

Tuesday 3rd September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Attendance Information for Parents and Carers

We would like to say **a big thank you** to all of our Haywood Village Academy parents and carers for supporting your children to attend school and engage so well with their learning. We ended last academic year (2023-2024) with whole school year-to-date attendance at **95.4%**. Our whole school persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) was **6.8%**, both of these are excellent when compared to the national averages. We know that this reflects the value our families place on children learning in school every day. We are looking forward to continuing to work together, to support best attendance and learning.

At HVA, we want and expect our pupils to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to, or there is another very good reason for their absence which is agreed by the academy.

We believe that children who attend regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education.

Attending on time every day also helps pupils form good habits which can stay with them throughout their education and on into the workplace.

Return to school arrangements

The first day and week of term are very important in helping pupils to settle into school and the school routine. **We know that children who attend every day during the first week of term are more likely to attend well over the year.** They are also better settled into the changes that happen in new terms, and therefore more readily able to access learning than those who miss out.

Thank you for your support in ensuring your child returns to school **on the first day of term.**

Term 1 begins on **Wednesday 4th September 2024.** The school gates open at **8:40am** and classroom doors open at **8:45am.** All of the HVA staff team look forward to welcoming children back to school, ready to begin the new academic year.

Arriving at school on time

Arriving at school on time is essential for the pupil's own learning, it encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any classroom disruption. Late arrival means pupils risk missing important information which can seriously disadvantage them.

Pupils can arrive in the school playground from 8:40am.

- All pupils are expected to arrive at school in good time for the start of the school day at 8:50am.
- If a pupil arrives at school after 9am, they will be marked in the register as late.

Staff may ask to meet with parents/carers of pupils who arrive late to school, to discuss reasons for lateness and solutions.

Illness

Pupils should attend school on every day the school is open, unless they are really not well enough.

Minor illness should not be a reason for staying at home. If your child attends school when feeling slightly under the weather, do let a member of staff know and we will monitor them and contact you if we think they need to go home. If you aren't sure whether to send your child to school, please contact the school office and we will be happy to talk this through with you.

If your child is too ill to attend, you must contact the academy before 8:30am on the first day of absence, to let us know. If your child is ill for more than one day, you will need to contact the academy on each morning of the absence, unless otherwise agreed.

To report an absence, contact the school office on 01934 312720.

Please clearly explain the symptoms your child has, when the symptoms started, and when you expect your child to be well enough to return to school.

By law, schools must record all pupil absences and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Medical and dental appointments

Please try to avoid medical and dental appointments in school time. If this is unavoidable, arrange appointments so the minimum school time is lost. Unless it is an emergency appointment, parents/carers are expected to let the academy know about the appointment in advance, with evidence of the appointment. Your child should still attend school for as much of the school day as possible.

Absence follow up

The academy will follow up any pupil absences where the parent/carer has not contacted us to explain why, or where we are unclear about the reason for absence.

If you don't tell us the reason for your child's absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Where the academy has cause for concern about the actual reason for a pupil's absence, staff may seek more information or evidence from parents/carers, and/or make a home visit to check the reason.

Unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

Important reminder about term time leave

Attending school every day helps children and young people maximise their learning and enjoy the benefits of their education. It really does make a difference.

For that reason, the academy will not authorise any leave of absence in term time, unless satisfied the reason is exceptional.

We ask parents and carers to request permission in advance, and only if absolutely necessary. Any requests should be put in writing via the appropriate form (available from the school office) and wherever possible with at least four school weeks' notice. The parent or carer who the child normally lives with should make the application.

We also ask parents and carers not to make plans without discussing with the academy first, so that we can make good decisions together.

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It may not always be appropriate, or in the best interests of the child, to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Wherever possible, please try to make alternative arrangements for your child so they can still attend school.

It is really important that we know where children are, as we have a duty to ensure they are safe. If we don't know why a child is absent, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

Parents/carers are reminded that unauthorised term time leave may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

To assist parents/carers in booking holidays and arranging other events, please find the term dates and inset days until July 2025 detailed below. Our term date information can also be found here. <https://haywoodvillageacademy.clf.uk/our-academy/term-dates/>

Legal action for unauthorised absence – including penalty notices

The government has made some changes to the penalty notices for unauthorised absence rules, which come into effect from 19 August 2024, in time for the new school year.

