



Hasmonean Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Reviewed and adapted March 2011)

Aims of the School

At Hasmonean Primary School, we aim to provide a high quality education in a safe, caring and disciplined environment so that all pupils are able to reach their full potential during the primary phase and leave here with positive feelings about education and its value to them.

Principles

- The Education Act 1996 states that all pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- It is important that all parents and children know that the staff value good attendance and punctuality.
- It is important that parents and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

Purpose

- To improve and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence.

Statutory Framework

- Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that

'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to ATTEND regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence'

- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the Head Teacher is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter or message will the absence be authorised.

Right and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at **Hasmonean Primary School** is the responsibility of everyone in the school community: parents, pupils and all staff.

1. Headteacher

- The Head Teacher will clarify authorised and unauthorised absences with the class teacher if there is any doubt as to whether the reason for absence is justifiable.
- The Head Teacher will send appropriate letters to parents and carers if a pupil's absence gives cause for concern.
- The Head Teacher will promote regular attendance at assemblies, with parents at parents' evenings and for each new intake.
- The Head Teacher will decide on parental requests in respect of family holidays. The Head Teacher will use the 'Application for Special Leave for Absence' form as a template for leave requests (SEE APPENDIX).

2. Administrative Staff

- The Admin Staff will ensure that registers are kept accurately and that absence figures will be given to the DfE yearly and to the LEA termly.
- The Admin Staff will consult with the Education Welfare Officer if, despite school action, a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern.
- The Admin Staff will check registers daily and will follow up absences by calling parents and talking to the teachers.
- The Admin Staff will operate a 'First Day Response' for children that have not arrived at school everyday.
- The Admin Staff will monitor attendance and follow up unauthorised absences.

3. Class Teacher

- The class teacher will keep an accurate record of attendance and absence.
- The class teacher will differentiate accurately between **authorised** and **unauthorised** absence. If class teacher has any concerns about a child's absence or reason for absence he/she will contact the Secretary or the Deputy Head teacher.
- The teacher taking the register will encourage attendance and punctuality and 100% attendance and/or punctuality is rewarded with a special certificate at the end of the academic year.
- The class teacher will keep all absence letters for the academic year.

4. Education Welfare Officer

- The Education Welfare Officer will assist the school in identifying poor patterns of attendance.
- The Education Welfare Officer will assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance.
- The Education Welfare Officer will support staff in the development of whole school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality.

5. Parents

- Parents will notify the school on the first day of their child's absence.
- Parents will avoid making medical or dental appointments for their child during school hours.
- Parents will write letters of explanations and/or provide medical evidence for any period of absence.
- Parents will apply to the Head Teacher in advance for permission to take their child away from school for the purposes of a family holiday or extended leave.

NB Family holidays are strongly discouraged and permission may be granted at the Head Teacher's discretion – a maximum of 10 days only in any school year.

6. Pupils

- Pupils will be aware of the importance of regular attendance at school
- Pupils will talk to a member of staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

A Guide for Parents at Hasmorean Primary School

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be in school in good time for morning registration. Morning registration will start at 8:30am for the Juniors and 8.45am for the Infants. All pupils must also ensure they are on time for afternoon registration which starts at 1:30pm (1.45pm on a Friday).

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registers close at 9:00am in the Juniors and at 9.15am in the Infants. If your child arrives late but before the time the register closes, he will be marked as late and he must sign the late book, found outside the office. If your child arrives after that, he will be marked as absent. If your child is late for a legitimate reason, he should bring a note.

3. Does the school need a letter explaining my child's absence or will a telephone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not 'phone us, we will 'phone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report as an 'unauthorised' absence.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments
- family celebration
- family bereavement
- attending an interview or an exam
- extended family visits abroad (only when prior approval has been given – see question 7).

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school in advance, giving full details.

In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or other corroboration of any condition affecting your child.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, frequent weddings, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first-day response for absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure children's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. Can we take family holidays during term time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term-time, you should complete an application form, **at least three weeks in advance**, stating the reason why the holidays must be taken in term-time. The Head Teacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:

- your child's age
- the time of year
- overall attendance pattern of your child's attendance.

