

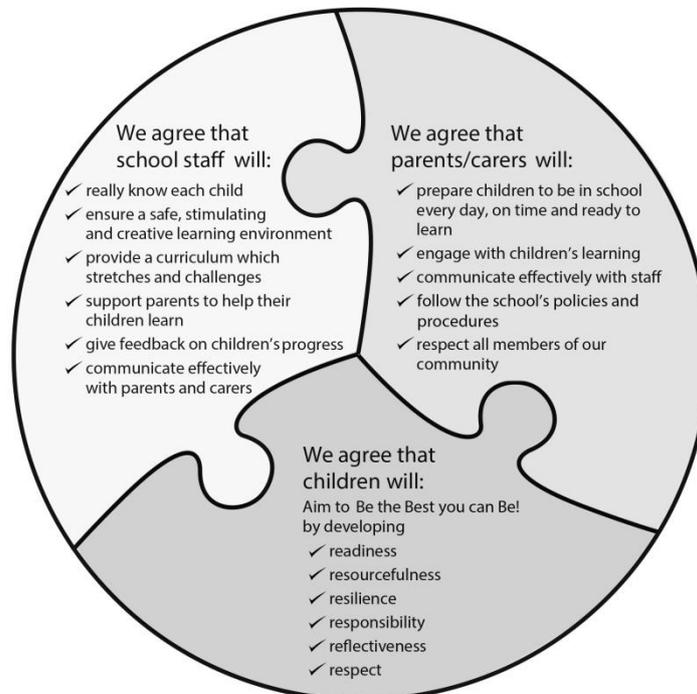
## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### Rationale

At Heathbrook Primary School, we aim to create a positive and secure environment where children will be happy and safe and be actively encouraged to attend school regularly and on time. We provide a creative curriculum to enable all children to *Be the Best they can Be!* Regular school attendance is important to ensure children get maximum benefit from the opportunities for learning which are available to them. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws in line with the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

### Parental Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring your child attends school regularly and punctually rests with parents and carers. As part of our Learning Agreement parents and carers agree:



To this end it is desirable that parents and carers should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school. It is the parents' and carers' responsibility to contact the school whenever the child is absent and on the first day of absence. A good education will help give your child the best start in life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under the Education Act 1996 Part 1, section 7.

### Authorised Absence

#### Illness

If your child is too unwell to attend school you need to:

- Telephone before 9.15am every day that your child is absent (please state your child's name, class and reason for absence); if a child is absent at registration and no message has been received, office staff will contact the parent or carer to ascertain the whereabouts of the child
- Remember that they need to be kept at home for 48 hours after the last symptom, if your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea

- Provide a note from your GP where a child has up to or more than 3 days of illness during the term (failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised and could incur a Penalty Notice, nb. it is the school who authorises absence, not the parent or carer).

### Medical Appointments

If your child has a medical appointment you need to:

- Please arrange these outside school hours whenever possible
- Requests for a child to be allowed to leave school should be sent prior to the appointment
- You may collect your child at the appropriate time from the school reception in good time for their appointment
- Where possible, they should return to school after their appointment
- For emergency appointments, please leave a message, before 9.15am, on the absence line stating whether you expect them to return to school after their appointment
- All appointment letters/cards must be shown to the school office for their records, so that the appropriate reason for absence can be recorded.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

If a child is absent from school without authorisation, this will be considered as 'unauthorised' and marked accordingly in the register. Unacceptable reasons for absence include: birthday treats, sibling illness, shopping trips, late night the day before, oversleeping, closure of sibling's school etc.

### **Exceptional Leave**

The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such requests must be made on an 'Absence Request Form' and handed in at least four weeks prior to the proposed absence where possible.

Please note that:

- Holidays during term time will not be authorised
- No authorisation will be granted in retrospect
- Authorisation may not be granted if the school believes the disruption to a child's learning and progress will result in further learning difficulties
- Authorisation may not be granted if the child concerned has had a high level of absence in the preceding 12 months, even if the reasons were unavoidable.

Please think carefully before taking term-time leave. Whilst we appreciate that holidays taken during term time are less expensive, there is a hidden cost to your child's education. Research shows that by missing lessons, pupils can soon fall behind.

### **Penalty Notices**

Parents who take their children out of school without authorisation may receive a Penalty Notice from the London Borough of Lambeth in accordance with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004, amended in 2007, 2012 and 2013.

Penalty Notices are issued in the following circumstances:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).

### **Meetings with parents**

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence with or without explanation, the school will contact parents and may invite them to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences or punctuality. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

## Application for leave of absence during term times

Attached is the Absence Request Form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The school will consider, on a case by case basis, applications for leave for events such as family weddings, funerals etc. This will be considered alongside your child's progress in school, their attendance record over the previous 12 months and the likely impact on their learning
- Since September 2013, the new law gives no entitlement to parents to take your child out of school for holidays during term time and holidays will not be authorised
- In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence, the school will take other factors into account
- If the school refuses your application and you still take your child out of school, the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a penalty notice. Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child then please complete the Absence Request Form (you can ask the office for a hard copy). This form needs to be returned to the school office as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible.

## Persistent Absence

All pupils whose attendance level over time falls below expected levels will be given support by our Attendance and Punctuality Team. Action can include engagement with external services including referral to our Educational Welfare Officer.

## Registration and Lateness

Did you know...?

Minutes late per day	Equivalent of missing
5 mins	3.4 school day per year
10 mins	6.9 school days per year
15 mins	10.3 school days per year
20 mins	13.8 school days per year
30 mins	20.7 school days per year

Twice daily registration is a legal requirement. The register will remain open until 9.25am and five minutes following lunchtime. Children arriving after the teacher has called the register, but before these times, will be marked as late (authorised). Children arriving after registration has closed will be marked as late (unauthorised).

If a pupil persistently arrives late after registration (unauthorised), the school is required to inform Lambeth's Courts Officer who will decide whether or not to serve a Penalty Notice.

## Lateness at the end of the school day

Any children that are late to be collected (after 3.30pm) may be taken to HeathKidz After School Club and parents will incur an automatic £10 fee.

## Reviewing our attendance systems

The school will review its systems for improving attendance and punctuality at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its goals.

Policy Adopted by Governors: March 2018

Policy Last Reviewed: March 2018

Policy Due for Review: March 2019



**HEATHBROOK**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

# ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

**This needs to be completed and submitted within four weeks of the start of the proposed leave of absence.**

- ❖ Parents and carers are reminded that Leave of Absence taken without permission may result in the issuing of fixed penalty fines by the Local Authority of up to £120 per parent per child.
- ❖ Parents and carers are also reminded that Leave of Absence for the purpose of holidays in term time can no longer be granted.

Date of Request.....

Child's Name..... Class.....

Child's Name..... Class.....

Child's Name..... Class.....

Dates of proposed leave of absence:

Start Date..... End Date.....

**Total number of days of proposed absence from school** .....

**We shall contact you within 5 school working days from receipt of request.**

Reason for proposed absence request:

**Parent/Carer Signature**.....

**For office use only**

Decision Made: *AUTHORISED*    *UNAUTHORISED*

Telephone

Letter

Verbal

Staff Signature:

.....

Actions: (if any)

Date:

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