

# Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School

**‘Together, we enjoy learning in a happy,  
caring and friendly environment’**



## ***ATTENDANCE POLICY***

**This Policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body in  
Summer (2022)**

**It will be reviewed in Summer 1 (2023)**

*(L & M Committee)*

Signed:

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*S. White*

**(Chair of Governors)**

## CONTENTS

SECTION	TITLE
1.0	INTRODUCTION
2.0	INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS
3.0	ORGANISATION
4.0	TAKING HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME
5.0	HOME/SCHOOL AGREEMENT
6.0	SCHOOL PROCEDURES
7.0	SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION
8.0	LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY
9.0	CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED AFTER SCHOOL HOURS
10.0	SICKNESS
11.0	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
12.0	MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

## Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School

*'Together we enjoy learning in a happy, caring and friendly environment'*

*This policy has been updated in line with recent government changes which came into effect from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. This policy has been agreed between 8 schools that are in the Rushden and Higham Cluster of schools. It has been produced to ensure a consistent approach towards attendance throughout the cluster.*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School aims to ensure that all its pupils receive a full time education which maximises opportunities for each child to realise their full potential. This can only be achieved if a child attends school regularly and punctually. There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. If children are not attending school regularly they will be unable to access the opportunities available to them and their progress will be affected.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

### 2.0 INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

When a child is absent from school he or she misses the teaching provided on the days they are absent. When absent, they are also less prepared when they return for lessons going forward. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which head teachers and parents will both wish to avoid. There may be occasions when a child has to miss school - for example, if unwell.

Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents should not take children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday.

### 3.0 ORGANISATION

The class register is completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers are taken at **8:55am**. Pupils arriving after **8:55am** will be marked as late.

Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately: -

- L - late **8:55am up until 9:10am** classed as present
- U - **after 9.10am** classed as unauthorised absence

Persistent lateness will be reported and if a child has 3 reported lates in a term, or more, this will be discussed with parents. **Adults must sign latecomers into the Late Book, giving a valid reason, which is in our school office.**

All letters explaining absences will be kept until the end of the school year and then filed with the registers. Parents should report an absence either by telephone, in person or in written form which is signed.

A set of standard letters will be sent to parents where persistent lateness and/or absence are in evidence. Where school office cannot make contact with parents then the Family Support Worker (FSW) or Headteacher will be contacted. Attendance below 95% for the previous term and annual figure will trigger action by school and targets **will** be set. If issues cannot be resolved, then school will work with parents to establish an action plan. School will analyse lateness and attendance on termly basis.

Children who continue to have attendance below 95% but have improved receive a letter. Another target may be set depending on how well the attendance has improved.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by our school as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for a child's absence is required from parents in writing, via the telephone, or in person.

If a pupil has more than 10% unauthorised absence and/or their overall attendance is less than 90%, then an interview is arranged between the Family Support Worker and parents. If the child has not been in for 10 days and school have tried but have been unable to contact home, then the Educational Entitlement Team will be contacted.

If a child is on a Child Protection Plan any absences must be reported immediately and these will be investigated.

**Authorised absences** are those which are for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause. Absences will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- Attendance at examinations e.g. music.

The number of days permitted for an authorised absence will be determined by the Headteacher on a case by case basis.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which our school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have never been properly explained or where no reason has been given.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Taking a holiday in term time.

#### **4.0 TAKING HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

From 1st September 2013, a new law gave no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the **Headteacher must be satisfied** that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school. The Local Authority's decision to issue a fixed Penalty Notice is based on information submitted by the school. Schools have a statutory duty to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority.

Triggers for the fixed Notice Penalty are:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 90% or less.

***It's important that parents understand that the initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240.***

Requests for leave must be given in writing to the Headteacher and a meeting may be arranged to discuss the exceptional circumstance if necessary. In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only.

The Rushden and Higham cluster of schools agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for the Headteacher to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. An exceptional circumstance is much more likely to be a one-off, unique situation which may include the death or terminal illness of a person close to the family, or a recommendation for an absence from school by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

#### **5.0 HOME /SCHOOL AGREEMENT**

All parents/carers and pupils are required to read and sign our home/school agreement within which there is a statement about unauthorised absence.

#### **6.0 SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

Our school operates a First Day Calling System. This means that parents should contact school **before 8.30am** on the first day of absence to inform us if their child is going to be absent from school. There is an automated voicemail service available.

**A phone call should be made each day the child is absent**, unless it is known in advance how long the child will be absent from school.

Reasons for a pupil's absence such as shopping, birthday treats and siblings' birthdays are not 'unavoidable causes' warranting authorised absence. Parents should avoid, where possible, making medical and dental appointments for their child during school time. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

#### **7.0 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

Our school recognises the importance that all children are entitled to full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Our staff monitor the attendance of all children at the beginning of each term and identify children whose attendance has fallen below 95% for the previous term **and** for the current year.

Our school recognises a child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Our school will follow the details set out in the NSCB procedure 'Children Missing Education' to report and respond to incidences of children missing from school. We will also comply with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021/22

## 8.0 LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

No child will be allowed to leave the premises during school time unless collected by a parent or responsible adult (parents/carer will need to phone through about this beforehand). All departures must be logged with the school office.

## 9.0 CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day.

In accordance with Northamptonshire County Council policy, if your child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents/carers then the Headteacher will contact the Police and/or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (Social Services) to inform them of a possible problem.

## 10.0 SICKNESS

If a child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting illness our school will request that they return to school 48 hours after the last period of vomiting or diarrhoea. This is taken from the 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Child Care Settings Document' from the Health Protection Agency:

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	

If your child is absent from school due to illness for **4 or more consecutive days**, then confirmation of illness must be received from a Doctor/Medical Professional. If your child is off due to a planned operation or hospitalisation then the letter must be seen by the school beforehand, or if this is not possible after discharge.

For Parents/Pupil that have attended a Surgery Meeting, with the Family Support Worker, **medical confirmation is required from day 3 onwards.**

## 11.0 RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Absence due to religious observance will be authorised, but the day must be:

- exclusively be set apart for religious observance and
- set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents).

## 12.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Our Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implication and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout our school.