

Hanwell Fields Community School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revised April 2010

Hanwell Fields Community School believes in access to education for all. For this to happen, every effort is made for all children to attend school as often as possible.

AIMS AND TARGETS

ABSENCE - Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days in an academic year unless there is a good reason for absence - for example, illness (severe enough to prevent learning) or a previously authorised holiday. Parents are, however, encouraged to take holidays within the extensive school vacations to give the children full access to the education available. No absences are authorised if attendance is below 95%.

LATENESS - Children at Hanwell Fields are made very welcome and it is recognised that their lateness may not usually be their fault. Children at Hanwell Fields are never made to feel guilty for repeated lateness. Parents are encouraged to make suitable arrangements for their children to arrive at school for 8.50am. Breakfast club is available from 8.00am each day. Children who arrive late must enter school through the main entrance and their parent/carer must enter their arrival in the **late book**.

TARGETS - The whole school attendance rate for 2008-9 was 95.1% . We aim is to improve this to at least 95.5% over the present and next school year (2009-10 and 2010-11).

To do this the staff will work alongside, and with, the children, parents/carers, Governors, Attendance & Engagement Team, HSCLW, PCAMHs and other relevant organisations, to promote the importance of attending school in order to receive the best education possible.

SUPPORT AND MONITORING

- ✓ Parents/carers will regularly receive guidance as to the importance of children's attendance at school. This will be done verbally at parents' evenings, through newsletters, in leaflets held at reception, through posters around school and via the school website.
- ✓ Each term the ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM will visit and any issues of concern (close to or over 15% absence) will be highlighted, discussed and, if necessary, addressed. The school will regularly conduct its own analysis and to highlight their own areas of concern (10%+ absence) each term. It is hoped that this will prevent the need for involvement of the ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM service in some cases. See below for action which may be taken.
- ✓ Concern about the level of absence without obvious reason (eg authorised absence, hospital stay etc), will result in the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher approaching parents to express concern over the level of absence/illness the child has experienced that term. If the regular absence continues, a letter from the Governing body, expressing similar concerns will be sent to the parents, offering the school's help and support. If the absence continues, the parent will either be invited into school to discuss any issues they may have to see if the school can offer any help (eg invitation to breakfast club, support from Home School Community Link Worker) or advice will be sought from the ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM.

RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE SCHOOL - It is a legal responsibility of all UK schools to register the children on their role twice daily. This provides an opportunity to welcome the children into school and lessons. It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure registers are completed accurately and on time each day. Hanwell Fields Community School places the safety of its children as its highest priority. As a result the school will take all possible steps to establish the whereabouts, and thus safety, of any 'unaccounted-for' child on role.

ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION - The school secretary has an attendance administration role to enter attendances and absences on a computerised system. This information is then automatically accessed by the local authority attendance officers who track attendance for education and

safeguarding purposes. Lateness and reasons lateness for this are also recorded on the same system. Lateness is an unauthorised absence.

THE PARENTS - It is a parental responsibility to ensure that children attend school regularly throughout the year and arrive on time each day for lessons. Parents must also ensure relevant and **up-to-date contact details** are held by school. The school will offer support where possible to any parent suffering difficulty with their child's attendance.

ABSENCE - Parents have a responsibility to inform the school if their child is to be absent as soon as possible. There is a dedicated absence line phone number with answer phone for this purpose (01295 709583 option 1). Parents may also speak to a member of office staff or the class teacher directly. It is not acceptable for children themselves to report reasons for absence or for parents to let the school know after an absence.

LATENESS - School begins at 8.50am each day, when the school doors open. Children are expected to be in school by 8.50am. Children entering school later than this, should come via the main entrance and report to the school secretary. Parents must sign in their children in the late book. Reasons for lateness will be recorded. Frequent lateness will be highlighted, and followed up, through conversation with parents, letters and, in some circumstances, referral to the **ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM** service.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME - Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, but the school may choose to grant leave of absence of up to 10 days in any school year. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for longer planned absence. All such cases should be discussed with the Head Teacher, as a child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, may be reported as missing to the **ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM** service and/or the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board. In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday, the school will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance and the reason for the holiday. The school will not usually authorise holidays taken at the beginning of the academic year or in May (when pupils are assessed in both National and school based tests). Holiday forms can be obtained from the school office, and all requests should be submitted to the School Office, at least four weeks before the

first day of intended absence. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which we must seek to avoid. Parents are reminded of this when completing and signing the holiday form.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE - The school is partnered with the local Education Welfare Service and one of their officers visits at least 3 times per year and analyses data available. Parents will be contacted by this service if their child's attendance or lateness is repeated or at the school's request. This may result in a contract, drawn up by the school, the **ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM** and the parents to order to improve attendance. In extreme cases, the **ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE TEAM** service, may fine or prosecute parents who repeatedly fail to ensure sufficient school attendance of any child.

PROCEDURES

If a child is absent from school:

- ✓ the parent should call the school before 9.30am (ideally before 8.30am, where possible)
- ✓ If absence/lateness falls over 10%, the school will contact parents to express concern and to offer support and advice
- ✓ If absence falls over 15%, it is likely that the Education Welfare Service will become involved

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

- ✓ The school has a breakfast club operating each day from 8.00am.
- ✓ Teachers are always available and happy to discuss any issues and to offer help where possible
- ✓ There is a dedicated phone line for reporting absence

- ✓ Parents are encouraged to discuss issues, before they become an area of concern, and the Head Teacher and SENCo are available by appointment
- ✓ The school has a Home School Community Link Worker who can offer support to families experiencing difficulty of any sort which is affecting punctuality or attendance of children at school.
- ✓ The school has a strong anti-bullying policy and 98% of children report they enjoy coming to Hanwell Fields (pupil questionnaire Nov09)
- ✓ Issues raised are taken seriously and are dealt with as quickly and smoothly as possible

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- ✓ The school will monitor attendance figures at least 6 times per year and will sometimes report findings to parents in our regular newsletter. These will be sent home with children and can also be viewed on our website.
- ✓ This policy supports and complements Hanwell Field's Safeguarding policy to ensure the school takes all necessary steps to protect the welfare of all children in our care.

SIGNED *Jane Haggitt* (Head Teacher)

SIGNED *Rev'd Chris Gaynor* (Chair of Governors)