

The Heights Primary School Policy for  
**PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Version 1.3

**Responsible officer:** Headteacher  
**Responsible Committee:** Pupil and Staff Welfare Committee

Date of last review: November 2016  
Date of next review: November 2018



## 1. Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to thrive and make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. The Heights Primary School recognises the close correlation between pupil progress and regular attendance and takes its responsibility seriously to monitor, support and promote the regular attendance of all pupils. The Heights acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning for the child and their peers, undermines the importance of educational progress and can lead to underachievement and low attainment. This also impedes the child's ability to develop and sustain friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

This policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently
- Supporting parents to ensure that barriers to good attendance are removed

## 2. Statement of expectations

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### ***What is expected of pupils:***

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Parents should also make sure that children arrive on time, properly dressed, fed and with the right equipment to access all aspects of learning. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually.

This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of the Local Authority, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where school attendance is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

***What is expected of parents:***

- To ensure wherever possible their child's attendance rate is at least 95%
- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment to learn. A reason should be offered for lateness
- To work closely with the school to resolve any problems that might impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused and leave will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATs and National Assessments.
- To support the child and recognise their successes and achievements

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils for both morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session. If a pupil is absent this has to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

***What is expected of the school:***

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be a part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by the Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 Education Act
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to formal referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and to ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the EWS the LA provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS aims to provide support and guidance to parents and schools to resolve any issues. However if attendance does not improve the EWS may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

Shirley Moneanu is the Education Welfare Service Lead at Reading Borough Council. The Educational Welfare Service can be contacted on 0118 937 6545.

### **3. School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

#### ***Recording***

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at the end of the flexible drop off period. At **9:15am** the register is taken to the school office. Any pupils arriving after 9.15am should then be entered into the late log which is given to the office. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will log this in the late book. The office is responsible for putting a late mark in the class register. Any pupil arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes at **9.45am** and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked absent for the session. A reason for lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

During both the morning and afternoon the electronic register will be updated. Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone. The school then decides if this is authorised or unauthorised. The decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for authorised absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave granted, in exceptional circumstances, by the school not by the parent.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a two week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

#### ***Monitoring***

The school will review attendance of all the school's pupils on a termly basis, and any pupils causing concern or with attendance below 90% on a weekly basis. A letter will be sent home where there is cause for concern requesting the problem to be rectified and offering support if necessary. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and recorded in the Integris system. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide work for pupils during such a period of absence and this will only be done at the class teacher's discretion.

If a family leaves the country for an extended period of time due to exceptional circumstances, the parents will be asked to enrol them at a school in their place of stay. Evidence will be requested and the absence may be recorded as 'education off site'. If a child fails to return on the due date, the school will try to make contact with the parent. If this is unsuccessful, after a further two weeks absence the child will be taken off roll.

### **4. Official Register**

A copy of the Integris register will be printed at the end of each half term providing a paper version of the electronically stored information for that term. The register will also have an audit trail to changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed. The 6 print outs will be bound together to form a years record and stored for a period of 3 years in a secure location.

### Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Class teacher will provide an inclusive, welcoming environment and deliver a well prepared and relevant curriculum so pupils experience success
- Goals will be set for individual pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern
- Pupils attendance figures will be published with the annual report to parents
- Certificates will be awarded in celebration assemblies for pupils with improved attendance
- Class attendance trees
- Rewards will be given weekly and termly to the class with the highest overall attendance
- Pupils with excellent attendance (97% or more) and punctuality will be presented with a certificate at the end of each term
- Pupils with excellent or improved attendance (97% or more) for the year are placed in a prize draw

### Amendments:

Version	Date	Updated/reviewed
1.1	September 2014	First version finalised
1.2	November 2014	Updated following discussion with RBC EWS.
1.3	November 2016	Updated by HT