From 19 August, if a child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks, their parent/s may receive a penalty notice. (A morning or afternoon is one session; a whole school day is two sessions.) However, the government's rules also allow for penalty notices to be issued for less unauthorised absence, in some circumstances, for example where parents appear to be avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events which the school has not authorised absence for.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with unauthorised absence. For example, if two siblings have unauthorised absence, and there are two parents/carers with responsibility for the children, four penalty notices would be issued.

Please note: Penalty notices are issued to parents and carers as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. A penalty notice may not be issued if prosecution is considered a more appropriate sanction for a pupil's unauthorised absence. The table below provides more information about penalty notices and other legal action for unauthorised absence.

Further information

If you have any questions about the information provided, or any other attendance related questions, please contact the school office and request to speak with Della Hall.

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your family back to school. The team at Haywood Village Academy look forward to offering an enriching curriculum full of exciting learning opportunities for your child/children. We can't wait to get started tomorrow!

Yours sincerely

Della Hall
Assistant Principal/ Attendance Lead

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action.

If a pupil has frequent unauthorised absence, and/or an extended period of unauthorised absence, a prosecution may be considered, instead of a penalty notice.

Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments.

| Sanction | Outcome |
|--|---|
| First penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period) | The penalty is £80 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted for the child's unauthorised absence.) |
| Second penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period) | The second time a penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child the amount will be £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days). There is no reduction in the amount if the penalty is paid early. (Again, if the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted.) |

Prosecutions for unauthorised absence

Local authorities (LAs) are unable to issue more than two penalty notices to the **same parent** for the **same child, in a rolling 3-year period**. Should a third offence of unauthorised absence for the same child be committed during the 3 years (including where a child has moved school and fines have been issued by other LAs), the LA may prosecute the parent/carer(s).

As penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution, the LA may decide to proceed straight to prosecution instead of issuing any penalty notice.

If prosecuting, it is for the LA to decide whether a section 444(1) or section 444(1A) prosecution is most appropriate.

| Sanction | Outcome |
|---|---|
| Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 | If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £1000 and ordered to pay court costs. The court may also impose a Parenting Order. |
| Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 | If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £2500 and ordered to pay court costs. Other court outcomes include community sentences, such as Curfew Orders, Unpaid Work (Community Payback) or a prison sentence of up to three months. The court may also impose a Parenting Order. |

Education Supervision Orders (ESO)

The local authority must consider applying for an ESO (under section 36 of the Children Act 1989) before prosecuting under s444 Education Act 1996. An LA may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, proceeding with a prosecution. The order is placed on the child, and a supervisor from the LA is appointed by the court, to give directions to the child and their parents with a view to securing that the child is properly educated. Parents can be prosecuted if they persistently fail to comply with a direction; if found guilty they may be fined up to £1000.

| | First day of term for pupils: | Last day of term for pupils: | Inset Days/Bank Holidays |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Term 1 | Wed 4 Sept 2024 | Wednesday 23 October 2024 | Inset Days: Monday 2 September 2024 Tuesday 3 September 2024 Thursday 24 October 2024 (Autumn Conference) Friday 25 October 2024 |
| Term 2 | Monday 4 November 2024 | Friday 20 December 2024 | None |
| Term 3 | Tuesday 7 January 2025 | Friday 14 February 2025 | Inset Day: Monday 6 January 2025 |
| Term 4 | Tuesday 25 February 2025 | Friday 4 April 2025 | Inset Day: Monday 24 February 2025 |
| Term 5 | Tuesday 22 April 2025 | Friday 23 May 2025 | Bank holidays: Monday 21 April Monday 5 May |
| Term 6 | Monday 2 June 2025 | Tuesday 22 July 2025 | Inset Days: Friday 4 July 2025 (Summer Conference) Monday 7 July 2025 |