



Holywell Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Written by: Claire Macdonald

(adapted from guidance from Cambridge County Council)

Date: April 2019

Review date: April 2020

Expanding our Horizons with Contagious Enthusiasm

Introduction

We are proud of our excellent levels of attendance and actively encourage punctuality and regular attendance so that all children are able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The law expects children to be in school and on time every day. There is no right to take your child out of school and the expectation is that children will be in school every day unless they are too ill to attend or you have permission from the school not to attend.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's attainment in school, relationships with other children, and their ability to form lasting friendships and their confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Rights and Responsibilities

Achieving regular attendance and punctuality is a partnership between home and school. The school will monitor attendance for all children and will work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their son or daughter is punctual and attends school every day of the academic calendar (please see our website for academic dates - http://www.holywell.cambs.sch.uk/website/term_dates/408099).

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that 'parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance to school or otherwise'. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

In line with 2018 DfE statutory guidance on attendance, holidays in term time will not be authorised. Permission should be sought from the Head teacher if you feel that you have to take your child out of school during term time. This should be done in advance and only in 'exceptional circumstances'. This is at the Head teacher's discretion.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in everyday case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before any decisions are made.

Responsibility of Parents / Carers:

Throughout this policy the term 'parents' represents one parent, both parents, and/or carer(s) with whom the child resides.

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure their child/children attend school every day that they are healthy and able to do so, as they have a legal obligation to ensure their child receives a full time education.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child is on time for school for the start of registration (8.55am and 1.15pm).
If a child is late his/her parent should report directly to the office where they are asked to register their child and record the reason for the late arrival on the Inventory signing in system.
- There will be times when your son or daughter cannot attend school most obviously, when they are ill. Parents have a responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence. This is to be done initially by telephone. This absence will be authorised by the school as long as the reasons are valid and you are able to provide evidence if requested.

Parents are expected to avoid booking family holidays during term-time. If you intend to take your child out during school time please request a leave of absence at least two weeks in advance. (Forms can be obtained from the school office and downloaded from the school website - <http://www.holywell.cambs.sch.uk/website/attendance/408105>). Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school and leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. In making this decision, a number of factors will be considered relevant to the child at question.

See also appendix 7 - Suspected Holiday Letter.

Parents should make all medical / dental appointments, whenever possible, outside of school hours.

We understand that some families may also need to travel and take children out of school for work or business. This must be discussed with the school prior to the event, and a start date and return date must be agreed.

Responsibility of the School:

The school has a responsibility to keep registers up to date. Every half-day absence* has to be classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

Please see below for those absences classified as authorised and unauthorised.

*Each am and pm registration count as one session each, or a whole day absent will reflect two absent sessions.

- The school will keep parents up to date on their child's attendance, and will issue a letter to initiate the 'staged approach' to improving attendance where a child's attendance causes concern. Parents should expect this when their child's attendance falls below 93% (see appendix 1-6).
- In some cases the school may also issue a Suspected Holiday letter (appendix 7)

Our 'staged' approach to improving attendance

Stage 1 – Parents will receive either Pre-Letter 1 or Letter 1 (appendix 2 & 3) to notify parents the school are concerned by their child's attendance.

Stage 2 – Monitoring of attendance will begin. If no satisfactory improvement is made, Letter 2 (appendix 4) will be issued. Letter 2 will inform the parents of a meeting which they are required to attend, in which the 'Attendance Improvement Meeting' Record will be completed and a set-monitoring period set up. This period will be 6 weeks.

Stage 3 – If this agreement is not effective and attendance does not improve, Letter 3 (Penalty Notice) will be sent (appendix 5).

Holywell C of E Primary School takes Persistent Absence seriously. Where a child has *eight or more* unauthorised absences in an eight week period, Parents and Carers put themselves in the position of being issued with a Penalty Notice. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the learning pupils miss when they are absent from school will never be made up. These pupils will be at a considerable disadvantage. There is also clear evidence of a direct link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

Absences that are acceptable to authorise include:

If a student is ill

Parents/carers must inform us on the first day of absence by telephone (01480 462007) and every day thereafter if a pupil is still unable to attend.

If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last episode of sickness. This in line with NHS guidelines to reduce the risk of infection

to other children and adults in the school.

If illness extends for more than 5 days, parents may then be asked for medical evidence.

If a student has a medical/dental appointments

Please arrange appointments during holidays or out of school hours. Understandably, there may be times when this is not possible, please inform our office staff in advance of the appointment and provide appointment letters or slips as supporting evidence. This absence cannot be authorised without this evidence.

If there is a close family bereavement:

Please let us know as soon as possible if there is a family bereavement. We want to make sure that we treat students sensitively and ensure they are appropriately supported if/when they are experiencing difficulties.

If they belong to a religious body which sets aside days for religious observance

Please let us know in advance if this is the case and which days for your son/ daughter will be involved.

Unauthorised Absence

Any absence which has not been authorised is recorded as unauthorised. The school has a duty of care to follow up on unauthorised absence and therefore will contact parents/carers to investigate the cause.

- You will be contacted by phone call within one day of the start of the absence, if there has been no communication from you.
- After 3 days of absence without adequate explanation, or earlier in the case of a persistent absentee (attendance below 90%), the reasons behind the absence will be investigated by school and potentially referred to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) or relevant local authority.
- Parents of persistently absent students will be alerted through our staged approach letters and as a condition of this will be expected to attend a meeting to resolve problems of attendance and agree a support agreement (appendix 7).
- Legal action may be taken if persistent problems cannot be resolved.

