



Holdbrook Primary School and Nursery

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Signature: Date:

Headteacher

Signature: Date:

Chair of Governors

Review Date: September 2019

ATTENDANCE POLICY
HOLDBROOK PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Introduction

At Holdbrook Primary and Nursery School we want to ensure that all of our children are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We believe, that in order to do this, they need to be in school every day possible.

Study after study has highlighted the positive link between attendance and educational achievement. Children who are persistently late or absent from school are vulnerable to falling behind with their learning. This can impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding place for the whole school community.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend regularly and punctually and to put in place appropriate procedures to enable this.

We believe that an important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

Our attendance policy will support the whole school community to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality and to assist our children in achieving the following five outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To be safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents/carers and children. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The School will:

- Provide a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raise awareness in parents and carers of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of their child's education;
- Ensure that records of attendance are maintained on a daily basis according to Government legislation and guidance;
- Implement First Day Response - phone parents on the first morning of absence if no reason has been received for the child's absence;
- Discuss attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary;

- Contact families where concerns are raised about absence initially through letters to parents highlighting when their child's attendance is at or below 96% for any reason and then again if the absence rate is at or below 93%.
- If attendance continues to deteriorate, parents will be invited into school to discuss any issues/barriers to good attendance and to work with the school to agree an attendance improvement action plan.
- Send a formal letter advising parents of their child's unauthorised absence and warning that a penalty notice will be issued if the unauthorised level of absence reaches 15 sessions in the current and/or previous term .
- Use Fixed Penalty Notices by way of dealing with attendance matters / unauthorised absences (totalling 15 sessions or more in the current and/or previous term) and may request Hertfordshire County Council to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice on their behalf.
- Monitor individual attendance where concerns have been raised;
- Making referrals to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) service where deemed necessary.

The Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- Collect their children on time at the end of every school day.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Ensure you have read the attendance policy.
- Ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment;
- Provide proof of reason for absence when requested i.e. text message from the doctors showing appointment time, copy of a prescription or letter from hospital/health care provider. If attendance is below 93% and evidence is not provided the absence may be marked as unauthorised.
- **ONLY** make requests for authorised absence in term time, **in exceptional circumstances**.
- Understand that family holidays do not count as exceptional circumstances and will **not** be authorised. Any requests for leave of absence need to be given in writing at least three weeks prior to date of absence.
- Be vigilant about ensuring all children are in school during April, May and June when preparation for and statutory testing takes place.
- Parents/carers will on the first day of their child's absence inform the school of the reason.
- Confirm the explanation for absence in writing on return to school.
- Return their child to school as soon as they are fit to do so. In relation to vomiting and diarrhoea the child should have 48 hours free of symptoms before return to school.
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours. If unavoidable inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter);
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary;

The Children will be expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually;
- Be ready to learn.

Monitoring attendance and responding to absence

School classroom doors open at 8:50am and close at 9:00am

Pupils may enter the building via the playground at this time. Any pupil arriving after 9:00am will need to come in via the office and be marked with the appropriate code.

Pupils should not arrive at school before 8:40am unless attending breakfast or other club.

Computerised registers are taken twice daily.

Illness

We understand that sometimes children become unwell and that in these cases absence is unavoidable but as a guide, if your child can get out of bed and play, they should be at school.

Coughs and sneezes are no excuse not to come to school.

Feeling tired is not an illness

Mild aches and pains are not an illness.

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after 9.00 am should report to the School Office to sign in.
- School finishes at 3.15pm. Children should be collected promptly at this time. If parents are going to be late, they must let the school office know.
- If a child is not collected by 3:45pm and no contact has been made with the school, we will contact the relevant authorities.

Following up Lateness

- Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by the attendance assistant. A second late mark in any week will trigger a letter home.

Leaving and returning to School during the School Day

- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified in the morning, pupils must be signed in/out at the office. This register will be checked and monitored by a member of leadership team on a weekly basis.

Absences

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school. A telephone call with reason for absence is required on the first day.
- On return to school a written explanation **must be** provided in order for the absence to be considered as authorised.
- An absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.
- The school will check any absences where a reason has not been provided

Definition of absence

- Absences, as defined by the Department of Education, are in two categories, either authorised or unauthorised.
- **ALL** absences, whether authorised or unauthorised, count towards persistent absence figures. Therefore we will be sending absence letters to parents at 96% and 93% to help them monitor their child's absence and take appropriate steps to make improvements.

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Where attendance levels fall to an unacceptable level, Parents/Carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for any further absence due to illness. If no medical evidence is provided then the absence will be recorded as "unauthorised"

In terms of persistent absence figures, it is the unauthorised absences which eventually could attract a fixed term penalty notice.

Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

- The leadership team monitors all pupils' attendance regularly.
- The school works in partnership with the allocated attendance improvement officer to improve attendance for persistently low attendees (children with attendance at or below 93%)
- The School works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO, the School may make a referral to Children, Schools and Families.

Encouraging good attendance

- Ensuring that Holdbrook School is a respectful and welcoming environment for all.
- Provide an interesting and flexible curriculum that engages pupils and meet their needs.
- Staff will promote good attendance through regular discussions with children and families. Posters promoting good attendance will be displayed around the school.
- Children will be praised for good attendance and punctuality. Where a child's attendance has improved this will be recognised and both pupils and parents will be informed.
- Certificates for children with 100% attendance on a termly basis.
- Gold certificate awarded for 100% attendance for the year and a reward given for every child with 97% attendance or above. This will be in accordance with the reward system put into place throughout the year that has been agreed by the Headteacher and the school Governors.
- The importance of good attendance will be regularly emphasised to parents in newsletters, assemblies and meetings.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy and practice.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, Statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school and not parents/carers can authorise and absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If the reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. The discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013).

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time. The absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code)

The DofE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child/ £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded in the current and previous term. If this penalty is not paid the local authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.