



## **“Every Day Counts and Every Child Matters”**

This policy applies to all children registered at High Ercall Primary School. It is available to all parent/carers on our website and by hard copy on request. At High Ercall Primary School we inspire and nurture all our children to become aspirational life-long learners through an inclusive, ambitious and engaging curriculum.

### **School Mission Statement**

#### **“High Expectations, High Ercall”**

High Ercall Primary School provides a safe and secure environment, in which our happy and confident children are nurtured and valued as unique individuals. Our children learn to become resilient, self-assured and respectful of all, thriving on the high expectations of behavior and learning which are evident across school. Our values-based curriculum nurtures curiosity and creativity by inspiring, challenging and engaging the children. Our children take responsibility for their learning and work in partnership with their parents and the school. They are equipped with the skills to reflect upon themselves as learners, and to become resourceful young people ready to make a positive contribution to their community and the world around them.

#### **As a school we aim to:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of 96.6%\* and above
- Increase parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- Celebrate weekly class attendance percentages and award attendance trophy in whole school assemblies.
- Report attendance to parents on the pupil annual school reports

\*This target rate is subject to change each academic year

#### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into Secondary School more easily.

### **As a Governing Body we aim to:**

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support school to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school cultures
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensure all school staff receive training on attendance
- Support school staff in appointing an Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority Attendance Team

### **Parents/Carers should:**

- Ensure your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling 'unwell' is not enough.
- Telephone or email on the first morning of any absence by 9.00 am informing us of the reason; 'ill/unwell' is not sufficient.
- Continue to contact the school daily by 9.00am when your child is absent.
- Make all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Provide evidence of these appointments and notify the school not less than 24 hours in advance.
- Not take a planned holiday during school holiday time unless exceptional circumstances.
- Provide medical evidence where the illness/absence is frequent or prolonged.
- Ensure we have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and emergency contact details. We should hold 2 contact numbers, at least, for each child.

### **Reporting an Absence**

It is not sufficient to inform the class teacher. All year groups must follow this procedure. Please telephone the school office on **01952 387570** and speak to a member of staff stating the full reason for absence. You can also email the school office at **a2051@taw.org.uk**. This needs to be completed on every day of absence before 9.00am.

### **The school will:**

- Follow up the unexplained absence by phone call, email, and letters as necessary.
- Telephone all listed contacts on a pupil's records if the number one contact is unobtainable and send emails to contacts.
- In cases where there is a concern for the vulnerability of the pupil additional measures should be utilised to ensure the reasons for absence are confirmed and the school will consider contacting any additional services who support the family e.g. social worker, strengthening families worker
- Make a referral to the EWO in order to conduct a home visit, where there are persistent concerns.
- A standard letter will be sent home after three days of absence, unless the parent/carer has already indicated that the child is likely to be returning at a later, agreed date. This should be recorded with the date of sending in the register or similar if computerised,
- Remind parent/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the school website.

- Publish each child's attendance percentage on her/his annual school report.
- Meet half termly with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer and discuss all pupil's attendance. The local authority will issue letters to anybody whose attendance shows a concern and further monitoring will occur.
- Inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality. Children with 95% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees.
- In the first instance we will discuss the absenteeism with the Education Welfare Officer and may send a 'SAL 1' to all pupils whose attendance drops below 95%. The pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored by the NAP and EWO and if this does not improve and then falls again below 90% we will send, 'SAL 2.' Please see the attached examples:
- Where explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or where absence persists, the Headteacher, EWO and NAP will invite the parent(s) to an Attendance Concern Meeting (ACM) in school to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a pupil from attending school. If parents do not attend or send apologies, a referral should be made to the AST.
- The Headteacher, EWO or NAP will contact parent(s) where there are problems of lateness, either by telephone or by the standard letter. Persistent lateness can be as detrimental to a pupil's education as poor attendance.
- We will work closely with the new "DFE Wonde" attendance software using pupil data and school comparison data.
- We will refer to additional support for families where there are attendance concerns and that referrals will be made to the LA in line with the LA policy and Telford and Wrekin Penalty Notice code of conduct.

### **Persistent Absence**

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE level.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree on a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement plan with the school as a way of managing improvement.

## **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, for family bereavement or for religious observance\*.

\*If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office via email and provide evidence for the exceptional absence.

## **Exceptional Leave – Term Time Leave of Absence**

*Parents should apply to the Head teacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively)’.*

*The Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Head teacher of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered, and the Head teacher will determine the duration of any leave if it is agreed and authorised. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered to the parent or posted to the parents’ home address.*

*As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings*

See attached form for reference

## **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/Going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Term-time holiday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

## **SEN and Disadvantaged children**

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

## **Children Missing Education**

In accordance with the DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidelines 2016: schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register after making 'reasonable enquiries', to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Monitoring attendance is an essential part of safeguarding children at High Ercall Primary School. In accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, we shall notify Family Connect if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register. We will also consider unexplained absence as a potential child protection or safeguarding concern, including and in particular any child missing 10 days or more.

## **Punctuality**

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.

## **School Times**

- Morning: 8.45 am – 12.15pm
- Afternoon: 1.15 am – 3.15 pm

Children should not be left in the playground before 8.40am as no adult will be on duty before this time. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gates by 8.50 am at the latest. The register will be taken promptly at 8.55 am and the school day will start on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

## **Late Arrivals**

- From 8.45 am the pedestrian gates will be staffed by a member of Senior Management
- Children that are not in class on time for the register will be marked late. (L code)
- All gates will be closed at 9.00 am.

Late arrival after registration closes, without an acceptable reason will be marked as 'unauthorised absence'. (U code) Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects.

All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Persistent lateness will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. A meeting may also be arranged with the Head teacher.

### **Collection from School**

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. All pupils are brought directly to the school playground by their class teachers/club leaders and handed one by one to parents. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school will make every attempt to contact parents and carer, but is then obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety i.e. the local police station. We will share concerns with other agencies.

**If you are running late or unavoidably obtained, please keep the school office informed.**

### **Pick Up Arrangements**

Please inform the school office at the start of the school day if there are any changes to your regular pick-up arrangements.

Please only contact the school office if your arrangements have been changed in an emergency. This minimises the disruption caused to the children's learning as all new arrangements have to be communicated through to the class.

### **Admissions/Transferring into High Ercall Primary**

The LA Admissions Team co-ordinate all school transfers and a transfer application should be completed by the parent via the online portal via the Telford and Wrekin Council website.

Once the school place is offered via Telford and Wrekin Council and the pupil commences at High Ercall Primary School the NAP will update the SAMS admission portal of an on-role date.

### **Leaving High Ercall Primary School**

If your child is leaving our school (other than to go to Secondary School) parents are asked to:

- Complete a Leavers Form (which can be obtained from the school office). This asks for comprehensive information about new school details, address details and leaving date.
- When pupils leave and we do not have information about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education.' This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Telford and Wrekin Council Attendance Team, the Police and other services to try and locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

### **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DFE (Department for Education) and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue. We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

### **Regular Attendance**

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school. (Supreme Court Ruling April 2017).

**Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorizable reason to be absent.**

(Registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). *“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”* A pupil’s Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the parent.

### **Part-Time Attendance**

High Ercall Primary School does not promote part-time attendance unless prescribed by an ECHP or built into a short term modified timetable to support a pupil with medical needs.

**“Every day counts and Every Child Matters!”**



## Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher the request form below. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **before** the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request). In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy is that leave should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of: -
  - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - the age of the child;
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
  - the nature of the trip.
  - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence
  - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
4. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant the leave but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave in term time 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**.
7. Should the School decide **not to grant the leave** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

**Request for Leave during Term Time**

Date.....

To: The Headteacher of:.....(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name) .....

from (date) ..... to (date) ..... for ..... school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) ..... and (parent/carer).....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) ..... School(s) .....

.....

.....

**Name of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Carer(s)** ..... **Signed** .....

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

**Name of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Carer(s)** ..... **Signed** .....

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

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**For Office Use Only**

Date request for leave in term time received by school .....

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions previously taken as leave in term time .....

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed? .....

What action are other schools taking? .....

.....

**Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed**

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed ..... Job Title.....

Print Name ..... Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....

Any notes:

## School Letter (sample) Leave in Term Time Not Agreed

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter/form dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance because ..... Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the local authority and government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Job Title)

## School letter sample when leave in term time has not been requested

(Both) Parents name and address

Date:

Dear (both parents names)

Re: (Child's name & date of birth)

Thank you for advising us you were on holiday with (pupil's name) and he would be absent until the ??/??/?? or School are aware that you have taken (pupil's name) on holiday and no request for the leave during term time was made.

As you may be aware the government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. On this occasion, as school have not received a request for absence, the associated legislation does not allow for retrospective permission to be granted, therefore, the absence during (the dates) will be unauthorised.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve his/her full potential. I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the local authority and government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

**(Name)**  
**(Job title)**

**SAL 1**

Address

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Post code

Date:

Contact: (Name of Head/Deputy Head/Assistant Head) Ref:SAL1

Dear (Parent/Carer)

**Re: Name**

**Dob:**

**Class/Tutor Group:**

As (e.g. Head/Deputy Head/Assistant Head) with responsibility for improving attendance at (name of School/College), I am concerned to see that following recent register checks (pupils name) has a school attendance of ....% which ultimately will have a detrimental effect on his/her achievement and learning at school. Attached is a print out of the school register showing this attendance level and I felt that I should draw your attention to it as soon as possible.

There may be reasons why this is occurring and School staff are always willing to discuss any problems that pupils may be having. If you feel that it would help to discuss the matter with me, then please telephone me on the above number and I will make arrangements to see you

I will continue to monitor the attendance, however you will be contacted again should there be no improvement and informed of further action.

Yours sincerely

**SAL 2**

Address

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Post code

Date: Contact: (Name of Head/Deputy Head/Assistant Head) Ref:SAL2

Dear (Parent/Carer)

**Re: Name Dob: Class/Tutor Group:**

You will recall that I have contacted you before expressing concern over 's attendance at (name of school/college). I have continued to review the attendance and notice that there has been no significant improvement and that it still remains unsatisfactory. I enclose a copy of the attendance record, showing an attendance level of %.

Due to the amount of time ..... has been absent from school, I have no other option than to inform you that any illnesses or medical conditions reported, for which evidence is not provided with either an official medical appointment card, copy of any prescriptions issued or proof from your GP, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I must remind you the law states that: ***"The parent of every child of statutory school age is compelled by law to ensure such a child attends school unless there is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against you"***.

School staff are always willing to discuss any problems that pupils may be having. If you feel that it would help to discuss the matter with me, then please telephone me on the above number and I will make arrangements to see you

I will continue to monitor the attendance, however should there be no improvement a referral will be made to the Attendance Support Team who will inform you of further action.

Yours sincerely