Any unauthorised leave of absence over a certain period could result in a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child being issued by the local authority. This money does not come to school. When a referral is made, the referral goes to a legal panel to decide whether a penalty notice should be issued.

Arrival and Registration

Classrooms are open from when the gate opens at 8:40am for a prompt 9:00am start.

The register is taken twice a day and each day is comprised of two sessions (am registration and pm registration).

Arrival after 9:05am will be marked as Late (L) on the register, and the child will have to sign in at the office.

Arrival after 9:30am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark, which is considered as an unauthorised absence for the morning session as registers have closed.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance / Punctuality:

These include:

- Regularly communicating with parents/carers on attendance matters through the newsletter, via special media, on the website and through individual letters.
- Provision of clear information on the school website.
- Sending LA leaflets to all new parents/carers.

- Reporting termly to the Governing Body via the Head's Report.
- Reinforcing the importance and value of regular attendance to children.
- Reintegrating pupils who have been absent for any extended periods of time through a structured and tailored programme.
- Raising awareness of this attendance policy.
- Ensuring regular communication via email (if necessary) reiterates the importance of attendance.
- Publishing the Attendance Policy on the school website.
- Using our staged approach.

Review: April 2020

See below for appendix

Appendix 1 - Authorised absence letter

Appendix 2 – Pre-Letter 1

Appendix 3 - Letter 1

Appendix 4 - Letter 2

Appendix 5 - Letter 3

Appendix 6 – Attendance Improvement meeting

Appendix 7 - Suspected holiday letter

Appendix 1

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I would like to thank you for following school procedure regarding Attendance. We understand that (Forename) has had authorised absence recently and that you contacted school every day to keep us informed.

We would just like to let you know that this has affected (Forename's) attendance which is currently at (%).

As you know, if it is medical please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

School share a vital part in ensuring that children who are absent from school because of medical needs maintain their education.

If your child is absent from school for over 10 days it may be necessary for school to seek support for your child.

Please ensure that the school is fully aware of any medical issues that may affect your child's attendance.

Regular attendance is important to allow your child to access their learning.

Please continue to work with us. You are more than welcome to contact school to discuss any queries or concerned you may have.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

Appendix 2

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is currently at (%). At Holywell C of E Primary School, we expect each child to be reaching 95% attendance.

We do recognise some of, or all of, these absences may have been authorised by the school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning. We would therefore encourage you to support (Forename) in this.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on (Forename) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

Appendix 3

(Date)

LETTER ONE

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to (%). At Holywell C of E Primary School, we expect each child to be reaching 95% attendance. As a result, we are becoming concerned that (Forename) is missing a significant part of their learning.

I have enclosed a copy of (Forename's) attendance record which shows a breakdown of attendance. We do recognise some of, or all of, these absences may have been authorised by the school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

We will continue to monitor (Forename's) attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement. We would encourage you to support (Forename) in this.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on (Forename) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

Appendix 4

(Date)

LETTER TWO

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

I am writing to advise you that (Forename's) school attendance is still causing concern as it remains lower than our expected 95%, at only (%).

We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting (Forename's) learning and we need to meet with you urgently.

You are required to attend a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss this matter further at the date and time detailed below.

Date:

Time:

Should (Forename's) attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Medical evidence is now required for any future absences to be authorised with immediate effect.

We look forward to meeting you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support our children in their learning. Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

Appendix 5

(Date)

LETTER THREE – PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

I am writing to advise you that over the monitoring period set out in our meeting on (Date & Time), (Forename's) school attendance has not met the agreed upon terms and Holywell C of E Primary School's expectations for attendance.

We are very worried that continued poor attendance is now significantly affecting (Forename's) learning.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if (Forename's) attendance fails to improve during the next 3 weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

If you feel further contact or a meeting with the Attendance Team would be beneficial, please contact the school to arrange this.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team

Appendix 6

Date of scheduled meeting	Tick if attended



Education Performance and Inclusion

Education Act 1996 and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

Attendance Improvement Meeting

Name of School: HOLYWELL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:	Where AIM is held :	

Present:	
Current Attendance % sessions absence authorised sessions absence unauthorised	
Background information provided by school	
Reasons for absence given by parent/carer, student/ pupil (Points of Discussion: Medical, Bullying, Transport Issues, Home Issues, School Issues, Holidays)	
Please tick and date any of the following that have been previously offered/completed:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with teacher or Attendance Team to discuss attendance concerns, e.g. telephone call, e-mails, letters, meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced timetable	Date
Was an EHA offered?	
Any other relevant intervention offered (please detail):	
Plan to Improve Attendance	
This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.	

Pupil agrees to:	
Parent(s)/Carers(s) agrees to:	
School agrees to:	
Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking	

Agreed Attendance target for the next 6 school weeks 95% with no unauthorised absence

Review Date

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being taken.

As Parent /Carer of I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me.

Signed:

Parent Parent

Date:

Pupil School Other

Date:

For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend

Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s):

(This should be within one day of plan being drawn up)

Appendix 7

(Date)

(Name and Address of Parent)

Dear (Parent's Name)

RE: (Name of Pupil) DOB:

I am writing about (Forename's) absence from school from (Date) to (Date).

From information received from other sources we believe that this was due to a family holiday. This means that unfortunately you have not followed school procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for this absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to a family holiday and it was due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within this 7 day period, (Forename's) absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised family holiday.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 2996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being taken.

Thank you for supporting outstanding attendance at Holywell C of E Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

The Attendance Team