Officer

A member of the School Leadership Team will act as the school's Attendance Officer and lead the school's work in promoting and improving attendance and ensuring that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Attendance Officer will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and attendance issues are shared with the School Leadership Team as soon as a trigger point is reached or earlier where there are other concerns. The School Leadership Team will ensure that support is put in place to deal with any attendance issues. The Attendance Officer will also meet with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer and share information with them regarding any concerns about a pupil's attendance. Attendance information and reports will be prepared by the Attendance Officer. Information on attendance will be made readily available to staff and parents/carers. Attendance reports will be made available to the Governing Body each term.

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. Teachers take the register electronically using the SIMS management system. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the codes detailed below.

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not	Authorised absence

	covered by another appropriate code/description)	
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (requested in advance) not authorised by the Headteacher	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday (requested in advance) authorised by the Headteacher	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- ii) The register will be called promptly at **9:00am** and **1:00pm (for EYFS and KS1) and 1:30pm (for KS2)**. The register will be called by the class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

2.4 The register will close at **9:15am** and **1:15pm (for EYFS and KS1) and 1:45pm (for KS2)**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be counted as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under section 4.5 of this policy.

2.5 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child not present at this time will be recorded as absent. This absence will be categorised as an 'unauthorised absence' unless leave has been authorised by the school in advance or where a reason for absence is known and is accepted by the school as a legitimate reason for absence. Where a reason for absence is given to the school at a later stage, the register will be amended (if required) so that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable.
- ii) Hardwick Primary School recognises that there are clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. The school recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence may potentially send a message to parents/carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, excluding where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Hardwick Primary School will challenge parents/carers 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 that an absence becomes authorised.** The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.**

iii) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance –

- a pupil is to be educated off site, for example to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is participating in an educational trip or visit authorised by the school,

(b) in an **exceptional** circumstance, where permission has been granted by the Headteacher for absence and where the parents/carers with whom the child normally resides have sought permission in advance. In authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case as well as the pupil's attendance, attainment, and ability to catch up on missed schooling will also be considered. See section 5.1 for further details.

(c) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(d) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers 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;)

(e) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(f) where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong;

(g) where the Local Authority have a duty to make travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty;

(h) where the pupil is of no fixed abode, their parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required them 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;

(i) where the pupil has been excluded from the school and no alternative provision has been made;

(j) in other very **exceptional circumstances** where a request could not have been made in advance (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

iv) 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/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- term time holiday
- 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 has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.6 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.

2.7 Class registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration, and to ensure the safety of pupils, teachers will take a register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by classroom staff and urgent measures will be taken to locate the pupil. See 4.8.

2.8 Staff Training

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

3. Collection and Analysis of Data

3.1 The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the School Leadership Team, parents/carers and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns will be made to the Department for Education within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Hardwick Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in registration groups. The school will celebrate and reward good or improved attendance e.g. by the issue of certificates. Parents/carers are regularly reminded in newsletters and at school meetings about the importance of good attendance. The Attendance Policy will be made available on request and via the school website.

4.2 Hardwick Primary School will contact parents where there is a concern regarding the level of attendance or late arrivals at school.

4.3 Hardwick Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within the week:

First-day calling

Hardwick Primary School has in place a system of 'first-day calling'. This means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent where no explanation for the absence has been received. The system helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parent's/carer's knowledge. Where it is not possible to make direct contact with parents/carers a message will be left on the parents/carers telephone(s) and a text message sent. If contact has not been made with the parents/carers by the end of the week, or earlier if there are reasons for concern, a letter will be sent home asking the parents/carers to contact the school immediately.

Meetings with parents/carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence or where staff are particularly concerned the school may contact parents/carers to notify them of their concerns. A meeting may then be arranged to discuss the reasons for the absences. At the meeting, plans should be put in place with the parents/carers

and the pupil to resolve any difficulties, to provide appropriate support and to improve the attendance within a specified time limit. This would usually be no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

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.

4.4 Penalty notices

The law says that parents/carers are committing an offence where their children (of compulsory school age) are absent from school without good reason. A Penalty Notice is a financial penalty issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. The school has a duty to share their attendance data with the Education Attendance Service and to notify them when unauthorised absence has been taken in term time. Penalty Notices are also issued where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school. From 1st September 2014 there will no longer be a warning letter prior to the issue of a Penalty Notice. **Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine on the 8th session (4 days) of unauthorised absence within a school year.** Where the penalty is not paid in full and/or within the prescribed time limit the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. If they arrive late it is both very disruptive to their own education and to that of others within their class. Pupils who arrive after the register closes 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. Reasons such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes will **not** be classed as a legitimate reason. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. 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, must report to the school office where their parents/carers must sign the pupil book and record the reason for their lateness.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building at any time. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office to allow staff to register pupils and ascertain their lunchtime requirements. **It is VITALLY important that all pupils & parents/carers arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.8 For the same reason it is vitally important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) and/or returning to school later in the day complete the required information in the pupil book held in the 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 means that the pupil will be potentially vulnerable to harm and will also not be receiving a full-time education. Hardwick Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that 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/carers immediately, inform the local police and establish a search team to locate the pupil.

5. Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

- 5.1 Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on the appropriate 'green' form by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Any further evidence supporting the application may be attached to the form. The application must be made well **in advance** of the intended absence. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval therefore if parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. All requests will be considered on an individual basis.

The Headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances, but this is reserved for a day or two – usually related to for example a funeral, a close family wedding or an exceptional circumstance that means the child has to miss school for that day.

5.2 Requests for term time holidays

The school does not authorise term time holidays, regardless of the reasons given.

Nick Gibb, Minister of State for the DfE has written to all schools outlining the following (July 2016):

“As you will be aware there is clear evidence that absence from school is linked to lower levels of attainment. The Department's latest analysis published in March shows that every extra day missed was associated with lower attainment at age 11 and at age 16. In other words, every extra day of school that is missed can affect a pupil's chance of gaining good GCSE results.

It remains the case - as set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended in 2013 - that headteachers continue to have the power to authorise leave of absence, but only in exceptional circumstances. While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education.”

After discussions with the Education Welfare Officer and the school's Governing Body it was decided that as from 1st September 2016 the school will not be authorising any holidays taken in term time, regardless of the reasons – including parent/carer work schedules. Children get 13 weeks a year given to them for the purpose of going on a family holiday (if desired). The school can no longer authorise additional time off for children to go on holiday in term time. If parents/carers decide to go on a term time holiday they will still need to inform the school by completing the 'green' form, and they will receive a penalty notice fine from the Local Authority if the holiday carries on to the 8th session of unauthorised absence.

If the parent's/carer's employer dictates the holiday schedule then parents/carers are advised to inform them that the school can no longer authorise holiday's in term time. Parent/carers should make sure they request their holiday leave in plenty of time to coincide with the published school holidays.

- 5.3 Hardwick Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving their decision as to whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.
- 5.4 Hardwick Primary School will **NOT** authorise time off school during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations.

6. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- 6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring that 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.) Parents/carers will be supported and encouraged by Hardwick Primary School.

- 6.2 Hardwick Primary School expects parents/carers:

- To ensure that their child will attend school every day the school is available;

- To support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- To understand that the school are unable to automatically agree requests for absence;
- To not condone unjustified absence from school.

6.3 Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify Hardwick Primary School on every day of their child's absence by phone.
- send written confirmation of **all** periods of absence and the reason for the absence on their child's return to school. In the event that written confirmation is not received at the school one reminder will be made to the parent/carer. Where notification is still not received the absence may be recorded as unauthorised;
- ensure that 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, signing reading records 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 child's lives. Hardwick Primary School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

7. Pupils' Responsibilities

7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of attending school every day the school is available. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

7.2 Pupils should attend all of their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents/carers to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

8. Governors' Responsibilities

8.1 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.

9. Conclusion

9.1 School attendance contributes to the health and safety of children and supports children in reaching their maximum potential. Being a member of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute and to be responsible for the well-being of others. 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.

Reviewing the policy:

Date of review: Autumn 2016

Amended: Summer 2017

Date of next review: Autumn 2019



Hardwick Primary School

Attendance: A guide for Parents and Carers

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should arrive at school in good time for registration. The morning register is called promptly at 9:00am and the afternoon register is taken at 1:00pm (for Reception and KS1 pupils) and at 1:30pm (for KS2 pupils). Children may come into their designated gate/door from 8:50am onwards. External doors and gates are closed promptly at 9:00am. If your child arrives after that time they **must** enter school via the main entrance and follow the procedure below.

What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrives between 9:00 am and 9:15 am he/she will be marked late.
- If your child arrives after 9:15 am he/she will be marked as absent (unauthorised)
- Pupils who arrive after the start of registration should report to the school office, and parents/carers should sign the pupil book giving the reason for their lateness. Where a child is late on more than one occasion in any 4 week period, the school may write to the parents/carers of the child regarding their child's punctuality. If a pupil is consistently late a meeting may be arranged to discuss reasons/ difficulties for lateness.

What should I do if my child cannot come to school?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence, and on every day of absence that follows. If you do not contact us, we will try to telephone you. We also require a written explanation of your child's absence on your child's return to school. A reminder will be sent to you if we have not received your letter. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we may not authorise the absence and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. School staff, the School Leadership Team, School Governors and the Education Welfare Officer all monitor absence.

Examples of reasons that the school will accept for absence include:

- Illness (unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make all routine appointments before or after school or during the school holidays.)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement or other exceptional family circumstance deemed acceptable by the Headteacher

Except in the case of illness, permission for your child to miss school should be requested well in advance, giving full details of the proposed absence. By giving sufficient advance notice you will ensure that there is time available for the school to make any necessary further enquiries and for written notification of whether the absence will be authorised/unauthorised to be sent. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or other medical evidence or to provide details of medical personnel to enable the school to make direct contact.

