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# Expectations for attendance at the Havelock Schools



## Regular school attendance means:

- **Attending school every day**
- **Arriving at school on time**

This leaflet is for you as parent/carer and explains your legal duty regarding your child's attendance at school and best practice to help you support your child to develop good habits which will stand them in good stead as they grow up. Regular school attendance is crucial to ensure your child's success. Your child deserves the best education possible.

### Every Lesson Counts

- Every lesson really does count for your child. Children can quickly fall behind if even one day is missed.
- Catching up even a little lost time from school can be really difficult, both academically and socially.
- Good attendance is linked to achievement, better relationships with other children and better overall behaviour in school.
- Good attendance is not just about what happens in school – absence when your child is young can limit their future opportunities, and set up bad habits for work and life.
- Statistics show that good attendance helps reduce the risk of your child becoming a victim of crime or abuse.
- Good attendance helps reduce the risk of your child being drawn into anti-social behaviour as they get older.
- Good attendance supports your child to make the most of their achievements.
- Whether your child is absent for a morning/afternoon or a whole day, or you have trouble getting him/her to school, first talk to your child's teacher – they'll do their best to help.
- There is lots of support available in school, through Hayley Harvey and Jayne Rhinds our Parent Support Advisors.



monitoring period of at least 4 weeks will commence where attendance needs to be significantly improved.

- After a period of monitoring if attendance still does not improve then we will refer your case to CH Education Welfare Solutions.
- As a last resort legal procedures will be instigated.

their child's regular attendance at school have been referred to the County Council's Education Entitlement Team, who have fined parents £60 per day for non-attendance at school, this money is collected and retained by the County Council and not schools. This has included persistent absence of any kind including time taken off for holidays. This guidance was tightened up further from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 so that any child who takes 5 or more days for unauthorised reasons including holidays is now referred on and could be fined £60 per leave period per adult per child. We understand that it can be difficult for some families to take holidays within school holiday time but we are required by law to follow this guidance. The Government wishes to see all schools and pupils achieve attendance rates that are 95% or higher.



### **How is attendance calculated?**

**The school has set procedures that we will follow if we have concerns about your child's absence.**

- Each term attendance figures are monitored for each pupil. If a pupil falls below 95% in that term then you will receive a letter outlining that we are concerned about their attendance. In an average 13 week term, possible attendance is 130 sessions. 95% means a child will be present for 123.5 or more of these sessions. This means if your child is absent for more than 3 whole days during this period then their attendance will fall below 95%. The attendance is a cumulative figure throughout the year so if attendance is particularly low it may take a few terms to pick up to a level that is above 95% again. Therefore you may receive a letter the following term until it does improve to above 95%. Over the year to maintain a figure above 95% your child needs to attend 361 or more out of 380 sessions. This means no more than 9 days missed throughout the year.
- If your child's attendance falls below 90% then you will be put on a monitoring schedule with our Attendance and Pastoral manager. You will be notified by letter that a

### **How can you help your child?**

- If your child is genuinely poorly or will be coming in late for some reason give us a ring on the morning of absence to let us know what is wrong, we have an absence line where you can leave details. Please let us know how long you think your child will be absent and keep in touch with us regarding their progress.
- Don't keep your child off school for minor ailments – we would rather you brought them in and 'gave school a go'. We will always call you if your child is too unwell to be at school.
- Avoid making routine medical or dental appointments during the school day. Please make them after school and in the holidays.
- Ensure your child is fully prepared for school each day – organise your child's school uniform, equipment, homework, kit and packed lunch the night before.
- Ensure your child attends school every day and arrives on time, in order to keep up with school work and the important social relationships they are developing.
- Show your child that you think school is very important and talk to them about how much difference a good education can make to their lives.
- Praise your child's achievements.
- Get them into good habits early on e.g. doing their homework and getting their school kit ready the night before. Recognise that children can get into bad habits from an early age and that these are hard to break later.
- Contact the school on the morning of any unplanned absence.
- Let the school know of any pre-planned absences e.g. for religious observance.
- Encourage and support your child with school work.
- Attend any meetings in school to which you are invited.
- Let the school know as soon as there are any problems or changes.



- Do not keep your child at home if your child is worried or has a problem. The best way to support your child is to ask for a meeting in school to explain any difficulties and to address problems. The more time your child is absent from school, the harder it will be for them to return.
- If you receive a letter regarding your child's absence, do not ignore it! Failure to engage and cooperate could have serious legal consequences.



### How can we help you?

- We have Parent Support Advisors who can help you if you are struggling to ensure your children attend school regularly. Talk to your child's class teacher about this or call either school office and ask to speak to Hayley Harvey or Jayne Rhinds.
- We work together with CH Education Welfare Solutions to support you if absence falls below a certain level. Mr Carl Henry will work with you to ensure you support your child's attendance at school increases so that you avoid legal implications.
- We record and monitor all absences and lateness with Mr Henry and contact you if either of these are causing concern.
- We call you in the morning if your child is absent and we have not had an explanation, this ensures your children are always safe.
- We ask you to avoid taking your children on holiday during term time as it has serious impact on their education and can result in a fine for you.

### The Legalities of Term Time Absence

- All absences must be recorded.
- All absences are either authorised **or** unauthorised.

#### Examples of authorised absence:

1. Genuine illness
2. Days of religious observance specified in advance
3. Exceptional family circumstances eg bereavement
4. Approved sporting activity

#### Examples of unauthorised absence:

1. Frequent absence due to minor ailments
2. Shopping during school hours
3. Looking after siblings of sick parents or carers
4. Birthdays
5. Day trips
6. Holidays
7. Arriving late for school after the close of register

- Absences for family holidays cannot be authorised. If you do decide to take a family holiday during term time please pick up a form from the office so that we are aware of your child's absence.
- Other unauthorised absences include shopping trips or visits to friends. All unauthorised absences will remain on the child's absence record. There are sometimes unforeseen circumstances affecting families which necessitate absence from school. Please come and talk to us if you are unsure and we will do our best to help.
- Considering the above facts it is vital that as parents you:
- Always notify us in the morning on the first day of absence by phoning the school.
- Ensure punctuality and stress it to your child. School starts each day at 9am and the doors open at 8.50am

### Absences Including Term Time Holidays

Changes in guidance issued to schools from the Department of Education meant that from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 attendance guidelines tightened up and parents who have failed to ensure