



HOLMLEIGH ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed: June 2023

Next review: June 2024

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Attendance Policy

Holmleigh Primary School aims to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve their best. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and is on time and this Attendance Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

As a school, we are aware of the government's Prevent agenda as well as the advice around preventing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). We monitor attendance closely with these issues in mind. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Call and text all parents when children are absent to ensure we record reasons for absence;
- Reward 100% attendance for pupils with certificates and annual prizes;

- Work alongside the School and Hackney Education's Attendance Service in an attempt to minimise absences;
- Call Children's Social Care Services if a child is absent and we cannot contact the family or emergency contact after repeated attempts.

The Law Relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs/he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under 18.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absenteeism will be looked at in the light of a child's overall attendance record.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and /or do not meet the legal requirement (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Hackney Education using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, seeing or collecting someone from the airport, weddings, birthdays or any other celebrations early;
- looking after other children;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their

absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

From 1st September 2015 the Government's persistent absence threshold is 10% (reduced from 15%). A child with attendance below 90% is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee', regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. Should a child's attendance percentage fall to below 90%, a letter will be sent home to alert them. If there is no improvement in the subsequent weeks from this letter being sent, the parents will be requested to have a meeting with the School Attendance Team. If a parent/carer fails to attend a meeting the case may be referred to Hackney Education Attendance Service and a letter of parental responsibility may be issued by the school with support from the Local Authority. Any pupil who has reached the Persistent Absentee mark or who is at risk of doing so will be carefully monitored by both the school and the Education Attendance Service. Where attendance has fallen to 90% and below a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) can request that medical proof is provided so that the absence can be authorised. Parents will meet with the assigned SLT member beforehand to discuss this. Failure to provide medical proof will result in the absence being unauthorised. Minor ailments such as a slight cold should not lead to a failure to attend school. If significant improvements are not made within the agreed period, parents/carers will be issued with a Notice of Parental Responsibility, after which the child's attendance will be closely monitored and if not improved will be followed by a School Attendance Panel meeting, which may result in the case proceeding to court. Please make reference to the section on Children Missing from Education in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent because they are ill you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. We would like you to do this by calling the school or by email to **admin@holmleigh.hackney.sch.uk**.
- Provide medical evidence or demonstrate proactivity in trying to obtain this. If your child is absent because they have a medical appointment, you must:
 - Inform the reception staff in advance, via phone or email **admin@holmleigh.hackney.sch.uk** so that it can be noted in the register.
 - Where possible, provide proof of the appointment in advance.

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day.
- Due to safeguarding protocol, we may choose to come to the child's home.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by

making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the school always hold 3 contact numbers.

The School Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school will seek advice from the School Attendance Officer from Hackney Education. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, this Officer can advise the use of sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Hackney Education.

Arrival at the school

Children and parents can arrive at school from 8:50am and wait outside the school gates until they are opened at 8.55am. Only children attending clubs will be allowed on the school site before this time.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher receiving vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can affect the wellbeing and mental health of the child and can also encourage absence. All pupils need to be at school on time.

If a child arrives late they will receive a late mark. Arrivals after these times should be via the reception where the child must be signed in on the InVentry screen. An explanation should be given for lateness, preferably by the parent/carer.

Good punctuality is essential in order for a child to achieve high attainment and maintaining/improving behaviour.

The school will:

- Keep accurate records of lateness.
- After 10 days recorded late arrival to school, the school's Attendance Officer will send a letter home regarding your child's persistent lateness, including a report showing those days with a late code.
- Stress how much we care about children being punctual for school each day and how much their class is disrupted due to another child being late.

Continued Poor Punctuality:

- School Attendance Officer to be informed of children whose lateness is causing concern.
- Parents and guardians to be invited into school to discuss the issue.
- Where necessary the School Attendance Team may issue a Notification of Parental Responsibility.

Registration Requirements

School registers are legal documents and are required to be taken twice a day. The school bell is rung at 9:00am to signal to children that they need to start lining up in the playground. At 9:00am, teachers bring the children in, or supervise them in the morning workout. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by 9:05am. At 9.10am, the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the DfE guidance, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site. We record the number of minutes absent on a regular basis and when the total of minutes late reaches a certain point then further action is taken. The parent of a child who is persistently absent or persistently late after the registers have closed can be prosecuted under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and the register would act as the main source of evidence in court. If your child has a persistent late record you may be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

If the school has to evacuate the building, the attendance register enables staff to account for the children present that day.

