HINGUAR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Responsible members of Staff
Mrs. F. Willis (Acting Headteacher)
Mrs. S. Wilson (Attendance Mentor)

This policy was approved by governors in June 2019 and will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

“Hinguar Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment”.

This policy was developed with reference to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013
**Aims**

Hinguar is committed to providing an effective and efficient educational experience for all its pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils; actively promote a positive attitude to attendance across the school.

We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and the school aims to work in partnership with parents to achieve good school attendance. We will discuss with pupils and contact parents if there are concerns about attendance. Equally parents should contact the school if they have any concerns about their child’s attendance. Any concerns which affect a pupil’s attendance will be investigated including factors that could relate to child protection, behaviour and discipline and anti-bullying policies. We will strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve any problems as quickly and efficiently in the interest of the child.

**Objectives**

The school will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law and complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session.
- Stress to parents the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- Communicate attendance rates through the school website and during assemblies and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Officer (AO) in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of attendance procedures by identified attendance workers and the school governors.
- Send newsletters each term to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

**Statutory Framework**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.
Roles and Responsibilities
The Governing Body
The Governing Body has the following statutory duties to:

- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept.
- Ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DFE and Local Authority, including informing the LA if a pupil has been continuously absent for 2 weeks or more (without a medical certificate).
- Ensure that attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absence is reported on an annual basis to governors.

Further strategies to monitor school attendance involving governor are:

- Agree attendance targets to help the school to further improve attendance.
- Appoint a governor with specific responsibility for school attendance matters.
- Ensure that the school monitors attendance and evaluates the success of the school’s attendance policy. They will request the Headteacher to report and provide analysis on attendance at each Full Governing Body meeting in order to monitor attendance.

The Headteacher
The Headteacher has the day to day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures. All absences will be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. The Headteacher will ensure that staff provide a positive approach to attendance across the school, using these strategies.

- The Headteacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of the Home-School Agreement.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school rigorously monitors attendance and for taking action to further improve attendance.
- The Headteacher has a duty under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Authority (LA) where there is a poor pattern of attendance of a pupil who has been absent for more than two weeks.
- The Headteacher is required by the Local Authority to return attendance data each half-term, which will be monitored by the Attendance Officer.
- The Headteacher will ensure that the school works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues, e.g Youth Offending, Social Care and Health Services.
**Designated Attendance Mentor**
The designated Attendance Mentor will take oversight of registration procedures, ensuring the staff keep registers in the correct manner, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Headteacher and Governors. Further duties will include:
- Managing the high profile within the school concerning attendance, e.g. Assembly rewards and website information.
- Supporting class teachers in developing strategies to promote individual pupil attendance.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school’s monitoring system.
- To develop effective partnerships with parents and pupils in respect to attendance issues.

**Class teacher**
The class teacher will promote a positive attitude towards attendance within their classroom, including welcoming pupils back on their return to school after an absence.
- The class teacher will ensure that registration periods are orderly and calm and that registers are called promptly and correctly. (Appendix One)
- Registers will be returned to the office as soon as the registration period is finished so that they are available for inspection by local authority nominees, information and data reading processes.
- If there are any Child Protection concerns the class teacher should inform the designated person on the first day of absence.

**Parents**
*Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996)*

Parents have responsibilities for their child’s attendance which are outlined in the Home School Agreement.
- Parents should ensure their child attend regularly and punctually.
- Parents should provide the school with up to date contact information and those with ‘parental responsibility’.
- Parents should contact the school on the first day of a pupil’s absence before 9.30 am. They should state the reason for their absence and also when they are expected to return to school.
- On the pupil’s return to school the parent should write a note to explain the absence, to be given to the class teacher, in addition to the original telephone call.
- When an appointment has been made for medical reasons these should be made outside school time wherever possible, the school should be informed in advance to the class teacher.
- Parents should inform the school of any relevant factors, e.g. bereavement which may affect their child’s attendance and behaviour.
**Pupils**
Pupils should aim to
- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Be appropriately prepared for their lessons.

**Late Arrival**
Registration begins at 8.50am, pupils arriving after 9.00am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.20am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.
On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

**Pupils Leaving During the School Day**
During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time. An appointment card or verification from the doctor/dentist/hospital must be shown to the school office when collecting their child.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

**School Procedure**
If no contact is received from the parents of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:
- Contact the parent by telephone, leaving messages where necessary, to find out where the child is.
- If the child returns to school without a phone call or letter of explanation and the school does not know the reason for absence a letter is sent home. This letter will inform the parents that the absence will be unauthorised unless the school is informed within that week of receipt of the letter.
Where attendance issues have been identified the following stages will be used to resolve the situation:

Level 1
Where attendance is identified as a concern by the school the parent will initially be contacted by phone to express this concern. This will be followed by a letter if there is no improvement in the child’s attendance. If there is still no improvement and reasons for absence are not accepted by the head teacher the school attendance officer will be informed and a Level 2 stage meeting will be formalised.

Level 2
If the situation is not resolved by Level 1 intervention, the school will invite the pupil and parent/carers to discuss the issue with other professionals, including the Attendance Officer.

Please note: Where parents are giving ill health as a reason for continued absence without medical verification a referral will be made to the school nurse for permission to contact the pupil’s GP.

Level 3
At this level action the Attendance Officer will then become involved. This may include direct work with the pupil and family, referral to other agencies and/or legal action, there may also be referral to other provision aimed to support the pupil to make a return to full attendance.

Types of Absence
Every half-day absence from school has to be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons absent from school for a good reason such as illness, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to Southend Borough Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which are not properly explained.
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Persistent Absence is defined as any pupil whose attendance is 90% or below.

