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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Aims

The Hayfield School is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at The Hayfield School it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all students. The Hayfield School actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. The Hayfield School recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares students for the disciplines of adult working life.

Guiding Principles

- The Hayfield School emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in The Hayfield School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- The Hayfield School needs to ensure that all its students access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- The Hayfield School will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- The Hayfield School will work with students and their families to ensure every student has good attendance and punctuality.
- The Hayfield School will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The Hayfield School has an effective system of communication with parents/carer together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- The Hayfield School will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- The Hayfield School will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- The Hayfield School will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

What you can expect from The Hayfield School:

- we will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- we will work closely with parents/carers where a student's absence is cause for concern.
- we will support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- we will support students returning to school after prolonged absence.

What The Hayfield School expects from Students:

- to attend regularly and on time.
- to be punctual to all lessons.
- to ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Office (School/Reception) where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.
- to ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place.
- Absences to be reported daily.

What The Hayfield School expects from Parents/Carers

- to ensure their child attends the school on those days it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- to ensure their child attends every day The Hayfield School is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- to avoid keeping their child away from The Hayfield School for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see below).
- to avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- to immediately inform the School Attendance Office if their child is unable to attend (by 8.25 am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return. Parents should also confirm in writing – in their child’s planner - on their child’s return the reason for their absence.
- if no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact The Hayfield School on each day of absence.

Registration

- the law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. This is at 8.40 am and 12.45 pm.
- students are expected to arrive by 8.35 am in order to be ready for the start of registration at 8.40 am.
- students are registered at the start of every lesson of the day.
- registers close at 9.00 am in the morning and 1.00 pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in ‘School Attendance’ published November 2016 by the Department for Education.

Punctuality

- The Hayfield School gate closes at 8.37am and students arriving after this time are deemed to be late.
- any student arriving after this time should sign in at Reception giving their reason for being late.
- students without a satisfactory explanation will have a Strike 1 recorded on the SIMS system.
- lateness to school and lessons will be recorded on the SIMS system. A second lateness infringement will be recorded as a Strike 2 and a 30 minute after school detention (ASD). On the third occasion of lateness a 60 minute ASD will be set for the student. The Hayfield School will continue to follow the school Behaviour Policy for persistent defiance of the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy. A 2 hour ASD will be set, and a parent/carer meeting with the Key Stage Leader/Pastoral Leader to complete an Acceptable Behaviour Contract will be required.
- repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. Repeated lateness after the register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. Parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where The Hayfield School has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory

justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only The Hayfield School can do this.

Parents/carers should contact the School Attendance Office (by telephone or email) on the morning of absence (preferably before 8.25 am) giving a reason and an expected date of return. This should be followed up by a note on the child's return.

Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:

- illness.
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments.
- exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement.
- days of religious observance.
- study leave.
- exclusion.
- involvement in a public performance.

Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:

- looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers.
- birthdays.
- days out, e.g. The Yorkshire Show.
- shopping trips.
- family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
- special occasions, where The Hayfield School does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Confirmation of all appointments by way of an appointment card, letter or appointment slip must be provided for any absence to be authorised. The Hayfield School requires sight of an appointment card or letter in order to authorise any absence from school.

If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the student to arrive late to the school, confirmation of the appointment (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued.

Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a student's absence, The Hayfield School will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

Absence which has not been explained will remain as unauthorised.

Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for holidays, days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

How we respond to Absence/Lateness

If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, The Hayfield School will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via automated message which will

text mobile numbers and/or leave a voicemail on landline numbers for contacts with parental responsibility. Parents/carers are able to reply to the text message with a reason for their child's absence. Where a message has been left on a landline by the automated service, a parent should contact the Attendance Office to inform us of the reason for their child's absence.

The school asks:

- that parents/carers ensure The Hayfield School has their most up to date contact details at all times.
- if no response is received to the automated service, the school may telephone, or in some cases, make a home visit to parents/carers to fulfil our legal duty to establish the whereabouts of their child. Unexplained absences may be followed up by letter or email.
- all absence notes will be retained.
- where a student's absence is cause for concern, the school will make contact with parents/carers in order that we can work together to support the student to improve attendance. Contact may be by any or all of the following: telephone, letter, meeting in school and/home visit.
- where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention. Penalty notices may be issued in line with Doncaster Local Authority's Code of Conduct.
- repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. Repeated lateness after the register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. Parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. This threshold was changed by the Department for Education from September 2015 and was 15% previously. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the Persistent Absentee threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- an action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve an Early Help Assessment (Social Care) and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant school staff and parents/carers.
- where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by The Hayfield School, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed. Persistent Absence data is communicated to Doncaster Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of a student's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence; please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time. Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional please be aware that:

- your request will not be authorised during exam periods (these could be throughout the year).
- your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the respective school's attendance target for the 12 months prior to application.
- your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.

It is expected that a Request Form is submitted to the Attendance Office at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form. The Hayfield School has the right to serve a Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to The Hayfield School.

Re-integration following Long-term Absence

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, The Hayfield School will:

- welcome the student back to the school and value their return.
- provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school.
- ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate
- nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the student's return.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students.

Students are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.

Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for each school will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.

Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded. Through certificates and celebration assemblies.

Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the School Attendance Office at any time to discuss their child's attendance.

Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.

Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the school.

Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.

The School works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.

All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All members of The Hayfield School have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.