Collecting children from school

On most occasions, children will be collected by their parent or another known adult such as a childminder or close relative. Children should be collected punctually by this responsible adult. It is not acceptable for a younger child to be collected by an older pupil at our school. A relative or older sibling of secondary school age may collect a child on a regular basis if the parent has given written permission to the school. We recognise that the parent or other known adult cannot always collect the child from school. In such instances, permission must be given by the parent first, if not in writing then through introduction to the class teacher and other responsible adults. We will not allow children to be collected by an adult when such permission has not been given.

Children at our school are collected at different times depending on whether or not they attend clubs. The details are given below.

1) If the child is not in a club then they should be collected at 3:30pm promptly. Children who have not been collected promptly will be taken to the reception area and their late collection will be kept on record. Persistent late collection is deemed to be neglect and parents may be referred to Children's Social Care Services.

2) If the child is in a club that ends before 6pm, they should be collected at the specified time. If the child is not collected at that time then they will wait in the reception area and their late collection will be kept on record. Persistent late collection is deemed to be neglect and parents may be referred to Children's Social Care Services.

3) If a child attends Holmleigh Afterschool Care Club, they should be collected by 6pm. Again, when a child is collected late, they wait in the reception area. In this case a charging policy applies. Persistent late collection is deemed to be neglect and parents may be referred to Children's Social Care Services.

Please make reference to the section on Children Missing from Education in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. We follow the guidance from the Department for Education and we do not grant permission for holidays during term time. Any holidays taken during term time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

We encourage parents to check the school's website to see details of the school term dates so they can organise their holidays around these.

Special Leave

In exceptional circumstances, children can be granted permission to take special leave from school. Permission is given at the discretion of the Headteacher. Leave for bereavement of a close family member will always be considered. A request for special leave must be made in writing. **You can collect a form from reception to make your request or download it from the school website.**

EXPECTATION OF SCHOOL'S ROLE IN RESPECT OF ATTENDANCE

Schools should have their own plan for improving attendance. This should be a whole school approach where there is a designated senior leader with all responsibilities clearly defined (Hackney Education – School Attendance Position Statement). Holmleigh Primary School follows this guidance with the following roles and procedures.

Regularity/d ate	Schools should	Who?
Annually (Autumn Term)	Ensure that an up to date Attendance Policy is in place. Schools should produce a policy including early intervention thresholds with a clear escalation process when a trigger point is reached.	Attendance Officer Full Governing Board
Annually	Appoint an Attendance Officer to act as overall leader and manager dealing with all attendance issues including the analysis of data and to carry out daily, random post registration truancy checks. Identify resources, including human resources to administer and manage the process of managing attendance. Ensure adequate time is allowed to meet the roles in the policy Ensure administrative and support staff have clear responsibilities and procedures to follow in order to promote and manage attendance. Ensure they have the time and the permission to follow procedures through.	Headteacher
Annually	Access staff training on attendance issues.	All attendance team
Annually	Ensure that systems to track and challenge sporadic absence are thorough, and provide "catch up" opportunities for work missed during absence.	Attendance Officer
Termly	Through newsletters ensure that parents are aware of the importance of regular attendance and understand their role and responsibilities in supporting school attendance. Ensure parents/carers are aware of the guidance regarding holidays in term time and of the impact this can have on their child's overall achievement.	Headteacher
Termly	Ensure attendance practices are understood by all school staff and that attendance practice is followed consistently.	Attendance Officer
Half Termly	Agree a sampling period, usually the previous half-term's attendance for each child. On this basis, categorise each child in the school according to the following threshold. For pupils whose attendance still continues to deteriorate, multidisciplinary discussion needs to take place with regard to child's needs, barriers to education, work already undertaken and whether there are other appropriate providers that can be considered to enable the child to access appropriate education.	Attendance Officer
Termly	Ensure that attendance is a fixed agenda item at the school's Pupil Progress Monitoring meetings.	Headteacher Attendance Officer
Weekly	Ensure that routine letters are sent out at the earliest opportunity following absence. These reflect the importance of attendance.	Attendance Officer
Half Termly	Provide individual attendance targets for pupils; All persistently absent pupils should have an Individual	Attendance Officer

	Attendance Plan. Arrange meetings with parents/carers to address attendance issues.	WAMHS Lead SENDCo
Weekly	Provide incentives for good attendance, e.g. league tables for individual forms, attendance competitions. Ensure regular emphasis on the connection between attendance and attainment, e.g. in assemblies.	Headteacher SLT
Daily	Provide an accurate and consistent registration system.	Admin team
Daily	Make first day phone contact to all parents/carers whose child is absent without notification.	Senior Admin Officer Admin Officer
School roll	Log pupils' movement in and out of school. Ensure that all relevant information re: destinations for pupils who are de-registered are ascertained from parents / carers prior to de-registration, and shared with Hackney Education in order to ensure that young people have continuous access to educational provision.	Admin team Safeguarding Lead