A 'Leave of Absence' from school may be granted in exceptional circumstances where an application has been made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides on the relevant form. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence if they consider there to be **exceptional** reasons for absence from school during term time e.g. close family wedding or a funeral. Applications must always be made in advance and evidence may be requested to support any application.

Can we take family holidays during term-time?

In line with government legislation, the school policy and Local Education Authority policy **all family holidays should be taken in school closure periods. The school does not authorise term time holidays**, regardless of the reasons. Where an absence has been unauthorised by the school and the time off school is taken, the school has a duty to notify the Local Authority's Education Service.

What is a Penalty Notice and when would one be issued?

The law says that parents/carers are committing an offence where their children (of compulsory school age) are absent from school without good reason.

A Penalty Notice is a financial penalty issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. The school has a duty to share their attendance data with the Education Attendance Service and to notify them when unauthorised absence has been taken in term time. Penalty Notices are also issued where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school. From 1st September 2014 there will no longer be a warning letter prior to the issue of a Penalty Notice. **Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine on the 8th session (4 days) of unauthorised absence within a school year.** Where the penalty is not paid in full and/or within the prescribed time limit the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

I am thinking about taking my child on a trip overseas to visit relatives, what should I do?

The school recognises that such trips help children keep in touch with their extended family, however parents/carers should always make such trips during school holiday periods. We appreciate that due to the long distances often involved there may however be some overlap with term time, but if your trip extends to the 8th session of unauthorised absence you will be issued with a Penalty Notice fine. Should you be considering such an absence you will need to put your request in writing on the green, term time absence form.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure that 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 for the school day. Show your child that you value his/her learning by asking them about their school day. Follow your home-school agreement and attend Parents Evenings and other information sessions at school to enable you to support your child's learning and progress.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems, bullying or 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 looking at all appropriate support available. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The Service is based at: West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. IP33 3YU.

What will happen if my child's attendance level falls?

The school monitors the attendance rate of all children as requested by the Local Authority, Suffolk County Council. Where a child's attendance rate is considered too low, the Local Authority requires the school to take intervention action. The following actions will therefore be taken in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

Attendance rate falls below 95% - A letter may be sent home from the school to inform the parent(s)/carer(s) that their child's attendance level requires improvement and the child's attendance will continue to be closely monitored.

Attendance rate falls to 93% - A letter may be sent home from the school to inform the parent(s)/carer(s) that the school are unable to authorise any further absences unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to the school.

Attendance rate falls to 90% – A meeting may be arranged with the parent(s)/carer(s) at the school to discuss attendance and support that the school can offer.

Where attendance does not improve the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted by the school.

Hardwick Primary School - Term Time Absence Request Form



The Headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, but this is reserved for a day or two – usually related to for example a funeral, a close family wedding or an exceptional circumstance that means the child has to miss school for that day.

Each application made by parents/carers for leave during term time will be judged on an individual basis taking into account the reason for the request, but unless it is deemed exceptional circumstances by the school, the request will be denied.

The Governors’ policy, in line with Department for Education and Suffolk Education advice, is that all holidays should be taken in school closure periods. As from 1st September 2016 the school will no longer be able to consider requests to authorise term time holidays and therefore all term time holidays will be unauthorised regardless of the reasons – including parent/carer work schedules. If your employer dictates your holiday schedule then please inform them that the school can no longer authorise holiday’s in term time and please make sure you request your holiday leave in plenty of time to coincide with the published school holidays. If you do decide to go on a term time holiday you will still need to inform the school using this form.

NB - Any request for leave of absence will not be authorised when children are due to take national/school tests in May and June.

Penalty notices

The law says that parents/carers are committing an offence where their children (of compulsory school age) are absent from school without good reason. A Penalty Notice is a financial penalty issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. The school has a duty to share their attendance data with the Education Attendance Service and to notify them when unauthorised absence has been taken in term time. From 1st September 2014 there will no longer be a warning letter prior to the issue of a Penalty Notice. **Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine where there have been 8 sessions (4 days) of unauthorised absence within a school year.**

Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Please note all applications MUST be made in advance.

Name of child / children:	Class:

I would like to apply for a leave of absence for my child / Children from:(Date)

Should this leave of absence be granted my child /children would return to school on:(Date)

The reason(s) for this request are:

Please provide written evidence from to support your application if necessary.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

- I am / am not attaching further evidence in support of this application (*please delete as applicable*)

Details of Siblings:

If you have other children currently attending another school please complete their details below.

Child's Name	Child's Age	Name of Child's School

I understand that:

- The Headteacher will consider this application based solely on the information provided on this form and on any further evidence that I have attached.
- I may be requested to provide further information to the school.
- I will be notified in writing whether this proposed absence would be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on my child's attendance record.
- I understand that I may receive a Penalty Notice fine if the request isn't deemed as exceptional.

I confirm that I am the parent/carer of the child detailed above and that my child normally resides with me.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date: