

# Heartwood Church of England

## Academy Trust



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Policy Owner: Heartwood Heads

Version no: 3

Date Revised: April 2016

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Sign off signatory: Chair of Multi Academy Trust

## CONTEXT

The Heartwood Church of England Academy Trust was established in September 2013 and consists of Austrey, Newton Regis, Warton Nethersole and Woodside Church of England Primary Schools. The academy aims to provide an outstanding education for children in the local area within a Christian context.

## AIMS

This policy is written in line with the aims, values and Christian ethos of the schools.

Our aim as, an academy, is to ensure that we create a happy and stimulating environment with access to a broad and balanced curriculum so that all children enjoy coming to school and develop a love of learning.

The schools will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of children to improve their attendance and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with children, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support, and maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

### 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 and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school
- If a child has 30 days absence a year from this equates to missing nearly full year of education during their time at primary school

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## *Improving Attendance at School – Charlie Taylor pub DfE 2012*

*Charlie Taylor, the Government’s Expert Advisor on Behaviour, was asked by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct a review of school attendance. It was reported:*

*Evidence shows that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically and are more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) when they leave school.*

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The Local Governing Body sets annual targets for attendance in each school. (See appendices)

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- ensuring that children arrive at school, on time, properly attired and refreshed ready for learning
- telephoning or texting school by 9.30 am with reason for pupil’s absence and saying when the child will return
- keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness (3 days or more)
- arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks where ever possible
- not taking holidays during term time

### **School responsibilities:**

- either to set up the weekly registration sheets for each class including Nursery using pupil registration data from SIMS. These weekly sheets are held in class registers which are called at the start of each morning and afternoon session. In the event of a group of pupils being on a full day’s outing, both sessions are completed when the register is taken in the morning. Registers are completed in INK. Or registers are completed electronically in the SIMS system.
- to chase up any children not in school each day for whom no message has been received by 9.30 am. If the person contacted is not aware of the child’s absence and is concerned as to the child’s whereabouts then the relevant agencies will be contacted immediately.
- to send out letters to parents from whom no reason for their child’s absence has been received.
- to amend the data on the computer daily: entering all individual pupil attendance data into the school SIMS computer program once written reasons for absence have been received from the parent. Once school has received a written reason for absence, the secretary can authorise the absence and enter the appropriate code into SIMS. (Prior to this, the code “N” is recorded i.e. “No reason”)
- to record any absences for which no reason is given, as unauthorised and keep a record of all absences and to be responsible for authorising any absences in line with school policy.

- to ensure that the school governing body receives regular reports on attendance
- to produce annual statistics on authorised and unauthorised absences to parents (in the school prospectus) and to the DfE.
- to ensure that any non-attendance is thoroughly investigated.
- to make provision for pupils to be rewarded for good attendance. (See appendices)
- to ensure an official register is printed every four weeks and is kept in the school office.
- to inform parents or carers when there is a concern regarding attendance
- to refer to the Local Authority Education Social Worker Service if there are concerns continue regarding attendance
- to ensure attendance procedures for non-compulsory age pupils are treated the same as for school age pupils

### Authorised Absence

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be, in the first instance, made in writing to the school, on the appropriate form, outlining the exceptional circumstances.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

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### *Improving Attendance at School – Charlie Taylor pub DfE 2012*

*Charlie Taylor, the Government’s Expert Advisor on Behaviour, was asked by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct a review of school attendance. It was reported:*

*If children are taken away for a two week family holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, they will have missed the equivalent of a year off school by the time they are sixteen.*

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### Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as **unauthorised absences**. Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory. Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The Education Social Worker Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

### Punctuality

- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. 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.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

### Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the 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 Department for Education and the Local Authority. The Attendance Compliance Enforcement 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 unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

***"Every day counts..."***

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually in the autumn term.

### The Legal Framework

Statutory responsibilities on parents, Governing Bodies, Headteachers and the Local Authority relating to the registration of pupils and the attendance of pupils at school are derived from the following regulations:

- The Pupil's Registration Regulations 1995
- The School Attendance Regulations 1995
- The Education Act 1996
- Social Inclusion Guidance Circular 10/99 and 11/99
- The Children Act 1989
- Guidance on the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

## Appendix 1 Sample leave of absence form

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

#### *Important Information for Parents/Carers*

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 no longer permit Head Teachers to authorise leave for holidays
- Head Teachers may grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent(s)/resident parent/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child

**Please note: Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.**

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Proposed Absence: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (*they can only be exceptional circumstances*) (*see overleaf before completing*)

.....  
...  
.....  
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

(*For siblings*) I have also applied to \_\_\_\_\_ School/Academy for leave of absence for

\_\_\_\_\_ (*Insert child/children's name*)

Signature of Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For school use only:**

**NAME OF CHILD:** \_\_\_\_\_

Timetable checked:

Y/N

Form tutor consulted: Y/N

Previous leave checked:

Y/N

Attendance %: \_\_\_\_\_

Consistent with school policy/regulations:

Y/N

For School use only:

Additional information: .....

.....

.....

.....

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 which come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state:**

Head Teachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless** they consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.

The Head Teacher will determine how long the absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

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- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996)
  - If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996)

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- *Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education*

- *Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind*

**Parents:**

- a. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
- b. Parents can be issued with a Fixed [Penalty Notice or prosecuted](#) for unauthorised absence including holidays.

***We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.***

## Appendix 2 Sample authorised absence letter

Dear \*\*\*\*

*Name registration year*

### Application for leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances

I have received your written request for Leave of Absence outlining the exceptional circumstances to support your application.

I have carefully considered your request and reviewed the exceptional circumstance you have given.

As you are aware Government regulations prohibit schools from authorising absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **In this instance only** the school is prepared to accept the reasons put forward and authorise the absence (please see the attached leave of absence form for details). Any extension to this request without authorisation or further absence will be unauthorised and as parent(s) you may be liable to further action including the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution through the court.

**You should be aware that failure to secure «Forename»'s attendance at school is a criminal offence under section 444 (1) and 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996. In the event that «Forename»'s attendance at school fails to improve or improve sufficiently then this could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (£60 fine if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days) being issued to you or criminal prosecution proceedings being issued against you. If criminal proceedings are issued and you are found guilty, the court could sentence you to a fine of up to £1,000 or £2,500 and or sentence you to serve a community sentence period or sentence you to serve a custodial period of up to 3 months.**

This decision is not made lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all pupils and believes regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Please contact the school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the leave on your child's academic progress.

If you have any concerns about the content of this reply do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

### Appendix 3 Sample unauthorised absence letter

Dear \*\*\*\*

*Name registration year*

#### Application for leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances

I have received your written request for Leave of Absence outlining the exceptional circumstance s to support your application.

I have carefully considered your request and reviewed the exceptional circumstance you have given.

As you are aware Government regulations prohibit schools from authorising absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In this instance the school **will not** authorise the Leave of absence and any absence taken during this period will be unauthorised (please see the attached leave of absence form for details). As parent(s) you Have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives a full-time education (section 7 Education Act 1996). You may be liable to further action including the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution through the court if your child is absent during the period requested in your application.

Evidence shows that pupil absence has a negative impact on pupil performance and social development. We urge you to consider this matter very carefully before making a decision to go ahead.

**You should be aware that failure to secure «Forename»'s attendance at school is a criminal offence under section 444 (1) and 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996. In the event that «Forename»'s attendance at school fails to improve or improve sufficiently then this could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (£60 fine if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days) being issued to you or criminal prosecution proceedings being issued against you. If criminal proceedings are issued and you are found guilty, the court could sentence you to a fine of up to £1,000 or £2,500 and or sentence you to serve a community sentence period or sentence you to serve a custodial period of up to 3 months.**

If you have any concerns about the content of this reply do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

## **Appendix 4 Woodside Church of England Primary School**

### Attendance Target

The local governing body has set a target of 96% attendance for the academic year 2013/14; 96.5% for 2014/15

### Incentives

1. Attendance is celebrated each week in Celebration assembly, certificate and bear (Cindy or Bob) for class with highest attendance
2. At the end of each term children with 100% attendance receive a certificate
3. At the end of the school year children with 100% attendance receive a certificate, a mention in the newsletter and a book token
4. Tracking of individual attendance through child's school career to reward 100% over several years
5. Class with the greatest number of weekly attendance certificates over the year is rewarded with a fish n' chip lunch in the last week of term