

HOLDEN LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance and Punctuality

Date: September 2023

Rational

Good attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to take full advantage of school, and gain the necessary skills that will prepare them for life. Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The school and the Local Authority work together to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance issues are dealt with in the first instance by the school and our Education Welfare Officer. This may be followed by a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service, which provides an important link between schools and families. Promoting good attendance is a key part of the school's objectives.

Aims

- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality.
- To recognise that good regular attendance and punctuality is an achievement in itself.
- To encourage pupil involvement with attendance and punctuality issues.
- To improve communication with parents in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- To encourage school staff to be involved in taking responsibility for promoting good attendance and punctuality.

ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where the school does not approve absence)

Pupil Registration

The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent.

Reporting absence

If a child is absent, parents should telephone the school on 01782 234890 each day of the absence, stating a reason. Absences will only be authorised by the school when a satisfactory explanation has been given by the parents or carers (e.g. illness). Parents and carers are asked to inform the school on the morning that a child is ill by a telephone call or by a written note. If there is no contact explaining the child's absence by parents or carers, then the school will make contact by telephone.

Authorised Absence

The Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility for authorising absence and will do so when a valid reason is given for a child's absence. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence will be given when a child does not attend school and a valid reason is not given for their absence, or, if the Headteacher refuses to authorise an application of leave in exceptional circumstances.

Medical appointments

Where possible, parents should make medical appointments for their children before or after school, or during the school holidays. If this is not possible and appointments are during the school day, then proof of the appointment should be given to the school to authorise the absence. A signing in/out system is used to record such appointments. Wherever possible, children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

Education Welfare Intervention

At any stage of this process, the services of the Education Welfare Officer may be requested to provide advice and support. This may include late gates, home visits, attendance clinics, referrals to support agencies and penalty notice warnings.

Attendance Monitoring

Active monitoring of attendance and regular communication with parents is an important part of ensuring good attendance. If there are concerns about a pupil's attendance, our Attendance Lead and our Education Welfare Officer, Mrs Turner, will monitor attendance and review intervention options. At Holden Lane Primary School, we have a clear system of 'escalation of intervention' – See Flow Chart (Appendix 1).

Letter 1

A letter to parents informing them that their child's attendance is below 96% and that it will be monitored regularly and the Education Welfare Officer may become involved if there is no improvement. School may consider not authorising any further illness unless medical evidence (GP letter, medical appointment card, label from prescribed medication covering the period of absence) is provided, to cover the period of absence.

Letter 2

If attendance does not show improvement, then letter 2 will be sent to parents inviting them into school for an attendance clinic to discuss the next steps. This meeting will be held with Mrs Dutton, our Education Welfare Officer.

Letter 3

If there is still no improvement in attendance, a penalty notice warning letter may be issued on behalf of the Local Authority. This gives parents the opportunity to improve their child's attendance over 20 school days. If the attendance does not improve during the 20-day monitoring period, the case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Referral to Education Welfare Service

If attendance remains unsatisfactory, the following documentation will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service:

- A referral form

- Copies of letters sent to parents
- A copy of the child's attendance record.
- The Education Welfare Officer may make a home visit or invite parents to an attendance clinic and more formal proceedings may begin.

Rewarding Attendance

Good attendance of all pupils is expected and highly promoted within school. In order to reward and encourage attendance, the school uses a range of reward schemes:

Attendance Assemblies where certificates are given to reward attendance over half a term.

- 100% Attendance
- 99%-96% Good Attendance

Weekly 100% Attendance book voucher draw

Weekly certificates for highest class attendance in the school.

Certificate and medal during Awards Assembly given for 100% attendance over the year.

Family Holidays

The school will not authorise any family holidays within term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays during term time have a significant impact on children's progress and as such are not encouraged.

An amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 removes reference to family holidays to make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. This amendment came into effect on 1 September 2013.

Parents or carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and, in law, are obliged to ask for permission in advance by completing a 'leave in exceptional circumstances' form.

Application forms for 'leave of absence in exceptional circumstances' are available from the school office and must be completed and returned prior to any leave for consideration.

The school reserves the rights to issue a Penalty Notice (fine) following five days of unauthorised leave of absence.

Parents need to be aware that a Penalty Notice Fine may be issued for any unauthorised leave during term time.

Absence/Holidays During Term Time

The Headteacher may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and will require evidence to validate any request. Term time holidays should not be planned or booked as they are likely to be unauthorised and could lead to the issuing of a fine by the Local Authority. Parents wishing to request leave of absence should collect a request form from the office and give to the Headteacher for approval.

Penalty Notices/Fines

Penalty Notices are issued by the local authority and require each parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a penalty, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid the case is automatically summonsed to appear in Court. Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of up to £1000.

Advice

If you require any attendance advice we are here to help and support you. In the first instance speak to your child's class teacher who will be able to signpost to relevant resources or further support from our pastoral team.

What if I want to take my child out of school during term time?

- Taking children on holiday or out of school during term time is against the law.
- We understand that holidays during term time may cost less money, but it is still against the law.
- The school is not allowed to authorise absence during term time, unless there are exceptional reasons.
- If you do not let us know why your child is not in school their absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Taking unauthorised holidays could result in a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

Recording Absence Figures

The school is required to submit details of the level of absence to the Local Authority. We are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance.

PUNCTUALITY MONITORING

The school keeps detailed records of all late arrivals. Registration is at 9.00am. If a pupil arrives after this time, they will receive a late mark 'L' in the register. The registers will close at 9.15am. A child who is late after registration closes will receive an unauthorised absence mark 'U' in the register. If there are concerns about a child's punctuality, the office will record the details and refer them to the Senior Leadership Team who will consider what action to take. This will be either monitoring their punctuality further, investigating reasons for lateness informally with parents or beginning the formal process. If a pupil receives 3 or more late marks during any half term, this will trigger the start of the formal punctuality process.

Punctuality Letter 1

A letter to parents informing them that their child's late arrival at school is unsatisfactory and that it will be closely monitored.

Punctuality Letter 2

If punctuality does not show improvement, a second letter will be sent to parents inviting them into school for a punctuality clinic to discuss the next steps. This meeting will be held with Mrs Turner, our Education Welfare Officer. This meeting will remind them of their original obligations and explain that if it continues to be unsatisfactory, the matter may result in a statutory referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Statutory Referral to Education Welfare Service

If punctuality remains unsatisfactory, the following documentation will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service:

- A referral form
- Copies of the letters sent
- A copy of the child's record of late arrival at school.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

The school will review this policy and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Reviewed: September 2023

To be Reviewed: September 2025

Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart

