



Holywell Church of England Primary School

# Attendance Policy

**Date: October 2023**

**Review date: October 2024**

*Flowing, Strengthening, Deepening*

## **Principles**

Holywell CE Primary School aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Officers (LAAOs) to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. At the same time, ensuring that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age. The recognised expected level of attendance at school is 100% unless pupils are affected by chronic health issues or there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

## **Parent/Carers Responsibilities**

Parent/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children registered at Holywell CE Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time, parents may on occasions be asked to provide supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Report any changes to the contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information.

## **Registration**

Reception to Year 6:

- The classroom doors are opened at 8.35 am.
- All external classroom doors are locked at 8.45 am.
- Once the external classroom door has been locked, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at 8.45 am and closed at 8.55 am. Pupils who arrive at school after this time will be recorded as L, late on the register.

- Pupils who arrive at school after 9.15 am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as U, unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

## **Lateness**

Registration takes place 8.45 to 8.55 at the start of the first activity of the day. This is also when the teacher informs the class of their daily timetable of learning and prepares the pupils for the day ahead. Pupils who arrive after the registration period and up to 20 minutes late will be marked as late. Any pupil who arrives after 9.15 will be marked as an unauthorised late. Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parent/Carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/Carers to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parent/Carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LA AO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

## **Reporting a Pupil Absence**

Parent/Carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8.45am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the classroom staff will attempt to make contact with the Parent/Carers once the registers have closed at 8.55am.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Failure to make contact with the Parent/Carers to establish a reason for an absence will result in a staff visit to the registered address. If contact can still not be established a letter will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to a meeting at school at the earliest opportunity. Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a Parent/Carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting evidence may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. A period of absences will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment. Children who fail to return to school within a reasonable time following their medical appointment could result in an am/pm session being unauthorised.

## **Illness**

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness can return after they have been 48 hours clear. This can be sooner if school can establish that the sickness was not caused by a viral complaint.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

## **COVID-19**

If a pupil tests positive for COVID- 19 and this has been reported to school, the pupil should stay at home and can return to school after 3 days if they feel well enough and do not have a high temperature.

As a school, we are continuing to maintain the good practice of regular handwashing and pupils are encouraged to cough and sneeze into a tissue to help reduce the risk of passing on any infections.

## **School Responsibilities**

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

## **School Staff**

School staff will aim to contact the Parent/Carers of any pupil who is absent from school and a reason has not been provided once the registers have closed at 8.55 am.

Staff will ring the first priority contact number to establish a reason for the absence. If unable to make contact, they will call the next contact until we have been provided with a reason for absence.

If the reason for absence is unknown at the close of registration, staff will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the Parent/Carers to enquire about a pupil's absence
- Complete the registers in accordance to the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes

- Leave a message on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence
- Log the outcome of the phone call
- Inform the School Attendance Officer should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness

### **The School Attendance Officer**

Lateness and attendance is monitored daily by the school attendance officer who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if reason unknown.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 90% autumn term, 95% spring and summer term..
- Offer support or sign post to other areas of support within the community
- Step One. A letter advising Parent/Carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren) attendance and/or lateness
- Step Two, informal contact. This can be via telephone or a brief catch up at the start/end of the school day by any member of staff, to ascertain barriers to accessing education and offering support and signposting.
- Step Three. A formal Parent Contract Meeting to be held in school, with Parent/Carers to discuss concerns and, working together, identifying support which can be offered and signposting. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
- Step Four. Should the targets set at step three not be met following a review, despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for children of statutory school age.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
- Monitor pupils attendance within specific and identified groups
- Monitor pupil absences for those with additional medical needs
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to Home Educated their child(ren)
- Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from roll
- Meet with LAAO on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of 15 days during the school year
- Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

Only the Head teacher or a designated member of staff may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason, not all absence supported by Parent/Carers will be classified as authorised.

## **Definitions of Leave:**

Holywell CE Primary School expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

### **Authorised leave:**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only day (s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

### **Unauthorised leave:**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the Parent/Carers, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.
- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

## **Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave**

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term Time Leave Request form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect Term Time Leave has been taken but the parent/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to all parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

**Exceptional circumstance** (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following

examples of requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised and could be subject to a penalty notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a life time
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance

### **Penalty Notice**

The fine for a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

Parent/Carers who take unauthorised leave during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any 4 week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution.

The definition of parent in relation to a Penalty Notice includes and Step-parent and the partner of a parent who lives in the same household.

See below for appendix

Appendix 1 - Authorised absence letter

Appendix 2 – Pre-Letter 1

Appendix 3 - Letter 1

Appendix 4 - Letter 2

Appendix 5 - Letter 3

Appendix 6 – Attendance Improvement meeting

Appendix 7 - Suspected holiday letter

Appendix 8 – Attendance Codes.

## Appendix 1

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil)    DOB:

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I would like to thank you for following school procedure regarding Attendance. We understand that (Forename) has had authorised absence recently and that you contacted school every day to keep us informed.

We would just like to let you know that this has affected (Forename's) attendance which is currently at (%).

As you know, if it is medical please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

School share a vital part in ensuring that children who are absent from school because of medical needs maintain their education.

If your child is absent from school for over 10 days it may be necessary for school to seek support for your child.

Please ensure that the school is fully aware of any medical issues that may affect your child's attendance.

Regular attendance is important to allow your child to access their learning.

Please continue to work with us. You are more than welcome to contact school to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team



## Appendix 2

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil)    DOB:

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is currently at (%). At Holywell C of E Primary School, we expect each child to be reaching 95% attendance.

We do recognise some of, or all of, these absences may have been authorised by the school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning. We would therefore encourage you to support (Forename) in this.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on (Forename) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

### Appendix 3

(Date)

LETTER ONE

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil)    DOB:

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to (%). At Holywell C of E Primary School, we expect each child to be reaching 95% attendance. As a result, we are becoming concerned that (Forename) is missing a significant part of their learning.

I have enclosed a copy of (Forename's) attendance record which shows a breakdown of attendance. We do recognise some of, or all of, these absences may have been authorised by the school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

We will continue to monitor (Forename's) attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement. We would encourage you to support (Forename) in this.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on (Forename) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

#### Appendix 4

(Date) LETTER TWO

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is still causing concern as it remains lower than our expected 95%, at only (%).

We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting (Forename's) learning and we need to meet with you urgently.

You are required to attend a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss this matter further at the date and time detailed below.

Date:

Time:

Should (Forename's) attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Medical evidence is now required for any future absences to be authorised with immediate effect.

We look forward to meeting you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support our children in their learning. Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

## Appendix 5

(Date)

LETTER THREE – PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil)    DOB:

I am writing to advise you that over the monitoring period set out in our meeting on (Date & Time), (Forename's) school attendance has not met the agreed upon terms and Holywell C of E Primary School's expectations for attendance.

We are very worried that continued poor attendance is now significantly affecting (Forename's) learning.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if (Forename's) attendance fails to improve during the next 3 weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

If you feel further contact or a meeting with the Attendance Team would be beneficial, please contact the school to arrange this.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

**Appendix 6**

Date of scheduled meeting	Tick if attended

**Education Performance and Inclusion**

**Education Act 1996 and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003**

**Attendance Improvement Meeting**

**Name of School:** HOLYWELL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:	Where AIM is held :	
Present:		
Current Attendance    % sessions absence authorised ..... sessions absence unauthorised .....		

<p>Background information provided by school</p>		
<p>Reasons for absence given by parent/carer, student/ pupil</p> <p>(Points of Discussion: Medical, Bullying, Transport Issues, Home Issues, School Issues, Holidays)</p>		
<p>Please tick and date any of the following that have been previously offered/completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies (please state )</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communication with teacher or Attendance Team to discuss attendance concerns, e.g. telephone call, e-mails, letters, meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduced timetable</li> </ul> <p>Was an EHA offered?</p> <p>Any other relevant intervention offered (please detail):</p>	<p>Date</p>	
<p><b>Plan to Improve Attendance</b></p> <p>This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.</p>		

<b>Pupil agrees to:</b>	
<b>Parent(s)/Carers(s) agrees to:</b>	
<b>School agrees to:</b>	
<b>Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking</b>	

**Agreed Attendance target for the next 6 school weeks 95% with no unauthorised absence**

**Review Date .....**

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being taken.

As Parent /Carer of ..... I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me.

**Signed:**

Parent ..... Parent .....

Date: .....

Pupil ..... School ..... Other .....

Date: .....

**For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend**

**Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s): .....**

(This should be within one day of plan being drawn up)



## Appendix 7

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil)    DOB:

I am writing about (Forename's) absence from school from (Date) to (Date).

From information received from other sources we believe that this was due to a family holiday. This means that unfortunately you have not followed school procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for this absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register.

However, if the absence was not due to a family holiday and it was due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within this 7 day period, (Forename's) absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised family holiday.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being taken.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

## Appendix 8

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day