



Holmwood and Ashbrook Schools Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Date	Next Review date
Head of School	September 2021	September 2022
Head of School	September 2022	September 2023
Head Of School	November 2022	September 2023
Head of School Holmwood (J Elford) and Headteacher Ashbrook (J Ainscow)	September 2023	August 2024

Attendance Policy

Principles

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence on the part of the parent that can result in legal action.

High levels of attendance are crucial for so many areas of development and gives your child the best opportunities to achieve and progress to their maximum potential. It promotes not only their learning and educational abilities, but provides many life skills and long-term positive work ethics. Children who have good levels of attendance are more likely to be able to progress socially, have enhanced self-esteem and confidence, develop time management skills, have a good understanding of expectations for future life and develop a respect for the importance of punctuality and attendance.

Importantly, the more time they are in school the more time they have for learning.

Even a child with 90% attendance equals ½ day missed every week and over a school year that would equate to one month out of school, that means they are missing 100 lessons.

Any child can at times feel unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a 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 school attendance does not matter; it may even make things worse.

Aims

At Holmwood and Ashbrook (part of IftL), we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Definitions

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Any information about the cause of each absence is always required, if possible in writing, evidence will be required to support some absences.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those that the staff at school do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence on the part of the parent and include:

- › Keeping children off school without a good reason
- › Truancy from a whole session
- › Absences that have never been clearly explained
- › Children arriving at school too late to get a mark
- › Taking holidays during term-time, this includes attending a family wedding.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the head of school/headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head of School /Headteacher

The Head of School/Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Head of School: Roxanne Jackson.

The attendance team

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance team are Lynn Funnell (first response) and Toni Cole (attendance officer).

Class teachers

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

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Contact the school on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Please advise when they are expected to return, informing them of the reason for absence. This needs to be done before the registration period of 8.40am.
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of 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 original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Punctuality

It is imperative that children learn the importance of punctuality in order to fulfill their own role in society as they grow into young adults. This role modelling of good practice begins in primary school.

- › Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.30 am and 8.40 am to ensure the children are settled and ready to start their learning and receive their registration mark. Learning activities and some intervention groups occur during this time.
- › The registration period runs until 8:45am and registers are closed to enable lessons to start promptly by 8:50am.
- › A late mark is given to any child arriving after 8:45am.
- › If a child arrives after 9.05 am, they will be given an unauthorised mark.

Procedures if your child is absent

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

First day absence

Parent/carers must contact the school on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Please advise when they are expected to return, informing them of the reason for absence. This needs to be done before the school gates open at 8.30am. Parent/carers are required to contact the school reception or leave a message on the school's absent line. Parents can also inform the school via parentmail of their child's absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance. If the school is not contacted, a callhome will be made to ensure all children are accounted for.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers 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. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section titled 'authorised and unauthorised' to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

It is imperative that children learn the importance of punctuality in order to fulfill their own role in society as they grow into young adults. This role modelling of good practice begins in primary school.

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › If Parent/ carers do not contact the school and the school is unable to get hold of the parent/carer, the school will conduct a home visit to check the child is safe. This will happen before 11:30am. If we are concerned for the child's safety, a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the police may be called.
- › If the school are concerned about a 'Child Absent in Education' the procedures stated within Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The head of school/headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as visiting a new school, a recognised religious festival, a recognised sporting event, a funeral or taking an external exam.

Since September 2013, it has no longer been possible to authorise family holidays.

For any requests for leave, parents are required to make an appointment to meet with the attendance officer, PRIOR to the time of absence. Weekly attendance meetings are held and booked via reception and this is required for ANY requested leave. Any holidays taken without a meeting may result in a fine warning letter being sent home and logged on your child's school record.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The head of school/headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. One day will be authorised for a recognised religious event, but any other days taken before or after this day will be given an unauthorised holiday mark.
- › External exam - One day will be authorised for the exam but any other days taken before or after this day will be given an unauthorised mark.
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a head of school, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice 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 or withdraw the notice.

Procedures if a child is absent due to persistent illness.

