



we are a learning community with the spirit to succeed

Holywell Primary School

Attendance Policy

Status:	Statutory
Approval Body:	Governing Body
Review Frequency:	Annually
Last Review:	June 2020
Next Review:	Summer 2021



Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Holywell School aims to work closely in partnership with all parents and carers to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils. Attendance and punctuality together with high levels of parental support are two of the most influential factors in determining children's achievements at school.
- 1.2 Ofsted expects a minimum of 96% attendance over the school year and attendance below this level will raise concerns, which may then trigger a school inspection. Historically, achieving this level of attendance at Holywell has been a significant challenge and the school is therefore constantly focused on doing all it can to improve attendance, working alongside the Local Authority and other relevant external agencies.
- 1.3 We set attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools and schools nationally when setting its own targets.
- 1.4 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. At the heart of our policy, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy, memorable and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

2. Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

- 2.1 Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for all school age pupils registered at Holywell Primary School and is essential if pupils are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.
- 2.2 Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- 2.3 Parents are responsible for informing the school if their child is absent. This should be on the first day of absence and should also give an explanation for the absence.
- 2.4 On a daily basis, if a child is going to be absent from school for any reason we ask parents to do one of the following:
 - Telephone or e-mail the school as soon as possible before 9.30 am
 - Send a written note to the school

- Inform the School Office in person

A member of admin staff will note the reason in the child's class register.

- 2.5 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- 2.6 Parents should avoid if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Pupils who do need to attend medical appointments during the school day (e.g. audiology) should not be absent for more than the necessary amount of time for the appointment.
- 2.7 Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality analysed by the school.
- 2.8 Pupils who have been sick (vomiting and/or diarrhoea) are to be kept home for 48 hrs from the last time of sickness.

3. Responsibilities – School

- 3.1 We, at Holywell Primary School, are responsible for supporting the attendance of our pupils and for dealing with problems which may lead to non-attendance.
- 3.2 We are committed to:
- maximising rates of attendance, both for individual pupils and for the school as a whole - this is one of our key priority tasks.
 - extending support to parents to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and we will respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance.
 - being sensitive to the needs of individual parents - this is reflected in the way in which we address attendance issues. We recognise that some parents experience difficulty understanding and producing written communications. We also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come in to school.
- 3.3 We encourage all staff, including ancillary and administrative staff, to see pupil attendance as part of their responsibility.
- 3.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- 3.5 We actively address all issues, such as bullying, which may lead to non-attendance.
- 3.6 We do not exclude pupils because of non-attendance.

- 3.7 We consider attendance from a whole school perspective. We explore the link between attendance and achievement.
- 3.8 We include in each pupil's annual report to his/her parents information relating to the number of unauthorised absences which the pupil has accrued during that school year (up to the summer half-term holiday).
- 3.9 For persistent unauthorised absences, we will consider using sanctions such as penalty notices; the process is set out below:
- Attendance data will be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, often alongside the Attendance Improvement Officer.
 - Pupils with poor attendance will be noted and parents or carers of these pupils will be invited to a meeting in school to discuss their child's attendance. At this meeting if parents/carers are unable to provide any satisfactory explanation for their child's poor attendance, they will be informed that we are no longer willing to authorise any further absences for their child without medical evidence that their child is unfit to attend school.
 - Identified pupils with unauthorised absence will be closely monitored and if the number of unauthorised absences exceeds 21 sessions (each half-day counts as 1 session), we will request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.
 - If a parent is issued with a Penalty Notice, they are required to pay a fine of £60 within 15 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days. If the parent does not pay the fine they will be liable for prosecution for failure to secure their child's regular attendance at school under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

4. Responsibilities – Behaviour and Attendance Team

- 4.1 The Behaviour and Attendance Team fulfils the statutory duty of the Local Authority in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so, it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.
- 4.2 We work closely with our Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who visits the school regularly, in order to meet with the appropriate staff. The purposes of the visits are to:
- Identify pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties (for example those with attendance below 90%). This includes analysis of attendance data.
 - Agree on the focused time-limited action which needs to be taken by the AIO and/or school.
 - Feedback and exchange information in relation to work which has been undertaken by the AIO.
 - Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
 - Advise the school on strategies for improving attendance.

- 4.3 Once a pupil has been identified as having poor attendance, the School and AIO will decide on a plan of action to improve the pupil's attendance. This may include:
- Considering use of a Penalty Notice as outlined in para 3.9 above.
 - Formally referring the pupil to the AIO, who will then undertake casework with the family and if necessary consider legal action against the parents/carers if despite this intervention, the pupil's attendance does not improve.
 - Consider completing Families First Early Help Module (EHM) and convening a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting to support the pupil/family.
 - Offering specific support to the parents/pupils either at school, home or elsewhere.
 - Referring the pupil/family to other appropriate agencies/services for support.
- 4.4 The AIO will offer, or assist with, INSET sessions on a range of subjects related to the attendance or welfare of pupils.
- 4.5 The AIO will follow up all instances of pupils who are absent from school for more than four weeks and who subsequently cannot be traced.
- 4.6 The AIO will work closely with the Children Missing Education Officer based at County Hall, who maintains a Children Out Of School Database and with the Education Welfare Services of other Local Authorities, in order to track children and ensure that pupils which have been legitimately removed from Holywell's school roll, have been registered at another school.

5. Governors

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

6. Attendance Registers

- 6.1 We recognise that attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases.
- 6.2 At Holywell School we ensure that registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- 6.3 Class teachers record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in approved educational activity.
- 6.4 Registers remain open for 30 minutes in the morning: from 9.00am to 9.30am
- 6.5 If a child is absent after 9.30am and the parent/carer has not provided an acceptable reason, we will record it as unauthorised.

- 6.6 Class registers are recorded on SIMS. We ensure any correction made is in such a manner that the original entry and correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- 6.7 We will keep registers in a secure place for a period of not less than three years.
- 6.8 Class teachers complete class registers directly onto SIMS, following LA guidance and procedures.

7. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

7.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school receives a satisfactory reason from a parent/carer, for example, if a child is unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Where pupils/carers are bona fide adherents of an organised religion and require leave for their child/children for the purpose of an official holy day, the school will allow up to 2 days authorised absence per academic year.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, the absence would be unauthorised.

7.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the school's permission. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home due to a parent being unwell
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions (e.g. birthday)
- the pupil is on family holiday during term time or leave of absence without the permission of the Headteacher (see also Para 10)

8. Approved Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities will be recorded as **approved educational activity**. For statistical purpose, such pupils will be counted as present even though they are physically absent.

A pupil will be recorded as approved educational activity he/she is on:

- A field trip or educational visit
- A sporting activity
- A link course

We recognise the key features of **approved educational activity** as being:

- Educational and directly linked to the our school's programme
- Approved by the Head
- Supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

9. Punctuality

- 9.1 The start of the school day is an important routine for all pupils and learning happens as soon as pupils come into school. We take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality, so that pupils arrive on time and are ready to start their learning. We monitor and follow up lateness on a regular basis.
- 9.2 Children are expected to be on site by 8.50am and the bell is rung at 8.55am promptly and the children line up to go into class. If a child is not present to answer their name in the register, they are considered to be late. (With the exception of those pupils who are in school but are taking part in learning outside of the classroom with a member of staff during registration, in which case the teacher would know where they are and mark them present). Registers will be called promptly at 9.00am and 1.05pm or 1.35pm at the latest. If a pupil is persistently late, the parents will be contacted.
- 9.3 When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open, he/she will be marked as 'late' (L) but counted as present for that session.
- 9.4 When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- 9.5 When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised late' (U) for that session.
- 9.6 When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site will be registered on the Inventory system in the reception area for the purposes of emergency evacuation, and to monitor reasons given for lateness.

10. Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

We believe that children need to attend school regularly, so that they can make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their children away on a holiday during term time and school will only authorise a request for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications should be made to the Headteacher.

11. Rewards for good attendance

The school will celebrate classes with high attendance or improving attendance by mentioning them during whole school assembly (usually on a Monday), and inviting them to take part in an additional sports club or similar reward activity (usually on a Friday).

12. Monitoring and review

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance and they will receive a termly report from the Headteacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 12.2 The rates of attendance will be reported to parents/carers in the annual Headteacher & Governors' report.
- 12.3 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body annually, or earlier if considered necessary.