**Horton Grange Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

**Last reviewed:** September 2023

**To be reviewed:** Annually

**Written by:** Rebecca Marshall

**Ratified by SLT:** September 2023

**Statement of intent**

At Horton Grange Primary School, we expect children to attend school every day that they are able to. We expect all pupils to strive to achieve **at least 96%** attendance in every school year. The school adopts a number of procedures to remind parents/carers if their child’s attendance falls below 96% in order to provide timely support prior to their absence becoming persistent (below 90%).

**School Attendance and the Law**

*Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.*

(DFE Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022)

Parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time without good reason could:-

* Receive a Penalty Notice Fine of £60 per parent per pupil
* Be prosecuted in the magistrate’s court and be fined up to £1,000
* In more serious offences, where parents have been previously prosecuted they could be fined up to £2,500 or face imprisonment

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring absence and punctuality, supported by the Attendance Officer, Zakia Bano.

**Arrival and registration**

The school gates open at 8.30am for children to arrive. The school day starts at 8.35am. Any child who arrives after 8.45am will be allocated a late mark.

Any child who arrives after 9:05am will be issued Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 12:45pm for Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils and at 1:00pm for Key Stage 2 pupils.

School closes at **3.05pm** each day. Parents/carers are expected to collect their children promptly at the end of each school day.

For children who arrive at school after the registers have closed; parents/carers will be required to sign their child/ren in on the inventory system. This also applies if a child is leaving school before school finishing time or a parent/carer arrives after 3:10pm to collect their child from school.

Registers are checked regularly by the Attendance Officer and the Headteacher to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers. This process also enables the above people assess to the reasons and incidence of any absences children may have.

**Good attendance**

Attendance above 98% is classed as good attendance.

Attendance below 90%, a child is classed as a persistent absentee.

Good attendance is celebrated and encouraged at Horton Grange Primary School by a variety of means:

* A class attendance certificate for the class in each year group with the highest attendance in the week.
* Attendance awards and certificates for children with good attendance, 98% or above, throughout an academic year.

The Headteacher, with support of the office staff and attendance officer, regularly monitors absence each half term. Any child who has a pattern of absence or has attendance below 96% will be contacted via a *yellow* letter and invited to a meeting at school to discuss reasons for their child/ren’s absence. Where necessary, targets for improving attendance will be set with the parent/carer and the child’s attendance will be monitored. The parent/carer will be informed of the outcome of any monitoring at the end of the monitoring period via a *green* letter, if the child’s attendance has improved, or a *pink* letter if the child’s attendance has failed to improve/deteriorated. If a *pink* letter is sent, parents/carers will again be invited into school and support will be offered to families as necessary, either in-school or via external agencies. Should a child’s absence become persistent, a *red* letter will be sent, explaining the further action required.

**Illness, Medical Appointments and Safeguarding:**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours, including, but not limited to; GP, dental and optometrist appointments. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for a medical appointment that has not been possible to arrange outside school hours, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed before 9.00am of the first day of a child’s absence and then each morning for the duration of the absence or at an agreed time discussed with the school office. This can be done through a phone call or face-to-face message.

In the interests of ensuring children’s safety, the school office staff will make every effort to contact parents on the first day a child is absent and the school has not been contacted. **It is therefore vital that parents ensure the school is kept up-to-date with their contact details.** If the school have been unable to make contact for three days of absence, a welfare home visit will be carried out.

**Extended Leave of Absence from School**

The Headteacher, at their discretion and having considered individual circumstances, may permit leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances. (See below)

**Criteria by which the headteacher will make decisions concerning the authorisation of extended leave of absence:**

*Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.*

*As Headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances* ***it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.***

*The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.*

(DFE Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022)

**Process for requesting absence in exceptional circumstances**

• By law applications must be made by a parent normally residing with the child.

• Whenever possible, seek permission for leave of absence before making firm travel bookings/ arrangements/payments

• Applications should be made by contacting the school office to make an appointment to meet and discuss the reasons for absence with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. During the meeting, the application will be made and presented to the Headteacher.

• Absence will not be granted retrospectively.

• After consideration of the above criteria, the Headteacher will write to the parent giving or refusing authorisation for the absence with reasons and reference to absence to date.

Work will not be set for completion during the holiday, but children should be encouraged to read, complete tasks on online learning platforms (such as TTRS) and keep a diary of their experiences.

Parents who decide to take their child/ren out of school without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child’s record and are monitored by the attendance team. Persistent absence can result in penalty fines and court action.

Parents/Carers requiring exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences longer than ten days within one academic year, should make an appointment to discuss this with the Headteacher well in advance. By school.

**Arrangements for absence in other circumstances**

**Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:**

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

**Children in entertainment**

All children who perform on stage or in television, such as in films and commercials, or who work in paid or professional sport or modelling must have a licence.

If children are to take part in any of the above activities, the legislation requires them to be licensed by the local authority (LA) in which they live.  These children have their welfare and safety protected by the following legislation:

The Children and Young Persons Act 1933

The Children and Young Persons Act 1963

The Children (Performances) Regulations 1968

The Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998

The Children (Performances) (Amendment) Regulations 2000

The licensing authority when considering a licence application must be satisfied that the child’s formal education will not be affected and therefore consults with the school. The governors of the school agree that any child whose attendance is at or below 90% (the Department for Education’s definition of “persistent absence”) should not have further absences authorised for any reason, including for entertainment licences, since further absences are likely to have a detrimental effect on the child’s learning and attainment.

Children who have an authorised license are given a P mark for taking part in sporting and or other activities.

**Penalty Notices**

Under new DFE legislation as from 1 September 2013, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances; therefore any absence taken for holidays will be subject to a ﬁxed penalty notice.

From 1 September 2013 ﬁnes will be as follows:

* £60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days
* £120 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 28 days

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

Appendix 1: Yellow Letter (below 96%)

Appendix 2: Green Letter (Monitoring showed improvement)

Appendix 3: Pink Letter (Monitoring failed to show improvement/showed deterioration

Appendix 4: Red letter (Persistent Absence, below 90% attendance)