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| **Attendance Policy** This policy reflects the vision and aims of Helping Hands Vocational Learning Centre.    At HHVLC all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.  Our policy applies to all children registered at HHVLC and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at HHVLC.  HHVLC encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership HHVLC in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”* (DfE 1999).**    **Aims & Objectives**  This attendance policy ensures that all staff in HHVLC are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.  Through this policy we aim to:   * Improve pupils’ achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality. * Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues. * Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school. * Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education. * Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence. * Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility. * Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties. * Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.   **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**  Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from education frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations  **Punctuality**  It is the parent/carers responsibility:   * To ensure that their children arrive HHVLC on time. * Doors open at 8:35am until 8:55am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom. * To ensure children who are late after 8:55am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence. * To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child’s normal arrangements, the class teacher and SMT should be made aware of this.     **Absences**  It is the parent/carer’s responsibility:   * To notify HHVLC on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the office, e-mail. * To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child’s return to HHVLC. * To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend education before/after the appointment. * To liaise with the HHVLC as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. * Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.   **Illness/Medical absences**  In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness HHVLC may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.  HHVLC will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.    **Absence for Holidays**  Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.  If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Co-Heads, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.  It is the parent/carer’s responsibility:  - To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).  If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Co-Heads’ authorisation, the child’s absences will be marked as unauthorised.  **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**    **Absence for Other Reasons**  Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the SMT. These requests must be discussed with HHVLA.  Absences for close family members’ weddings or funerals will be limited to one day’s authorised absence, if granted.  It is the parent/carer’s responsibility:  - To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.  - To inform the office as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to HHVLC, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.  **Unexplained Absence**  When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.  Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.    **Role of the Education Welfare Officer**  - To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.  - To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.  - To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.  - To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.  - To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.  - To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.  **Children Missing in Education**  If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority. Link for form below:    <https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/>    **Persistent Latecomers**  Children who repeatedly attend late after 9:30am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer does unannounced gate check. |