HOLLY GROVE PRIMARY ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Holly Grove Primary Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that regular attendance at school is essential if children are to achieve their full educational potential, develop positive relationships, and gain the skills needed for lifelong learning.

We recognise that attendance is everyone's responsibility and that strong partnerships between pupils, parents, school staff, governors, the Local Authority and external agencies are key to securing good attendance.

The school is committed to developing and maintaining a culture where attendance and punctuality are valued and where barriers to attendance are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Holly Grove Primary Academy follows the Department for Education's "Support First" approach, recognising that absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances and that understanding and removing barriers to attendance is the most effective way of improving outcomes for children.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE July 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Staffordshire County Council Attendance Guidance
- Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices

Aims

The school aims to:

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all pupils access their full entitlement to education.
- Foster a whole-school culture where attendance is valued.
- Identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Work in partnership with parents and external agencies.
- Remove barriers preventing regular attendance.
- Reduce persistent and severe absence.
- Meet all statutory duties relating to attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Promote the importance of good attendance.
- Monitor school attendance data regularly.
- Ensure leaders fulfil statutory attendance duties.
- Challenge and support leaders where attendance requires improvement.
- Review the effectiveness of attendance strategies.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Promote a culture of excellent attendance.
- Authorise leave of absence requests where exceptional circumstances apply.
- Work with Staffordshire County Council and external agencies.
- Monitor attendance data and ensure appropriate interventions are implemented.

Attendance Lead

The school's Attendance Lead is: **Mrs S.Barnes**

The Attendance Team consists of:

- Mrs Barnes (Attendance Lead)
- Mrs Dovey (Pastoral Support)
- Mrs Homer (Administration Team)
- Mrs Spencer (Pupil Premium Champion)

The Attendance Team will:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality.
- Analyse attendance data regularly.
- Coordinate support and intervention.
- Meet with families where concerns arise.
- Liaise with Staffordshire County Council and external agencies.
- Report attendance trends to senior leaders and governors.

Class Teachers

Class teachers will:

- Promote good attendance.
- Complete attendance registers accurately.
- Raise attendance concerns promptly.
- Support pupils and families to improve attendance.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day unless genuinely unable to do so.
- Ensure punctual arrival at school.
- Notify the school of absence each day by 8.40am.
- Work collaboratively with the school.
- Attend meetings where attendance concerns arise.
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive on time.
- Engage positively with support provided.
- Speak to a trusted adult if anything is affecting their attendance.

Promoting Good Attendance

Holly Grove Primary Academy aims to create a culture where pupils enjoy coming to school and understand the importance of regular attendance.

Strategies used to promote attendance include:

- Whole-school assemblies.
- Weekly attendance awards.
- Weekly "No Lates" awards.
- Termly attendance awards.
- Celebration in newsletters.
- Positive communication with families.
- Attendance improvement letters.
- Attendance support meetings.
- Pastoral support and intervention.

The school follows the DfE attendance framework:

1. Expect

Clear attendance expectations are communicated to pupils and families.

2. Monitor

Attendance is monitored daily and reviewed regularly.

3. Listen and Understand
The school seeks to identify barriers to attendance through discussion with pupils and families.

4. Facilitate Support
Support and intervention are provided to address identified barriers.

5. Formalise Support
Where concerns continue, attendance plans and multi-agency support may be implemented.

6. Enforce
Legal interventions may be considered only where support has been unsuccessful or inappropriate.

School Procedures

Registration

School gates open at **8.40am**.
School starts at **8.50am**.
Registers are taken at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.
All registers are completed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Late Arrival

Children arriving after 8.50am must enter through the main school entrance and report to the school office.
Parents/carers will be asked to provide a reason for lateness, which will be recorded.
Attendance codes will be applied as follows:

- Arrival after 8.50am and before 9.15am: **L Code (Late)**
- Arrival after 9.15am: **U Code (Late after register closes)**

Persistent lateness will be monitored and parents may be invited to attend attendance meetings.

Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must inform the school of any absence before **8.40am on each day of absence**.
Absence can be reported by:

Telephone: 01543 278620

Online Absence Form: https://www.hollygroveschool.co.uk/lateabsence-procedures/

Email: office@hollygrove.staffs.sch.uk

Class Dojo must not be used to report absence.
Where no explanation for absence is received, the school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.
All unexplained absences will be investigated.

Medical Appointments

Parents should endeavour to arrange appointments outside school hours whenever possible.
Where appointments are unavoidable during the school day:

- Pupils must be signed out through the office.
- Pupils must be signed back in upon return.
- Evidence of the appointment should be provided.

Only the minimum amount of school time necessary will be authorised.

Attendance Expectations

All pupils are expected to achieve attendance of at least **96%**.
Attendance below this level may negatively impact learning and progress.

Attendance categories:

Attendance Percentage	Category
96% - 100%	Expected Attendance
90% - 95.9%	Attendance Concern
Below 90%	Persistent Absence
50% or below	Severe Absence

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance data is monitored:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Half-termly
- Termly
- Annually

The school analyses:

- Individual pupil attendance
- Class attendance
- Year group attendance
- Punctuality patterns
- Vulnerable groups
- Persistent absence
- Severe absence

Data is benchmarked against local and national attendance figures and regularly reported to governors.

Pupils Requiring Additional Attendance Support

Particular attention will be given to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils with medical needs.
- Pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Children with a social worker.
- Looked After Children.
- Previously Looked After Children.
- Young carers.
- Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium.
- Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

The school will work proactively with families and external agencies to provide appropriate support.

Mental Health, Medical Needs and SEND

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from:

- Physical illness.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Anxiety.
- Neurodiversity.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Where attendance issues are linked to these factors, the school will:

- Work collaboratively with parents and professionals.
- Consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.
- Develop individual attendance support plans.
- Where appropriate and after seeking guidance from the LA, Implement time-limited phased returns.
- Create reintegration plans following periods of absence.
- Seek specialist support where necessary.

Remote education will only be used as a temporary measure within a wider reintegration plan.

Medical Evidence

The school will not routinely request medical evidence for every illness absence.

Medical evidence may be requested where:

- Absence is prolonged.

- Illness is recurring.
- Attendance is causing concern.
- Additional support may be required.
- There are reasonable concerns regarding the authenticity of the illness.

Examples of acceptable evidence include:
- Appointment letters.
- Prescriptions.
- Hospital discharge documents.
- Consultant letters.
- Evidence from healthcare professionals.

Requests will always be proportionate and considered on an individual basis.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent Absence

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss **10% or more** of possible sessions.
This equates to attendance below **90%**.

Severe Absence

A pupil is severely absent when they miss **50% or more** of possible sessions.

Where attendance falls into these categories, the school will:
- Meet with parents/carers regularly.
- Identify barriers to attendance.
- Implement attendance support plans.
- Seek support from external agencies.
- Consider multi-agency intervention.
- Consider legal intervention where appropriate.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Department for Education states that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless exceptional circumstances apply.
Exceptional circumstances are determined by the Headteacher on an individual basis.
Parents must complete a Leave of Absence Request Form before any planned absence.

The Headteacher will consider:
- The nature of the circumstances.
- The educational impact.
- The child's attendance history.
- The timing and duration of the absence.

The following reasons will not normally be authorised:

- Family holidays.
- Cheaper holiday costs.
- Parental work patterns.
- Family gatherings.
- Days out.
- Birthdays.
- Extended weekends.
- Holidays booked before school approval.
- Sporting or entertainment events.

Leave taken without prior approval will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Notice to Improve

Where attendance concerns continue and support has not been successfully engaged with, Staffordshire County Council may issue a Notice to Improve.
This notice will:

- Outline attendance concerns.
- Summarise support already offered.
- Explain improvements required.
- Identify available support.
- Specify an improvement period of between three and six weeks.
- Explain circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Penalty Notices

The national threshold for consideration of a Penalty Notice is:

10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A Penalty Notice may be considered where:

- A child has unauthorised leave of absence during term time.
- Unauthorised absence meets the national threshold.
- Parents fail to engage with attendance support.
- Attendance concerns continue despite appropriate intervention.

First Penalty Notice

Each parent may receive a Penalty Notice of:

- £80 if paid within 21 days.
- £160 if paid within 28 days.

Second Penalty Notice

If issued within three years of the first Penalty Notice in respect of the same child:

- £160 payable within 28 days.

Third Occurrence

A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued within a three-year period for the same child.
Alternative legal action may be considered by Staffordshire County Council.

Children Missing Education

The school has a legal duty to identify and support children who may be missing education.

Where concerns arise regarding a child's whereabouts, the school will:

- Undertake reasonable enquiries.
- Work with Staffordshire County Council.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

The school will notify the Local Authority when removing a pupil from roll in accordance with statutory regulations.

Young Carers

The school understands that young carers may face additional challenges which impact attendance.
Appropriate support may include:

- Pastoral support.
- Family liaison.
- Early Help intervention.
- Referral to specialist services.

Support will be tailored to individual circumstances.

Attendance Register Codes

The school will use attendance register codes in accordance with current Department for Education requirements.

Registers will:

- Be completed at the start of each morning session.
- Be completed at the start of each afternoon session.
- Be taken consistently for all pupils.
- Be retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Data Protection

Attendance records will be held and processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Department for Education requirements.

Information will only be shared where lawful and necessary.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, Attendance Lead and Governing Board.
The policy may be reviewed sooner if:

- Attendance legislation changes.
- Department for Education guidance is updated.
- Staffordshire County Council procedures change.