Holme Court School Cambridge

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

Holme Court School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, 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, on time. 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.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

2 Aims of policy

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

This policy sets out the School's approach to ensuring thigh levels of attendance and punctuality in order to promote pupil welfare, safeguarding and educational outcomes and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

This policy aims to

- reduce absences

- build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them
- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- be mindful of to be mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental health, physical health or SEN needs and provide them with additional support or accommodations
- ensure appropriate adherence to Government guidance and fulfil statutory duties
- ensure consistent good practice throughout the School

3 Scope of policy

This policy applies to all pupils and staff responsible for attendance, safeguarding and pastoral care.

This policy applies at all times including where pupils or staff are away from theSchool.

This policy applies to core School activities and/or trips within stated school hours.

This policy is designed to address the specific obligations on the School to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4 Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010.

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2026) (**KCSIE**
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024) and The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

5 Publication and availability

This policy is published on the School website.

This policy is available in hard copy on request.

A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the school office during the School day.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

6 Roles and responsibilities

The proprietor, Head, DSL and staff all have defined responsibilities for monitoring and ensuring attendance.

The Proprietor has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Proprietor has allocated the following tasks:

Task	**Allocated to**	**When / frequency of review**
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Head	As required
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments, any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness.	Head of Centre	As required
Formal review	SLT	As required, at least once every 2 years

Parental responsibilities

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives the education that they are entitled to.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends the 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.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, however, we understand that there are exceptional circumstances when a parent may need to request a leave of absence such as a special event or family emergency. In this instance, parents should contact the Head directly (via email) with their request.

7 Attendance expectations

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. The government has set a target of 96% attendance for all pupils (which is considered good attendance). This rate allows for periods of illness or particular circumstances when absence from school is unavoidable. If attendance drops to 90% or lower the government classify the child as having persistent absence (PA) and if attendance is 50% or less the child is classified as severely absence (SA). We want your child to attend school regularly as this supports their learning.

8 Registration procedures

Form Tutors have responsibility for recording and monitoring the attendance of their respective Form (Year Groups).

Form Tutors will take their morning registers when the School day officially starts at 8.45am

Afternoon registration is taken by the teacher responsible for the class that afternoon.

Pupils arriving after 8.45am will need to enter the School via the main reception where they will registered by the Administrator.

8 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

An unauthorised absence classification is given to a child away from school without permission; in this instance the parent or guardian has not provided a legitimate reason for absence.

The DfE does not consider a holiday to be an exceptional circumstance. However, the Head may be allowed some discretion.

Pupils may attend approved offsite extracurricular or sporting activities.

9 Reporting absence

In the case of illness (or lateness), on the first day of absence, parents should adhere to school guidance on absence due to illness and contact the Form Tutor directly via email) by 8am stating the reason for absence.

Parents should contact the Form Tutor or School Administrator on every further day of absence before 8.30am.

For medical appointments, the School should be notified no less than 1 day in advance of the appointment.

A doctor's note may be requested after a period of 7 days of continual absence (including weekends and bank holidays).

10 First-day response

It is parents' responsibility to contact the school regarding absence.

Where no notification of absence has been given, the School Administrator will contact parents by 9.30am. as a safeguarding priority.

If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

11 Monitoring and intervention

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential.

The Head if Centre is the designated Schools Champion (Attendance Officer).

The School Champion will monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends in conjunction with the School Administrator Together, they will work with SLT to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.

The School Champion will conduct thorough analysis of termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends and benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement as well as devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance.

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 90% / causing concern
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate.

12 Safeguarding and escalation

Attendance concerns may trigger safeguarding procedures.

Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with the safeguarding policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

In the UK schools must hold a minimum of two emergency contacts for every pupil. However, Department for Education (DfE) safeguarding guidance recommends holding three contacts wherever possible. Where reasonably possible the School will adhere to DfE guidance.

13 Children missing from education

The School shall inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non- standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). This will assist the local authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing or persistently absent from education; and
- follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

The School shall inform the local authority of any pupil who:

- fails to attend School regularly; or
- has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).
- has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the School has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Note: only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

When a parent indicates that they wish to educate their child at home in which case the school, local authority and other key professionals will work together. This is especially important if the child has special educational needs or disabilities or has a social worker. The School will inform the local authority of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll, including any child enrolled in Elective Home Education.

14 Lateness

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Holme Court School are:

Gates open: 8.30am

Early morning interventions :8.30-8.45am

Am registration starts: 8.45am

Am registration closes: 9.15am

Pm registration begins 1.20pm

Pm registration ends 1.50pm

End of the school day: 3.30pm

Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

While lateness is generally unacceptable, we are aware that the majority of pupils travel long distances each day to get to school. This coupled with the traffic in and around Cambridge means that ensuring that pupils arrive in time for 8.30am is not always easy. We are also very aware that many pupils feel anxious about being late for the start of the day. While we do not condone lateness, staff will not address any concerns directly with pupils.

15 Managing lateness

At Holme Court School the school day begins at 8.30am when pupils enter the school via the back gate.

This gate remains open until 8.45am when registers are taken.

Pupils arriving after 8.45am are required to come into school via the front door.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.

If pupils are persistently late, or tardiness is caused by difficulties relating to taxis, the School will inform parents and request that they contact the taxi company to raise this as a concern.

If difficulties continue the School will contact the relevant local authority in order to work with them in order to resolve this situation.

16 Version control

Date of adoption of policy	September 2020
Date of last review of this policy	September 2026
Date of next review of this policy	September 2028
Policy owner (School)	Head