



**THE FEDERATION OF
LOWER HALSTOW & NEWINGTON CEP SCHOOLS**

Attendance Policy

Approved	Team	Review Date
5.11.13	L&D	Autumn 2014
18.11.14	FGB	Autumn 2015

ATTENDANCE POLICY -

Lower Halstow and Newington CEP School believes that full attendance is essential in making sure that each child reaches his or her full potential. Quite simply, if a child is not in school, they cannot learn. The school will encourage good attendance by promoting a positive and safe school environment.

The Government defines good attendance as 95% as it has been proven that children with this level of attendance are more likely to achieve their full potential.

Good attendance has also been shown to benefit children in other ways, such as children who have good attendance are less likely to become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. To ensure that attendance is one of the priorities at Lower Halstow and Newington CEP School, attendance is regularly monitored. If there is concern about the level of attendance of a particular child, the school will send a letter to the parents/guardians to alert them of the schools concerns. If attendance does not improve a letter will be sent requesting medical evidence of absences or to meet with the Executive Headteacher to discuss concerns and try to resolve any issues that may arise from that meeting. If after this meeting attendance still does not improve the schools will have no choice but to refer the matter to the Attendance Officer which may in turn lead to prosecution.

Authorised and unauthorised absence:

The Executive Headteacher has discretion over awarding authorised or unauthorised status.

Even if a parent/carer telephones the school to explain why their child is absent, the ultimate decision to authorise the absence rests with the Executive Headteacher.

Below are examples of:

Unauthorised absence:

- Going shopping.
- Helping a parent/carer at home.
- Birthdays.
- Remaining at home whilst other sibling is not at school due to their school having a staff development day.
- A parent/carer or sibling illness, except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Executive Headteacher.
- Getting up late and not coming in for the remainder of the day/session.
- Long weekends.
- Visiting relatives.
- Arriving after the Register has closed.

Authorised absence:

- Sickness and diarrhoea.
- Head lice—although not necessarily all day.
- Chicken pox or other contagious diseases.
- Medical appointments (doctors, hospital or dentist. These should be supported by an appointment card or letter confirming date of the appointment and a pupil pass must be obtained).

Registration:

The school gates at both schools open at 8.30 am and children can go directly to their classrooms to quietly get ready for the school day. At Lower Halstow the children should be in their class by 8.50 am and any child that arrives after this time will need to go with their parent/carer to the School Office to be entered on the late register.

At Newington CEP the school gates shut at 8.55 am and any child arriving after that will need to go with their parent/carer to the School Office to be entered on the late register.

In both schools lessons start at 9.00 am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised late.

Lateness:

Lateness is to be discouraged and it is the *parent/carers' responsibility* to ensure arrival at the correct time. After a period of monitoring should a pattern of lateness emerge, the school will inform a parent/carer of their concerns in writing. Further concerns are referred to the Attendance Officer and Penalty Notices may be issued.

Any child entering school via the office after the commencement of morning school whistle/alarm has sounded, must be signed in by a member of staff recording name, time and reason for lateness.

Rewards

Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded in each school and at the end of the Academic Year any child with 100% (and no late marks) will receive a special pen.

PROCEDURES FOR WHEN A CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

First Day Calling:

It is the responsibility of a parent/carer of a child who is going to be absent to telephone the school office on **EVERY** day of their absence by 9:30 am to explain why their child is absent from school. If the parent/carer does not telephone, the school will send a text to investigate why the child is not in school. If school cannot contact a parent/carer, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Contact with the parent/carer ensures that the child is safe, along with reinforcing school expectation regarding attendance and

maintaining open communication with the parent/carer.

On the first day of attendance after illness, children should bring in a note explaining why they were absent, together with medical evidence if requested, in order for school to keep up to date and accurate records.

After a period of monitoring, should a pattern of absence emerge, the school will inform a parent/carer of their concerns in writing and further concerns are then referred to the Attendance Officer. Significant unauthorised absence or persistent lateness may lead ultimately to a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or court proceedings.

Fixed Penalty Notices:

Schools have new legal powers regarding unauthorised absence or lateness. This system is implemented using Local Authority guidance and has been adopted by the governing body. Under this scheme a Penalty Notice of initially £120 per parent/per child within 28 days reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of Notice, may be issued to any parent/carer of a child who has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence. If the higher penalty is not paid, the Attendance Service will then institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This will be recorded on your child's records.

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Annual Holidays /Leave of Absence:

The Executive Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence, for whatever reason, during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and law says no parent or carer has the right to remove their child/ren from school for the purposes of holidays.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances then a request for leave of absence can be made by a parent/carer to the Executive Headteacher in writing and will be assessed on their own merits. Parents will be informed of decisions in writing within 10 days of any such request.

The decision will be at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher, who will take into account circumstances, including knowledge of the family concerned.

Leave of absence authorisation will **not** be granted under any circumstances during assessment testing time (usually during the month of May), nor if a child's attendance is low.

If the Executive Headteacher decides it is not appropriate for the child to be absent, and the parent/carer still decides to take the holiday, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

Telephone Numbers:

School Office:

Lower Halstow Community School : 01795 842344

Newington CEP School : 01795 842300

Attendance Service: 01227 284495