



**Respect Responsibility Relationships**

# **Hollydale Primary School Attendance Policy**

**Update October 2019**

**Review date: October 2022**

## Attendance

- Every child is expected to attend school every day with a minimum expectation of 96%
- All children should arrive in school at 8:55am
- Individual attendance is monitored daily
- Class attendance is monitored weekly
- To encourage excellent attendance, the class with the highest weekly attendance is rewarded by the attendance cup for the highest class in the phase.
- Attendance certificates are given out half termly, to encourage good attendance
- To improve pupil attendance and punctuality
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school
- To raise educational achievement of all pupils
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimize absence
- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analyzing attendance data
- To promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The school governors with the Head teacher will, at the beginning of each school year set an attendance target for the school.
- The school office staff is responsible for ensuring that pupil's names are recorded on the school admissions and daily register.
- The school office staff and class teachers have a duty to report any attendance concerns to the Family Support Worker.
- The Head teacher has a responsibility to ensure the daily register of pupils attending the school is taken and designates the family support worker to monitor and report on attendance matters.
- The Family support worker will meet and discuss attendance on a fortnightly basis with the school EWO.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
- The Education Welfare Service has a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility and the service can seek legal redress to secure a pupil's attendance if a parent fails in their duty.

### 4. Working with the Local Authority

- Hollydale Primary School works with the Education Welfare Service to help improve the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils.
- The Family Support Worker meets with our link Education Welfare Officer (EWO) bi-weekly to monitor and review progress. Our EWO visits school bi-weekly to advise the school on managing absences, making appropriate referrals and to meet parents.

### 5 How Our School Manages Pupil Absence

- At Hollydale Primary School the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically. This helps us to produce termly data through the School Census for the Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Authority.
- Each reason for pupil absence has a special code, which assists the school to monitor persistent absentees. The details of the codes can be found in the school handbook.
- In our school we expect pupils to have 96% and above attendance (national average is 95.6%).

- Through data analysis the school can track which pupils fall below this threshold and take action.

(a) **Unauthorized Absences**

- At Hollydale Primary School we have an expectation that parents will telephone the school on the first day of absence to report the reason for absence. In some cases we may not accept the reason for absence. The absence may be unauthorized.
- If a parent does not contact the school, the school office will complete the **1<sup>st</sup> Day Calling** procedure:
  - Phone parent and ask for a reason.
  - Leave a voicemail if no answer.
  - Send a follow up text asking for the parent to contact the school with a reason.
- If a pupil is then absent for a **second day** without the parent contacting the school with a reason the school office will repeat the above 1<sup>st</sup> Day Calling procedure.
- On the **third day** of absence without notification, a text will be sent to the parent telling them they must provide a doctors letter to show to the school for the absences. The school office will also notify the family support worker at this point about the child's unauthorized absences.
- The family support worker will discuss with the EWO any persistent absences. The FSW will send a letter asking for reasons or if a letter has been sent without response, a second letter will be sent to book a meeting for the parent to attend with the EWO (pre-referral meeting). If a parent fails to attend the meeting without notifying the school, or a child's attendance fails to improve despite a meeting, the FSW will refer the child to Education Welfare Services using a CAF
- Regular unauthorized absence where a parent has not provided a valid reason for absence means that a parent may be breaking the law and could be:
  - Issued with an Education Penalty Charge notice of £60-£120 by the Local Authority
  - Found guilty in a magistrate court and fined up to £2500 in very serious cases
  - parents can be imprisoned for up to 3 months.
- Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with parents through our newsletters, structured conversations and regular reviews and reports.
- If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with a member of staff rather than allow a situation to escalate.

**School Attendance Panel**

- School attendance meetings are held for reception age children where attendance has become a cause for concern. This is a supportive meeting between the Education Welfare Officer, Family Support Worker and parents/carers.
- School attendance panel meetings are held for year 1 – year 6 pupils where attendance has become a cause for concern. This is a meeting between the head teacher, education welfare officer, Family Support Worker and parents/carers.

(b) **Regular Pupil Sickness**

- If a pupil is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absence.
- This discussion may be with the EWO or School Nurse.
- When a pupil is regularly absent due to illness the school will request that the parent provides medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorize further absences.

(c) **Request for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time**

- Attendance regulations in England changed in September 2013, removing the former notional 10 days limit that head teachers could authorize for a pupil to be absent in term time for family holidays.

- All term time pupil leave applications now have to be on exceptional grounds in line with the regulations. There are therefore no grounds for parents to apply for term time family holidays leave for their children.
- Leave of absence during term time is subject to approval by the Head Teacher and School Governors and is only authorised in extenuating circumstances.
- The only grounds on which parents can apply for term time pupil leave are for 'Exceptional circumstances'. By definition this is decided upon by the head teacher alone on a case-by-case basis.

#### (d) Religious Holidays

Parents may absent their child from school on the day of a religious festival, so that children can enjoy celebrations with their families. The school is unable to authorize leave of absence for longer than one day. Parents taking children out for more than one day will have the absence recorded as unauthorized.

### 6. Punctuality

- Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8:55am.
- The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. As well as recording that a child has arrived at school the register is necessary for health and safety reasons should the building need to be evacuated.
- Pupils arriving between 9am and 9:30am will be given a late card by the office; the time of their arrival will be recorded on the register with an 'L' – unauthorized absence.
- If pupils arrive after 9:30am, the time of their arrival will be recorded on the register with a 'U' – unauthorized absence.
- Pupils should be collected from school at 3:30pm. If a parent is going to be late collecting their child the school office should be notified as soon as possible.
- If a child is not collected by 4pm, they will go to after school club. A late fee of £3 per 15 minutes will be charged.
- If a child is not collected from an enrichment club by 5pm, they will go to after school club. A late fee of £3 per 15 minutes will be charged.
- Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the head teacher. In very serious cases of pupils being left at school the pupil may be deemed abandoned and the local police station will be informed.

### 7. School Census Data

- The school must submit data to the DFE on the number of pupils that are persistently absent, for whatever the reason. Currently the DFE threshold for persistent absence is 85% or below attendance. It is well researched that pupil attainment and progress is directly linked to pupil attendance. The school message is that 'every lesson counts'.

### 8. Pupils on Long Term Leave due to illness or medical treatment

- Occasionally some pupils may be away from school for a long period of time due to illness or medical treatment. We will work with the Local Authority who has a duty to ensure that if the pupil is well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition.
- The Local Authority should make any pupil with long term medical leave is not without access to education for more than 15 school days and should arrange education from the start of a pupil's absence if it is clear the pupil is going to be away for long and recurring periods.

### 9. Dental and Medical appointments

- Wherever possible parents should make every effort avoid medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange routine checkups during holiday periods or at the beginning/ end of the school day.
- Most medical appointments do not necessitate a full day's absence and it is the parent's responsibility to collect their child from school to take them to appointments and bring them back to school once the appointment is over.
- A medical appointment card / letter will be required as evidence of appointment.

## 10. School Governors

- The head teacher has a responsibility to report on attendance matters at every full governing body meeting.
- One of the governors' responsibilities is making sure that each pupils details are recorded, including address and telephone number which are very important in case of emergency.
- Parents should always ensure the school has up to date contact details.
- The governors support the Head teacher in managing any requests for leave of absence and take the position that families have no lawful entitlement to such leave.