



Attendance Policy

Date approved:	April 2015 (Reviewed May 2017)
Approved by:	School Council
Next Review date:	May 2018

Attendance Policy

Our Aim for Attendance:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 97%
- Maintain parents` and pupils` awareness of the importance of regular attendance

At Hope Community School, we believe that good attendance is essential to effective learning. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will affect their attainment and social integration with their peers. Pupils who attend regularly achieve more highly. Punctuality is equally as important. If children are late for school they miss out on the regular morning routines and disrupt the class teaching and the learning of other children. Pupils with regular attendance and good punctuality have an easier transfer into secondary school. It will also aid pupils when they reach the work place.

Our Mission:

We want every child to enjoy and achieve to their full potential at school. Whatever ability, ethnicity or background, each child will thrive and prosper throughout their time with us at Hope.

Absence

We monitor attendance regularly and therefore expect excellent attendance from every child. If you have concerns with attendance, the school can provide support to help you to improve the attendance of your child.

Reporting absence:

- All matters relating to absence must be reported to the school office before 9.00am on the first day of absence giving the reason why he or she is not in school.
- Parents must send a letter or e-mail the school when their child returns confirming the reason for absence.
- It is the responsibility of the school to check absences by telephone if we do not hear from the parents or carers. If no explanation has been received within 5 school days then a written reminder is sent to the parents. If there is still no communication from the parents after a further 2 days then the absence will be unauthorised.
- If a child is absent or taken out of school during the day due to a medical appointment, parents should notify the school by providing a note/appointment card or contacting the school office in advance.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences." For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences.” Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going out for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in late after a night out
- Unapproved holidays
- Parental sickness
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or when the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

Punctuality

Children are recorded as late if they arrive to school after 9.00am, unless for a notified reason, such as medical appointment.

Late marks in the register are monitored regularly by the school and the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents who continually fail to bring their children to school on time will be contacted by the school.

The school is not responsible for children after the end of the school day. In exceptional circumstances where a parent is delayed, they should contact the school immediately. Failures to contact the school or persistent late collections will result in the Principal making a referral to the EWO or in extreme circumstances, contacting Social Services.

Holidays

All unnecessary absences within term time are disruptive to a child’s education and the Principal will not authorise these absences. Holidays are **not** allowed during term time and the Principal will only approve absence in during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, taking into account the nature of the event, the frequency of the request, whether the parent has given notice in advance, the pupil’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. The School reserves the right to not authorise absences during May due to testing.

If an unauthorised absence is taken during term time, the Principal, Governors and EWO will consider issuing a penalty charge notice to each parent for each child that is taken out of school.

Parent Responsibilities

- To ensure their child attends school and arrives on time before 9.00am

- To keep medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible
- To ensure that holidays are taken outside of term time
- To keep contact details correct and up to date
- To contact the school on the first day of absence and give a reason
- To provide a note/email to the school on the child's first day of returning to school.
- Provide a note or copy of the medical appointment card for absences during school hours.
- To support the school's aim of 97% (+) attendance

School Responsibilities

- To improve the overall attendance target to 97%
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To celebrate pupils who achieved at least 97% over the year and to highlight those who have achieved 100% over a term and over the year.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- When attendance is less than 97% (after the first half-term) a letter is sent to the parents together with a copy of their child's registration certificate.
- When attendance fails to improve within three weeks the Principal / Family Liaison Officer will contact the parents to attend a meeting to discuss the issue and offer support to improve attendance.
- Where no improvements in attendance have been made, a formal referral is made to EWO. This could lead to the EWO issuing a penalty charge notice or taking further action.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date if known and reasons for moving.
- Confirm the school has your current mobile number.
- Give the new school's contact details so that files can be transferred.
- Let us know when you moved.

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local

Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Bexley Social Care, the Police and other agencies to try and track and locate your child.

Governors

It is a legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

We value your support in helping us maintain very high standards.

Attendance Timeline

Parents / Carers to inform school on first day of absence and each morning of absence thereafter.

If Parents / Carers do not contact the school – the school will contact the parents / carers on that first day of absence. If parents / carers cannot be contacted, the school will try other emergency contacts.

If there has been no contact has been received from parents / carers after 5 days the school will conduct a home-visit.

If no contact is made with the family after 10 days the Police / Social Care / EWO will be notified.

Parents to be informed of their child's attendance at Parent Consultation Meetings and each half-term.

Children whose attendance falls below 96% after the first half-term to be informed by letter from the Principal.

If attendance does not improve a meeting will be arranged to help support parents improve attendance.

If attendance after this meeting has not improved the child attendance will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

A Fast Track process will begin once a referral has been made.