

Attendance and Punctuality

The Role of Parents/Carers



Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Taken from 'School Attendance - guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' Department for Education, Nov 2016

Highbury Grove School believes that central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is excellent attendance and punctuality.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will only be authorised in the most extreme circumstances. If permission is not granted, but the pupil is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

Arriving late to school

Registration begins at **8.55am** and all pupils are expected to be in their form room at this time. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.10am.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of 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.

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Some strategies to improve punctuality

Bedtime routines

- Encourage them to pack their school bag before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

Morning routines

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without making them late for school.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encourage them to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they needs to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club if available.

How can parents/carers help their child have good attendance and punctuality?

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Notify the school by telephone on the first day that their pupil is unavailable to attend school.
- Confirm this in writing when the pupil returns to school.
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments during the school day.
- Do not take their pupil on holiday in term time and in the case of exceptional circumstances permission must be granted by the Headteacher. The Leave of Absence in Term Time application form is on the school website and applications must be made four weeks before the intended date of absence.
- Promote the value of excellent attendance at home and follow the procedures set by the school.
- Advise the school of any difficulties they may be having so that the school can support as appropriate.
- Are aware that Section 444 of the Education Act states, *'If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'*

For further information

Please contact your child's form tutor in the first instance. If having spoken with them you continue to have questions or concerns, then please contact their Head of Year.

Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
95-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
93-95%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-93%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

So what does 90% attendance actually mean?

90% attendance over a school year = ½ school day missed every week!

It's your responsibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If a child is registered at a school they must by law attend that school regularly and punctually. Children should only miss school if they are ill or unable to attend for some other unavoidable reason.

Highbury Grove School believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community. We will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Reporting an absence

When a child is absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and every day thereafter to give the reason for absence.

To report an absence you should call the school on **0207 288 8900** and then choose **option 1**.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school.

Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the school or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.

Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given to the school.

What is an authorised absence?

There may be some circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness - High temperature/vomiting and diarrhoea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably falls in school time.
- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Exclusion from school.

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. In some cases the school will require medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it

cannot be avoided, pupils should attend school for as much of that day as possible. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to a member of staff at school.

Religious observance

Highbury Grove School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request their child not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carer's religious body. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave" of absence has not been given. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily – this can be due to child care arrangements, to look after siblings or relatives or because parents are unwell. In this case, alternative arrangements should be in place to ensure the child attends school;
- Shopping trips;
- Birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

Family holidays and term time leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and any term time leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers should not remove their child from school during term time without having first requested a leave of absence in writing from the Headteacher.