The Head Teacher will not approve your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with tests.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time each morning and has breakfast. Ensure he or she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, you value his or her education.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's Class Teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

10. What will happen if I am late in picking up my child?

- If you know you are going to be late to collect your child contact the school immediately. Steps can then be taken to ensure your child is cared for until you arrive.
- If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work.
- **If your child is to make his or her own way home, you must inform the school of this ahead of time, and in writing (only for Year 5/6).**
- *Please remember that children worry about their parents' welfare and can become quite distressed when they realise that no one has come to collect them. If you need support contact the Education Welfare Officer.*

The Education Welfare Officer is based at:
Building 4,
North London Business Park
Oakleigh Road South
N11 1NR

Tel: 020 8359 7684

A Guide for Staff at Hasmorean Primary School

Registration

Calling of the registers

- teachers are responsible for attendance registers
- registers will be called promptly both morning and afternoon by the teacher
- registers will close at 9.00am in the Juniors and 9.15am in the Infants
- if a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he will be marked absent
- pupils who arrive late, but before the close of registrations should report to the office where they will sign the late book.

Who will amend the register?

- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should report to the school office and again sign the late book. The Admin. Officer will amend the registers to indicate lateness.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should report to the school office and again sign the late book indicating time of arrival. If an unacceptable explanation for the late arrival is not received from the parents the register will show an unauthorised absence.

Attendance registers

- teachers will be responsible for calling registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- any suspicious absences should be notified immediately to the school office

Monitoring Procedures

- Attendance registers will be monitored by the Education Welfare Officer annually.

Authorised / Unauthorised

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:

- illness
- dental / medical appointments
- family bereavement
- attending an interview or exam
- exceptional special occasions, e.g. family weddings
- family holiday, where prior approval has been obtained from the Head teacher

It will remain unauthorised if:

- no explanation is received from parents
- looking after siblings
- shopping trips
- unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays
- family holidays longer than the duration originally authorised by the Head teacher, usually no more than 10 days.
- family holidays where prior permission was not sought or was refused.

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence they should consult with the Head Teacher or the Education Welfare Officer.

Keeping of Notes

- Absence notes should be kept in an attached folder in the back of the class register.
- These letters should be kept until the end of an academic year.

Following up absences

- In line with our first day response, all absences are followed up by the Admin. Staff.

Strategies employed to support pupils and parents

We feel it is both appropriate and necessary to employ the following procedures / strategies;

1. On a daily basis the Admin. Officer goes through the registers at 10am and any absences on it are noted. On the back of the form any reasons given for absence are noted. If no reason is available, a phone call to the home may be made. If there is no response, a letter may be sent. Copies of all calls and letters must be kept on file.
2. If a pattern of concern regarding attendance is developing the teacher will speak to the child or parent about their pattern of absences.
3. If there is no significant improvement the Head Teacher will contact the parents and may invite them into school to discuss attendance.
4. Once Point 3 is reached and there is no resolution, a referral should be made to the Education Welfare Officer who should receive copies of all previous attempts made.

Acknowledging good attendance

- o At the end of the academic year pupils will be acknowledged in assembly and a certificate and reward given. Their names will be included in the Newsletter.

Fixed Penalty Fines

If the school approves an extended leave absence, the child will be expected to return on the date specified on the request form. Failure to do so will result in any extra time being classified as unauthorised absence.

If your child goes on holiday without authorisation the Local Education Authority has the power to issue Fixed-penalty Notices of £50, rising to £100 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004).

APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent / carer you should fill in this form if you have no alternative and have to take your child out of school for an extended period during term time.

You should be aware that if the school approves this absence, your child will be expected to return on the date specified on the form. Failure to do so will result in any extra time being classified as unauthorised absence.

If you take your child out of school without authorisation the Local Education Authority has the power to issue Fixed-penalty Notices of £50, rising to £100 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004).

I request that _____ be granted leave of absence

From (date)_____ To (date)_____

Reason_____

If yes please provide details_____

Signature of Parent/Carer_____ Date:_____

Permission is granted for the above child to be absent from school

From (date)_____ To (date)_____

Signature of Headteacher_____ Date:_____