



### **Rationale**

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We recognise that at their current age, children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. It is therefore vital that parents agree to ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance at the school.

As children receive 15 hours early education, with some children entitled to an additional 15 hours, which is funded by the government, it is essential that we support and monitor regular attendance to ensure the best use of public funds.

Hart Hill Nursery School aims to support the Local Authority and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to such education as their medical condition allows enabling them to reach their full potential/

### **Aim**

Hart Hill Nursery School aims to maximum attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them by:

- Establishing clear expectations for attendance and punctuality and have clear lines of escalations where families do not meet our expectations
- Ensuring persistent absence and lateness is monitored regularly and that parents understand the importance of regular attendance and the lines of notification if their child is unwell
- Making clear how expectations may differ for children who have a special educational needs or diagnosed medical conditions
- Maintaining the vital partnerships with parents so that good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all
- Developing positive attitudes towards school for children, so that they want to attend school
- Being accountable for our school attendance figures, to the Governing Body and the DFE

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy the current definitions will be used:

### ***Authorised absence***

Authorised absence is any absence where the parents have contacted the school on the day to inform them of the child's absence; this could include for sickness or where a child is unwell, an agreed medical appointment, where an appointment card or text has been seen, days out or family holidays, that have been agreed in advance and a child's attendance is above 75% for that academic year.

### ***Unauthorised absence***

Unauthorised absence is any absence where the parent has not given a reason for a child's absence, or where the school has reasonable doubt to explanation given. It also includes where a medical appointment is being attended for a parent or other family member. Any days holidays or events requested where a child's attendance is below 75% will also fit into this category.

### ***Persistent Absence***

Persistent absence is where a child is absent from school repeated on the same day of the week, or where a child's attendance falls below 75% without a good medical reason for this absence.

### ***Severe Absence***

Severe absence is where a child is absent from school more than they attend (50% or lower). This is a significant safeguarding risk and the school will work with the Local Authority Team for safeguarding where a child falls into this category.

### ***Absence due to medical need***

Where a child is absence due to medical need, this will be authorised absence. Not all of a child's absence, who has a medical need, will be due to their medical need and so the absences will be spilt to ensure that a true attendance percentage is available for monitoring by the school.

### ***Absence due to individual special educational need***

Where a child has a diagnosed or undiagnosed special educational need and is struggling with something specific, we understand that this may affect their attendance for a short period of time; this will be noted as authorised absence, until the time that support and advice (or medication) is given. Not all of a child's absence, where there is a special educational needs, will be due to this need and so that absences will be spilt to ensure that a true attendance percentage is available for monitoring by the school.

### ***Punctuality***

For the purpose of this policy punctuality includes dropping off on time and picking up. The school takes a lack of punctuality as seriously as a lack of attendance.

### ***Persistent Lateness***

Where a child is late into school and parts of the session are missed, this will be deemed unauthorised without a notification from parents. Lateness to collect a child at the correct end of session time will be seen as a safeguarding concern, where this is not a one off occasion. Persistent lateness may be deemed this if a child is late on the same day each week, or if the amount of lateness is below 75% punctuality rate.

### ***Severe Lateness***

Severe lateness is where a child is late on a regular occurrences and where the hours add up to be a significant amount of education lost. Severe lateness is also where a parent fails to collect a child repeatedly on time at the end of their session; more seriously if they do not collect a child after the closure of the school at the end of the school day. The school will work with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team where severe lateness occurs.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The class teachers and room leaders are responsible for the recording of daily attendance in their classroom. They must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The attendance registers are marked by 9:10 for the morning session and 12:55 for the afternoon sessions.

The admin team are also responsible for recording reasons for absence, for calling parents who have not made contact with the school as to why their child is absent and ensuring that any family who are late sign in with the electronic system.

The Family Worker responsible for attendance (or a member of SLT in their absence) will check the registers regularly, holding regular meetings with the clerical assistants. All absences without reason, persistent or repetitive absences and persistent lateness, that has not been agreed, will be investigated and support will be offered to help families to improve attendance and embed good habits, with regards to the importance of school attendance for children, no matter their age. All emails or telephone calls linked to monitoring attendance will be followed up by a written letter. In addition to this, each half term, the Family Worker will work in partnership with the Deputy Headteacher to carryout attendance reviews and complete improvement plans (attached) to support parents to improve a child's attendance in the school.

The Headteacher will also monitor overall percentage of individual children's attendance, at least once a half term. They will use the definitions above to ensure fair and due diligence of the attendance records are carried out. Where attendance falls below 75% they will work with the family worker and admin team to organise letters attached according to the correct procedure for next steps and will ensure a meeting is organised within the first week of the next term with the Family Worker and Deputy Headteacher. Where a family fail to meet the attendance improvement plan, the Headteacher will report individual cases to the Governing Body for new steps to be reviewed and actioned; this could include removing a child from the school role or completing a referral to the Local Authority safeguarding team.

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for improvement plans, where these are required for families. They will work in partnership with the Family Workers to ensure meetings are timetabled quickly and that meetings are effective in raising attendance figures for individual families. Where families fail to meet targets, the Deputy Headteacher will transfer the improvement plans to the Headteacher for further investigation with the Governing Body.

The Governing Body, through the Safeguarding Governor will ensure that this policy is followed and that all staff have a good understanding of the schools procedures, as well as the definitions discussed in this policy. They will ensure that the school monitor staffs effectiveness in t their role and that they are given the correct training, including in house training, to be able to hold parents to account for their children's attendance needs.

### **Authorised, Unauthorised Absence and Punctuality**

Each absence is recorded as either Authorised or Unauthorised as approved by the Headteacher. It is not the role or responsibility of any other member of staff to authorise or not authorise absences from schools. Wherever possible, we expect parents to make appointments (doctor, dentist and attendance at classes) outside of the school session times. Overall attendance percentage is taken seriously when deeming if an absence is authorised or unauthorised, as described in the definitions listed above.

### **Authorised Absence**

We understand that children in our school are of an age whereby they are not yet statutory school age. To support this we have agreed to grant families reasonable absences in an academic year with authorised absence. Any further days beyond this will classed at unauthorised absence.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised Absences are those absences for which the school received no reason or explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given. Unauthorised absences are also absences that occur, in terms of a day out or holiday, whereby the Headteacher has not given permission prior to the event, or where families have already had excessive days of absence authorised in a school year.

It must be noted that continued or repeated unauthorised absences could be seen as a safeguarding concern and therefore support from the family working team may be appropriate in this incident. A child may lose their school place for repeated poor attendance, particularly if there is a waiting list. This is to ensure that we are showing to provide a good resource for public funds, as the education places are funded by the local government. Where a child is removed from the school roll, under any circumstances, a letter will be written to the parents to confirm this taking place.

## **Lateness**

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start to the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils, as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to the children's individual learning, as well as causing risk of unsettling their wellbeing, and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is extremely important therefore that all pupils arrive on time.

Along with this is so also crucial that children stay in school for the duration of their session. Leaving early unsettles them and other children in the class as they begin to ask questions about where their parents are. Both lateness and early collection will be counted as unauthorised absence unless a letter has been written to the Headteacher informing them of the reasons for this on a daily occurrence, such as needing to collect or drop other siblings at a different school.

## **Promoting Attendance**

We want to share the successes of the children and families who attend well at Hart Hill Nursery School, however understand that young children in their first educational setting are likely to develop some illnesses whilst with us, especially as their immune systems develop. We also understand that it is not each child's responsibility as to whether they attend school.

We aim to promote attendance with all children through regular conversations, newsletter and contact via Parentmail, so that parents can see what the children are doing in school. This will allow parents to see what a child is missing when they do not attend. In addition to this, attendance is discussed in terms of attainment at parents consultation meetings; the staff take target setting seriously and want to see every child reach their full potential.

When targets are reviewed, the impact of attendance is a strong measure towards the school and parents being able to work together to meet common goals.

We also want to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of parents, who do support the children to attend above the expectation set by the government – 95%; Where a child has attended the school for 95% of the time or above in a half term, they will receive an acknowledgement of this commitment from the Headteacher.

### **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the annual policy cycle. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff by the Headteacher.

All members of staff directly involved with the attendance are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined as part of this policy, including all relevant Government and Local guidance.