Leave of Absence
The school holiday dates and end of key Stage 2 Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence will not be authorised during these assessment periods.

The Governors and Headteacher will also not authorise absence during the first four weeks of the academic year. INSET days are published as soon as the school governors have agreed these, but may be subject to change.
In line with the government’s amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will not be authorised.

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be completed from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school Governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil’s previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.

- Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live in the same address or to each with parental responsibility where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of refusal, that both or all ‘parents with responsibility’ are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent could receive penalty notice.

- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school. It will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority CFEIT team will be informed.

- Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but the child does not return to school at the time they were expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the school could be lost.

**Criteria for Exceptional Circumstances at Hinguar Primary School and Nursery**

It is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

1. An opportunity which is of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
2. The occasion of bereavement of an immediate family member.
3. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.
4. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
5. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.

Where there are other factors which the Headteacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.
Penalty Notices
Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty Notices for Holidays
In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The local authority may issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day’s holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

Strategies for promoting attendance
At Hinguar we offer a learning environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. Our ethos demonstrates that pupils feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late. We promote attendance and punctuality by providing rewards for good and improved attendance and punctuality, both for individuals, classes or groups. Such rewards include:-

- A weekly ‘Lucky Dip’ for 100% that week.
- Certificates for good attendance which are taken home for targeted children.
- The award of badges, medals or trophies for individual 100% annual attendance from each key stage.
- The awarding of a class attendance cup and bunny for the best class attendance each week across the KS1 and KS2.
- Baking a class cake for the highest class ½ term’s attendance.

Children Missing Education
Part 1 (Clause 4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 identifies the statutory duties on LA to make arrangements to establish the identities of Children Missing Education (CME). Hinguar Primary School and Nursery adheres to the

- LA procedures as identified in the CME LA guidelines 2014.
- Part B Section 20 of LSCB SET procedures Sept 2015.

A child missing from education is a child at risk and may be living a life of abuse.

Removal from roll
Parents must inform the school if they are transferring their child to another school
Pupils will be removed from the school roll and class registers under the following circumstances:

a) Where a parent informs the school that they are moving out of the area and give a new address and school where they intend to register the child.

b) Where a parent informs the school that they will be enrolling the pupil in another school in the area. A date for the transfer will be requested and a
subsequent check will be made by the school that the child is attending the new school. If confirmed, the pupil will then be removed from the school roll. 
c) Where a parent informs the school in writing that they intend to teach the child otherwise than at school. The school will inform the LA who will arrange for the educational provision to be checked by an appropriate adviser.
d) Where a pupil has been continuously absent for not less than 4 weeks and both the school and the Attendance Officer after extensive enquiries have failed to locate the pupil. In such cases the Attendance Officer will make home visits and other enquiries to ascertain that the family are no longer living at their last known address. Removal of a pupil from the class register should only be undertaken when authorised by the Headteacher after these enquiries have taken place.
The school will notify the LA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school and the child has not arrived at identified placement roll before a child is taken off roll.

**A staged approach**
The school adopts Southend on Sea LA staged approach to attendance as set out in the LA’s policy, strategy and guidance document. The School Attendance & Child Employment Service can be contacted directly at Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6ER or (01702) 215909
The return of any long-term absentee will be carefully planned which will include:
- Nominated key person to co-ordinate, monitor and review the child's return.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of, and alert to, the situation.
- Consideration for a phased or gradual return.
- Identify a timetable to determine what is immediately possible and manageable for the child.

**Starting School**
Starting school or a change of school can be difficult for a child. Hinguar Primary will work in partnership with local primary and secondary schools in assisting any transfer of a pupil who may appear likely to experience attendance difficulties. This may involve:

**Primary School pupils**-
Visit to the school
Identify pupil mentors or learning mentors

**Secondary School transfer**-
Structured visits from our schools in the summer terms and follow up meetings with primary/secondary staff
- Effective liaison with the attached attendance officer.
- Involving the parents from the very beginning.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**
Hinguar Primary School and Nursery has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote attendance
- Attendance issues are discussed with parents at termly consultation meetings and their child’s attendance is reported annually.
• The Headteacher and the Attendance Mentor meet weekly to discuss attendance issues and to set up meetings with the parents of pupils who are persistently absent, involving the Local Authority where appropriate.
• Attendance data is reported to the Governing Body termly.

APPENDIX ONE
Registration

The Status of the Register
The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately, neatly and marked in ink. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance.

Marking the Register
Registration is a significant part of the school day. All staff involved with the registration process are aware that the law is very specific regarding the keeping of registers and the importance of consistent registration within their class in addressing poor attendance and punctuality within their class. All school registers will be closed 30 minutes after the start of each session.

Management and Monitoring Registers
A membership of the administrative team will take responsibility for registration procedures, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Headteacher and governors. He/she will be responsible for ensuring that class teachers keep registers in the correct manner. If a child is not present during registration they will be marked “N” in the register with the relevant code inserted at a later time to show reason for absence.

B Receiving part time and/or temporary education at an off-site unit or other than at the school where they are registered.
D Dual registration (attending another establishment)
C Other circumstances (to be specified in register)
H Annual Family Holiday (for which leave has been granted)
I Unwell, unfit for school
M Medical/dental/hospital
R Day of religious observance in the religious body to which the parents belong.
V Educational visit
L Late
U Late (after registration has finished)
G Unauthorised family holiday.
O Unauthorised and unwarranted absence
P Sporting Activity

It should be noted that the Education Act 1996 s.434(6) states that a person who contravenes or fails to comply with any requirements imposed by
regulations is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine. The Head teacher will meet regularly with the School’s Attendance Officer to discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school’s monitoring system.