If a child is persistently ill, school will be able to provide support for the child and the family. Parent/Carers are required to contact the a member of the Strategic Leadership Team responsible for attendance to inform the school of medical appointments and if they are absent for long periods during serious illness. In this instance, the school will require written medical evidence, for example, letters or a doctor's visit.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives and strategies

- The PATH schools have a whole school attendance target of 97%.
- Punctuality is monitored weekly and should a child be persistently late, parents/carers will be contacted in the first instance by the class teacher to support punctuality.
- Attendance figures will be shared with parents on a half termly basis and a final attendance figure for the year will be included in the end of academic year report.

Procedures

Procedures if attendance falls below the school expectation.

If a child's attendance falls below 97%, the procedures are as follows:

Attendance Percentages below 97%

Parents are contacted by the school and a conversation to discuss the decline in attendance will take place. Support will be offered to the family if required and appropriate. If the attendance continues to decline or remain below 97%, the attendance officer will be in touch to discuss this further.

Attendance Percentage below 93%

A letter will be sent out to parents informing them that their child's attendance has dropped below 93%. The letter will remind parents of the importance of attending school and will invite them in to speak to the attendance officer about their child's low attendance. Parents and carers will be reminded that if their child's attendance does not improve over the next half term, they will be placed on attendance watch.

Attendance Percentage below 90%

A letter will be sent out to parents informing them that their child has dropped below 90%. The child will be put on a formal half termly attendance watch. We would like to see an increase in attendance by 100% during this watch period. Any absence during that period will be unauthorised if a doctors note or stamp cannot be provided for any sickness.

Following this, parents will be invited into school by the Head of School to work collaboratively on creating an action plan, to discuss the situation in greater detail and medical records will be requested as appropriate.

If attendance percentage does not improve, parents will be invited to take part in an attendance panel held at the school. The attendance panel will include the Head of school, a member of the SLT and a school governor. All evidence of the individual situation will be reviewed and appropriate targets will be set. Regular weekly review meetings will be arranged.

If attendance does not rise, the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority, will be informed and it may be necessary to take further action.

School-age pupils are **persistent absentees** if they miss 10% of sessions or more. Therefore, any pupil with an attendance below 90% will be placed on the persistent absence register. The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children attending school at this percentage and is required to make interventions to support families. These are called 'persistent absentees' by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

Fixed Penalty Warnings/Notice

If the parent or carer has asked for a leave of absence that is not covered by exceptional circumstances, they will be invited in for a meeting and given a warning letter to say that if they choose to go ahead with the unauthorized leave, they will receive a fixed penalty notice. If the parent or carer still goes ahead with the unauthorized absence, they will

then receive notification that this has been reported to the local authority and they will receive a fixed penalty notice.

If a parent or carer takes their child out of school for a period of time without letting the school know in advance, we will follow our attendance procedures. If this is due to exceptional circumstances, proof will be requested i.e. last-minute flight bookings. A parentmail will be sent warning parents that they have 5 days or ten sessions unauthorized absence and therefore may receive a fixed penalty notice on their return.

If children are on attendance watch and continue to have poor attendance, a letter will be issued after ten unauthorised sessions (equivalent of 5 days) have been recorded over a period of twelve weeks. A fixed Penalty Notice will be issued which will result in a fine of £60 or £120 if not paid within 28 days.

Absence

Weekly monitoring by the Head of School/Headteacher of all absence ensures patterns are addressed quickly. Children with an attendance percentage of 90% or less are highlighted as red, those with an attendance percentage of 96%-90% will be highlighted as yellow and those whose attendance percentage is 97% or more will be highlighted as green. This links to the same day phone calls where the class teacher will mark a child absent and record if they are currently highlighted as red. This information will inform the SLT and further action can then be triggered immediately.

Good attendance is at the heart of the school ethos and as a result, class teachers will discuss the importance of good attendance with the children in their class and during school assemblies.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Responsibility for Attendance

Parent/Carers and all staff are ultimately responsible for attendance and punctuality matters. Others responsible within school for attendance include:

Jess Elford – Head of School (Holmwood)
 Jamie Ainscow – Headteacher (Ashbrook)
 Sharon Kelly – Business Manager
 Toni Cole – DSL (Ashbrook and Holmwood)
 Marina Moore – Business Support Assistant (Ashbrook)
 Carly Stephenson – Pastoral Lead (Ashbrook)

Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with Parents/ Carers in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour 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
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