



Hollymount School Attendance Policy

Issue Date	Summer Term 2019	Review Date:	Summer 2021
------------	------------------	--------------	-------------



Hollymount Primary School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019

Hollymount Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, Hollymount believes a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and the link this has to achievement and attainment.

Hollymount Primary School promotes early intervention and prevention of poor attendance. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

School Procedures

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Registration is carried out electronically using SIMS (School Information Management System) and backed-up daily.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The amended entry
- The reason for the absence
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.



Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9am. The register for the second session will be taken after lunch playtime.

Promoting/Improving Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The weekly newsletter may be used to promote attendance and other strategies may be used, such as announcing weekly attendance figures or displaying attendance figures, if the school believes this to be necessary.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Termly attendance award for the class with highest attendance
- Annual attendance award for the class with highest attendance
- Annual attendance award for pupils with 99%+ attendance

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. Progress towards these targets will be analysed regularly by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and strategies adopted in line with this policy will be implemented to achieve or exceed the target. It is the responsibility of the parents, staff and pupils at Hollymount Primary School to ensure good attendance and achievement of targets.

Reporting To Parents

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance annually in the written end-of-year report.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9.00am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late. If they arrive after 9.30, without an acceptable reason they will be marked as having an unauthorized absence. Pupils who arrive late following an early morning appointment should bring evidence of this, e.g. an appointment card.

Unplanned Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as 'no reason given' and a phone call made to the parents, followed by a letter if a reason is still not obtained. On the first day of absence parents should telephone the school office or use the e-mail box: pupilabsences@hollymount.merton.sch.uk to inform them why their child is unable to attend, giving a specific reason, and how long they are expected to be absent. The school is then able to mark the register appropriately as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. The decision to



authorise or unauthorise absence rests with the school according to the agreed criteria as outlines in this policy.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should notify the school office and class teacher in advance if their child has a medical or dental appointment.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Leave of absence

The Governors of Hollymount Primary School believe that leave of absence should be avoided if at all possible as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education, overall achievement and wellbeing. Only in exceptional circumstances, where sufficient evidence is provided to substantiate the circumstances, will any absence from school be authorised.

The school policy is as follows:

- 1) Parents must request leave of absence in writing to the school office as far in advance as possible. If the parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 2) The request must include the reason why it is necessary to take such absence during term time, including exceptional circumstances and relevant evidence such as a medical certificate. For an emergency trip, evidence of last minute booking of flights must be provided.

On receipt of an application for leave in writing together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. A letter outlining the decision of the school (whether absence is authorised or unauthorised) will be sent within 7 days. Holidays during term time will, in most cases, be unauthorised.



Penalty Notices

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Authorised Leave Due To Religious Observance

Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong the absence will be authorised. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 days in a term will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent Absence

Registers are monitored regularly by the head, admin officer and Education Welfare Officer to identify any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem, depending on severity, using strategies such as:

- Headteacher talking to parent/child
- A letter from the Headteacher
- A meeting with the Headteacher
- A referral to the Education Welfare Officer

Where attendance falls below 90%, the school may request medical evidence (and provide parents with guidance on acceptable examples of medical evidence) for all future illness absences. The school will also refer the child to the School Nurse or the Specialist nurse in the Education Welfare Service if there is a high level of absence for medical reasons. If medical evidence as requested is not provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A high level of unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer who will issue a Penalty Notice warning. A monitoring period will then follow, and if attendance does not improve within the monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued which carries a fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.



For pupils with appropriately evidenced illness, the school will follow appropriate protocols to offer support.

Absence notes

The school will retain notes from parents explaining absence as per current protocol/legislation.

A Welcome Back

It is important that, where appropriate, on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include a discussion about the best way for the child to catch up on missed work where appropriate and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues penalty notices, where necessary.

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue penalty notices

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.



Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances



I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school



#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
---	------------------------	---