



Hoyland Springwood Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Jennifer Hunt
Executive Headteacher: Mrs Gerry Wilson

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Attendance Matters

Dear Parent / Carer,

As you are aware good attendance and punctuality is of huge importance to us here at Hoyland Springwood. We reward the children for good attendance in a range of ways and value children and families who put in every effort to ensure children arrive at school on time (good punctuality) and have good attendance all year round.

Our recent Ofsted inspection in September 2018 has commented that one of the ways that the school needs to improve is to raise attendance levels. The school cannot do this alone and good attendance can only be achieved through effective collaboration with parents. We all have a duty of care to ensure your children are in school.

What does Hoyland Springwood do, to promote good attendance already?

- sharing class attendances in Monday morning assemblies and presenting the class with the highest attendance of the week with a £5 token to be collected and spent on something for the class
- sharing class attendances and school's overall weekly attendance in the Weekly Newsletter
- sending out 'well done' texts, certificates and letters to specific children who improve their attendance
- handing out termly certificates and prizes

As well as this, Andrea Drayton (attendance officer), Lynda Smith (PSA), myself and other key members of staff, work relentlessly with specific families who need extra support in ensuring their children access the education that they deserve. This year we have much more involvement from our Education Welfare Officer too, in an attempt to improve attendance.

Why do we do this? Why is good attendance so vital?

Regular school attendance allows children to make the most of their education, which in turn improves their chances and opportunities in later adult life. It also helps the children adopt a positive attitude to attending well, for when they go in to their chosen place of work. Consistent schooling helps children to develop their social skills, confidence and maintain positive friendships with their peers. When children do not attend school regularly or they miss chunks of time, the children's progress and attainment can be significantly affected.

The Education Welfare Services (EWO):

Our school's Education Welfare Officer is Mrs Clare Goodliffe. She works closely with Andrea Drayton, Lynda Smith and myself in school to improve attendance and also supports us in running Attendance Panel Meetings for parents whose children's attendance/punctuality is causing us concern. She regularly meets with us to discuss the children in school who are persistent absentees (when their attendance falls below 90%), occasionally visiting homes to help improve matters for the family and child(ren). She also recommends strategies for school to employ and improvements in our policy to further impact on our attendance e.g. reward letters/tests/certificates for improvements or letters to notify parents about late punctuality etc.

What is our attendance policy around children being ill, holidays in term time and punctuality?

Of course, from time to time, children become ill and we understand this. If they are poorly, we ask that you let us know **each morning** if your child is going to be off and the reason why. If we do not receive notification, we will make a phone call and/or a text to parents. On occasions Lynda Smith may call round to the family home if no contact has still been made. For some families, if children are still off on the third consecutive day of illness, then a home visit may be made. This is because of the duty of care that we have to the children but also to you and your family. This is purely so that we can make sure the children on our roll are as safe as possible and to support families



where needed. All holidays are unauthorised (as recommended by the Local Authority) unless there are special circumstances. Fines may be incurred for holidays at the cost of £60 per child, for children aged 5 and upwards and if the holiday is for more than 4 days. Obviously past attendance is also considered as part of this process.

Absences may be authorised if they are:

- important / urgent medical appointments that your child needs to attend that cannot be made outside of school hours
- close family bereavement
- child's personal medical condition/illness (where appropriate)
- religious observance

Absences will be unauthorised if:

- the illness is for any other family member (where appropriate)
- days off for birthdays etc.
- holidays taken without school's authorisation
- any other time which has not had school's prior approval

When your child is ill, the school will not automatically authorise absence, especially if a child is off for 3/4 days as it is unusual for a child to be ill for a sustained period of time. It is important for parents to try to provide school with evidence that their child is ill so that the absence can be authorised. This may include medical cards, letters/notes from parents, medicines with prescription that show the date that the medicine was prescribed. It is important, if your child is off, that you stay in regular contact with the school so we can support you e.g. work sending home, support from Lynda Smith, seeing a school nurse etc.

What happens if my child is late to school?

Punctuality is a key life skill! *Classroom doors open at 8.50am and registration closes at 9:05am.* Lessons start at 9am and when children are late, this disrupts the start of their day – plus it is very embarrassing for a child to walk in to a lesson / assembly late.

If a child arrives at school after 9:00am, they should come through the main school doors and be signed in as 'late'. Children who are late twice in a term will receive a letter and parents/carers may be invited to an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss ways forward.

Why shouldn't I take my child on holiday during term time?

Schools cannot and will not authorise school absence purely for family holidays. If you feel you have an exceptional circumstance it is advised that you speak to school before making plans. Missing school time is to the detriment of a child's education. Whilst school understands the predicament that families are often in, especially with holidays being so much cheaper in term time, policies and procedures have to be followed and holidays DO impact on attainment, progress and confidence.

I hope this letter outlines and summarises our policy for you all and you are clear on our high expectations of the children – which I know so many of you appreciate. I hope this offers reassurance to parents who always ensure their children are on time and in school in term time, that we are actively encouraging better attendance from all. If you need further clarity about expectations, awards and sanctions around attendance, then please do not hesitate to contact me in school.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs J Hunt
Headteacher

