



Attendance Policy

Summer 2022

To be reviewed Summer 2024

Holtsmere End Junior School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Aim:

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Whole School Target setting

- This school will set an annual target in accordance with current regulations. The annual target set is a percentage of the total possible sessions in the school year. This is currently set at 96%. This allows for 8 days absence due to normal childhood ailments and emergency medical appointments.
- The school places a great deal of importance on good attendance and punctuality and acknowledges this appropriately.
- The whole school works towards reaching targets set and strives for continuous improvement.

School Responsibilities & Expectations

- School will provide a safe learning environment which is built on trusting relationships with all stakeholders.
- School will support children with medical conditions, mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND).
- School will have clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence – pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support.
- School will ensure records of attendance are maintained accurately and consistently on a daily basis in accordance with government legislation and guidance.
- School will monitor and analyse data regularly and keep the Governing Body informed through reporting.
- School will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.

- School will ensure that the attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently.
- Schools can no longer grant leave of absence, except if the Headteacher is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances, for short periods (see section 'Leave of Absence').
- Only the Headteacher can authorise absence.
- The school will provide attendance details on the child's annual report.

The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.

- School will forward the deletion from roll form within 5 days of removing a child from roll, having made all of the reasonable checks to locate the child. Should the school have concerns, they will alert the AIO officer immediately. The AIO must be informed once a child is absent for two weeks by completing and sending them the 10-day absence from school form (Child Missing in Education).
- Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Parent Responsibilities and Expectations

- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.
- Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.
- Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers must inform the school on the 1st day of absence by 09:15am and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain daily contact with the school until child returns to school unless otherwise advised that it is not necessary due to specific/long term illness. In these circumstances, the parent/carer will still be asked to keep school informed but on a less regular basis.
- Parents/carers are expected to inform relatives and friends of the school attendance policy so that no holidays are to be arranged during term time as the absences will be unauthorised in most circumstances

If a Child is Absent

The school will:

- Record notification thereof.
- If notification is not received, parents and carers receive a text by 9.30am on the first day of absence and a record of this is logged on Arbor. If no response is then received, parents and carers are rung.
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence.
- Keep written notification from parents/carers on file.
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Write/telephone to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current 'Department for Education' guidelines.

Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters

- Mrs McGuigan (Headteacher)
- Mrs Sexton (Learning Mentor)
- Mrs Payne (School secretary)
- All class teachers
- Governing Body

Supporting Attendance Matters

- Attendance Improvement Officer

Records

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately.
- When attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be contacted by letter. If it continues to fall without a suitable explanation then parents/carers may be invited to a meeting and the pupil will be made known to the AIO.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent Absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer. Please also refer to the Fixed Penalty Notice information.

Lateness

- Registers are taken at 8:45am. Any child arriving after 09:00 will be recorded as late.
- Afternoon sessions begin at 1:25pm when the register is taken again.
- It is important that children are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.
- Parents/carers are expected to escort their child into school and report the reason for lateness with the school office.

Absence due to Illness

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. Absences are authorised by the Headteacher only. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register
- The school operates a '1st day response' policy. This means that if we have not been notified by 9:15am to tell us why a child is not coming to school that day we will contact his/her parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not enough.
- Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time of absence through illness by a doctor they are expected to contact the school each day to let us know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis by our Attendance Improvement Officer to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc. They may ask to see parents/carers if attendance is not satisfactory.
- If a child is persistently absent due to illness the absence will be communicated to the Headteacher. At this point medical evidence may be requested and a referral to the school nurse may be considered.

Absence due to Medical Appointments

- Medical appointments should be made out of school time as much as possible.
- If a medical appointment is known in advance parents and carers must notify the school in writing or verbally. If an emergency appointment is made, please phone the school before 9am.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The parent must record the child's absence in the sign in/out book located in the school reception area and then record them back in if they return to school on the same day.
- Evidence of medical appointments need to be submitted to school

Leave of Absence

- Leave of absence will not be given, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher. There is no entitlement, in law, to time off in school time to go on holiday etc agreed by the Headteacher.
- Requests for leave of absence: permission may only be given in exceptional circumstances and must be made at least 2 weeks in advance by completing and returning an absence request form. This will be given to the Headteacher for approval. We advise that no travel arrangements should be made until permission has been given.
- Under no circumstances will permission be given for a leave of absence in the 2 weeks before or during Key Stage 2 SATs in May.
- Children will not be given work to do during a holiday.
- Parents and carers are expected to contact the school if they cannot get back from a leave of absence on time and give a reason for the delay. This may result in removal from school.
- If permission is refused for leave of absence, a letter will be sent giving the reasons and the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from an extended family leave of absence on the agreed date, after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s) or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate the pupil.

The school operates the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy. Please refer to this information.

Monitoring Attendance

- Registers will be taken at 8:45 each morning. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as being late up until 9.00am. Any child arriving after 9.00am, without a suitable reason, will be marked with a U (Unauthorised Session).
- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted to request an improvement in punctuality and may be asked to attend a meeting with school.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.
- For targeted children, the school will monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- Half termly, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 90% attendance will be notified.
- For pupils with less than 90% attendance a referral will be discussed to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Fixed Penalty Notices

- A child is given an unauthorised mark if they fail to give a satisfactory explanation as to why they were absent from school.
 - If a child's attendance record reveals 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences then they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty warning letter. This will be counted from both current and previous term.
 - If this continues and a child's attendance record reveals 15 sessions (7½ days) for unauthorised absences then they may receive a Fixed Penalty Breach letter.
 - If this still continues following the Fixed Penalty Breach letter then the school can apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice fine and this could result in the parents/carers either being fined or possibly prosecuted. Each parent must pay £60 for each child if they pay within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days the LA will consider prosecution.
 - If a child is persistently absent due to illness the absence maybe unauthorised by the Headteacher. At this point medical evidence may be requested.
 - If a child has an unknown leave of absence in excess of 20 sessions the school will make an application to the LA for a FPN without warning.
- Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) formally Education Welfare Officer
- The AIO is employed by Hertfordshire Local Authority department for Children Services (CS).

- An AIO is allocated to every school to monitor attendance and support improvement where necessary.
- The AIO monitors the school's attendance registers and records every term.
- The AIO aims to work collaboratively with the school and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance.
- The AIO has a statutory responsibility and can initiate legal action such as Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court if a parent fails to ensure their child attends school without a legitimate reason.
- Parents/carers may also contact the AIO for impartial advice or information on 0300 123 4043

Exceptional Circumstances

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.
- Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate, which should be agreed with parents.
- When a child has an illness that requires absence from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If a pupil is absent due to a medical diagnosis that is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, and medical evidence is given, then the school will refer to the Education Support Team for Medical Absence to request support for the child with additional tuition and to support a reintegration into school.

Monitoring & Review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine, closely, the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary