



Attendance Policy

Date Adopted:	April 2024
Next Review Date:	September 2024 (in line with new guidance to be published)
Signature of Chair of Governors:	
Signature of Headteacher:	

This policy is based on the recommendations of the guidance "Working together to improve school attendance" September 2022.

Please read this policy alongside the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- SEN policy
- Behaviour policy

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1. Organisation and facilities

Securing good attendance is not seen in isolation. Attendance interacts closely with curriculum, positive behaviour, bullying prevention, safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities, medical needs support, mental health and wellbeing and effective use of resources. Hollingbourne Primary's foundation for securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

2. Rationale

Hollingbourne Primary promotes the benefits of good attendance for all pupils. It sets and expects high standards of attendance for every pupil, communicates those expectations both clearly and consistently to pupils and parents/carers and systematically analyses their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts. We are committed to working together with children and parents to promote 100% attendance wherever possible.

For some pupils the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils and parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Improving and supporting attendance is the responsibility of everyone in school. We believe that good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances

3. Policy aims

We will ensure:

- We have a culture of good attendance which is underpinned by our school values
- A named governor is responsible for attendance
- Visible leaders who are ambitious and relentless in ensuring good attendance
- We prioritise attendance and punctuality
- An improved overall percentage of pupils at school
- Our registers and attendance data is accurate.
- There is a framework which sets out agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- A first day response as part of our robust daily response to absence
- There is a senior leader who is responsible for attendance
- Attendance data is shared with governors

- Work takes place where necessary with families to address reasons for absence including in school barriers
- Processes for engagement with the School Liaison Officer are in place
- Engagement with multi agency professionals, early help assessment, special educational needs professionals
- Children's social care are involved where there are safeguarding concerns and built support into attendance planning.

4. Expected attendance and legalities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full time education, suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance in school. Responsibilities of the senior leader who has this responsibility include championing and improving attendance in school, offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

6. First day response and daily absence

School requires first day contact for a child's absence. The procedures for when first day contact is not received are recorded in the attendance protocols.

All other absences will be marked as unauthorised unless prior arrangement has been agreed with the Headteacher.

With regards to unexpected absence during term time, parents and carers should contact school daily during any absence. Absence should be reported by 8.45am for each day of absence to the school office 01622 880270. This should clearly state the name of child, child's class, the name of the person reporting the absence and the reason why the child is absent.

7. Managing absence

Attendance is reviewed by the Headteacher.

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or is not being engaged with, school will work together with families to explain the consequences clearly and ensure

support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

The school is supported by The Attendance Service at the Local Authority and will seek advice and representation from this service to assist in the monitoring of poor attendees. The service will formulate a plan of action with the school to improve pupil attendance and if necessary, can instigate legal proceeding through the fast-track process. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention to protect the pupil's right to an education.

8. Recording attendance and authorising absence

Reasons for non-attendance should always be provided by parents/carers. If this is not the case the school will continue to contact parent/carer until a reason has been given.

Hollingbourne Primary have agreed with the Local Authority that the school will not authorise absence except for medical or illness or faith-based holiday. We follow Local Authority guidelines and will not authorise any absence due to holiday unless exceptional circumstances can be proven. [Appendix 1](#)

School can request that any absence due to illness be verified with a doctor's appointment card or medical note if necessary. Detailed guidelines have been formulated and will be provided upon request.

Fixed codes for absence and attendance are used consistently throughout the school and are shared with parents/carers. [Appendix 3](#)

9. Requesting authorised absence

All other planned absences will be marked as unauthorised unless prior arrangement has been agreed with the Headteacher. Requests for absence must be put in writing to the Headteacher.

10. Promoting and incentivising good attendance

We aim to build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them. They will be provided with support, advice and guidance where required. We will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support. We are committed to working together with children and parents to promote 100% attendance wherever possible.

We visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or through curriculum content. This will be done sensitively and without discrimination and may also include praising and rewarding improvements in



attendance at whole school, key stage, year group, class and individual level. Praise and rewards systems can be found in the protocols.

When a pupil has not attended school for a significant period, we will recognise the needs of the individual pupil and carefully plan re-integration.

11. The use of data/ tracking and monitoring of attendance

The Department for Education and Local Authority require schools to monitor and report the attendance levels of every pupil. One of the reasons for this is the strong statistical link between attendance and attainment. The higher a pupil's attendance, the higher their levels of achievement. We seek to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

We will rigorously and proactively use attendance data to identify poor patterns of attendance at individual and cohort level as soon as possible so that all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

The Headteacher will provide monitoring reports for Governors.

12. Strong partnerships and working together

We will work collaboratively with external partners to identify and address the root causes of absence and remove barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly. This work may include Early Help assessment, whole family planning and special educational needs assessment. It may also include working with Children's Social Care where there are safeguarding concerns. This support will be built into attendance planning.

Information will be shared with other schools in the area, Local Authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Developing strong relationships and families will result in reduction in persistent and severe absence. These relationships will ensure families are supported to gain access to wider support services and will be provided with support to remove the barriers to attendance. When appropriate support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority

13. Training

All teaching and non-teaching staff will know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents/carers and receive the training and professional development they need. To ensure this happens all school staff receive annual attendance updates.

Information regarding attendance is part of school staff induction protocols.

14. Attendance protocols which form part of this policy

Hollingbourne Primary School has the following protocols to support the implementation of this policy. The protocols are intended to support staff and parents/carers by providing guidance in procedures and are based on DfE best practice.

Number	School Protocols
1	The school day and registration
2	Absence managing procedure
3	Daily absence procedure
4	Praise and rewards system
5	Leave of absence notification

Protocol 1 - The School Day and Registration

- The school day begins at 8.45 am.
- Registration takes place as soon after 8.45 am as is possible.
- A child will be marked late after registration if their class teacher is unaware that they are in the building.
- The register will be left open in extreme bad weather, or if the child has been delayed by another member of staff on the premises.
- Registers must be in the school office by 8.55 am and will be officially “closed”.
- Children who arrive after registration closes at 8.55 am will be noted on the school system as late. Children arriving after 9.15am will lose a mark for the morning session. This absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- A letter will be sent home if a child is late after registration closes on two or more days in the week.

Protocol 2 - Absence Managing Procedure

Every 6 weeks and the following procedure is followed:

- Identify PA (90%) children and reason for absence
- First attendance letter to be sent to children identified for persistent absent (not covid related). Letter will be posted by Royal Mail.
- Impact/Improvement letters to those pupils who received a PA letter previously.
- No improvement in attendance from previous attendance letter to be sent a further letter explaining possible involvement of Local Authority Attendance Service (bring these to attention of SLO Attendance Service and monitor over the next term). If attendance has not improved within the next term, the child will be referred to the Attendance Service.
- If still PA over next time frame attendance letter sent and referral to Local Authority Attendance Service. If attendance has still not improved, parents may be invited in to a formal meeting with the school and the Attendance Service.
- If still PA after receiving letter from SLO Attendance Service a plan of action will be put in place to improve attendance which could result in prosecution if there is no significant improvement in attendance.

- Attendance monitoring report to be completed identifying PA (90%) children and reasons for absence.
- Regular meeting with Local Authority Attendance Service to discuss attendance report and refer any pupils as required.
- For those children that have achieved 100% each term, certificates to be distributed.

Protocol 3 – Daily Absence Procedures

<p>All late arrivals to sign in folder at front door.</p> <p>Reason and number of minutes late added to SIMS</p> <p>All messages regarding pupil absence entered into SIMS by 9.30</p>	<p>Office</p>	<p>Sign in folder</p> <p>SIMS</p>
<p>Office staff complete first day response calls to any children absent with no reason given - Telephone call made to first contact on child's file - If no response, calls to be made to other contacts listed.</p> <p>Office team/ SLT to review available information and decide if any further potential action needed</p>	<p>Office team</p> <p>SLT/ Safeguarding lead</p>	<p>Record outcomes on SIMS</p>
<p>Children absent listed as vulnerable identified and social worker/relevant lead professional notified</p> <p>If reason for absence is obtained update records and Recorded on SIMS if needed.</p> <p>If child is unaccounted for, SLT to decide to carry out home visit or request welfare check by contacting the police on 101 (review information on SIMS)</p> <p>SLT/Attendance officer Cases identified for discussion/referral to SLO</p>	<p>SLT</p>	<p>Record outcomes on SIMS</p>

Protocol 4- Praise and reward systems

- Weekly assemblies for class attendance
- Half termly rewards for individuals with good attendance.
- Letters /postcards home for good or improved attendance

Protocol 5– Leave of absence notification

A request for leave of absence must be put in writing to the Headteacher.

APPENDIX 1. Pupil attendance and planned absence (Appendix to policy).

Definition of “exceptional circumstances” for term time holiday authorisation.

Legislative Framework:

It is a parent’s duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of “compulsory school age” is to receive “an efficient, full time education”. A child is of compulsory school age from age five. A child should attend school from the start of term commencing on or after his / her fifth birthday. We, at Hollingbourne, encourage good attendance from the day a child joins one of our schools.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and fulltime basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Local Authority, if problems cannot be resolved by agreement with the school. School policies describe the required levels of attendance and punctuality for good progress to be made at school.

The government expects schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence.
- Ensure that every child has access to full time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The government also expects:

- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 regulations to prohibit the Headteacher of a school from granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating the request. We believe it is necessary to define what we consider to be “exceptional circumstances” to give further structure to the decision to decline authorisation 14 of absence.

We have four permitted areas of “exceptional circumstance”:

1. The death or terminal illness of an immediate family member, where immediate is defined as the parents / carers and siblings of the child in school.
2. Absence recommended by a health professional.
3. Religious observance.
4. Allowances made for the families of service personnel on active duty.

In addition, we apply a further “threshold test” to the fundamental definition of “exceptional”. We believe that the circumstances must be, rare, significant, and unavoidable to qualify.



Where the Headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the request for leave of absence but has additional concerns about the timing of the absence, or the pupil's attendance record, they may request a meeting with the parent / carer; the absence may not be authorised without attendance at this meeting.

If you require any further information or clarification, please refer your request to the school Headteacher via the school office.

APPENDIX 2:

This policy is guided by Kent County Council and Department for Education guidance and best practice

The policy has been written with due regard to the following:

DfE Guidance Documents

- Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities - Published Sept 2022
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities – Published September 2022

Legislation

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- Section 7 and 444 of the Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (KCSIE)

APPENDIX 3 Codes used in the register

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances