



**Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy**

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy 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 (i.e. every day available to them) and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement depends on good attendance.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absence.
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance.
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives.

The whole school community - pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and statutory regulations.

## **3. SCHOOL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff at the school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher or another designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting excellent attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the Governing Body regularly. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

#### **4. REGISTRATION**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (see Appendix A). The register will be called promptly at **9:00am** and **1:10pm** by each class teacher, and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each pupil.

The registers will close at the end of first session. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as absent; this absence will be unauthorised. Pupils who arrive after the register is taken but before it closes will be counted as present, but late, and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

The school must be contacted on each day of a pupil's absence, providing an update and confirming the child's safety. If a pupil's attendance is 95% or above, verbal confirmation of their absence will be accepted and recorded on the school management information system. However, if a pupil's absence is below 95%, a letter must be sent or an absence form must be completed (available from reception) and returned to the office within two school weeks of the pupil returning to school. If this is not completed within this timescale, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

#### **5. FIRST DAY CALLING**

It is expected that parents will telephone the school if their child is unwell. (01638 663214)

The school has in place a system of first day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, all emergency contacts will be telephoned, and voicemail messages will be left. If it is not possible to contact a parent or emergency contact to confirm a pupil's safety, the Attendance Leader, Headteacher, Family Support Worker and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead will be consulted to determine if further action is required (e.g. making a safeguarding referral, contacting the Education Welfare Officer to arrange a welfare check).

#### **6. CATEGORISING ABSENCE**

The school recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a pupil's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render pupils extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at the school will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does

not mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.**

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where leave of absence has been granted by the school in advance (see below).
- A pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion (in authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered).
- Where the school is satisfied that the pupil is too ill to attend.
- Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards - or send him/her to school beforehand).
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil lives more than two miles (if under eight) or three miles (if has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority.
- The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.
- In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be, but are not limited to:

- No explanation has been given by the parent, or the school is not satisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday.
- The pupil is absent from school for an unauthorised leave of absence.
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## **7. LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see above) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

For health and safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late must report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.** For the same reason, it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for

a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day should report to the school office. Pupils must report to the office and be signed out by a member of staff, who will ensure the pupil is leaving with a known adult; the pupil must not let themselves out, but must wait to be let out by a member of staff.

## **8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

With effect from 1st September 2013, the Statutory Instrument 2013 No.756 made changes to the use of the word 'holiday' within the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Holiday is to be omitted from Regulation 7 and has replaced this with:

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless:

(a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent  
with whom the pupil normally resides

and

(b) The proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance  
with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to  
the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Leave of absence may be granted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Considerations that are not exceptional include, but are not limited to:

- Cost of the holiday is less in term time.
- Prolonged holiday.
- Absent parent/grandparent taking the child on holiday in term time.
- Absences during public examinations and SATS tests.

Parents/carers who wish to request a leave of absence must complete a leave of absence request form prior to the start of the leave of absence. Where an extended leave of absence is taken, there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school work during this period.

## **9. PENALTY NOTICES**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, section 23 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

Parents have a legal responsibility (Education Act 1996, Section 7) to ensure that their children receive a fulltime and efficient education, and LAs have a duty to enforce this when necessary. A parent is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of the child (Education Act 1996, Section 576).

A Penalty Notice will be issued where a pupil has missed **four school days (eight sessions)** or more due to unauthorised absence; this is most commonly issued when:

- A request for a leave of absence of four or more days has not been authorised.
- A leave of absence of four or more days has not been requested, and therefore has not been authorised.
- A pupil has been late after the register has closed on eight or more occasions.

The Penalty is **£60 per parent/carer, per child**, payable within **21 days**. If not paid within 21 days, the Penalty increases to **£120 per parent/carer, per child**, payable between **21 and 28 days**. If the Penalty is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority will start legal proceedings against you which may lead to a fine of **£1000**.

Penalty Notices will not be used in the case of unauthorised absence of children who are in care.

Referrals are made by the Office Administrator, who will complete the Penalty Notice Referral Form and send it to Suffolk County Council in accordance with agreed procedures.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued. Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges parents' liability for the period to which the Notice relates.

Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice per child in any 12 month period.

A full copy of Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notice Protocol is available on request.

## **10. REFERRAL TO THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICE**

If there are significant and/or ongoing concerns relating to attendance (see Appendix B) the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Particular regard will be given to:

- Pupils whose attendance is below 90%, which is considered to be 'persistent absence' by the Department for Education.
- Pupils who have been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more.
- Pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

If the absence is due to long term sickness (where evidence has been provided), the EWO will not be asked to monitor absence.

## **11. STAFF TRAINING**

The Office Administrator will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## **12. MANAGING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE**

Attendance has a very high profile at the school and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and attendance is promoted in school. The school has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences.

The Office Administrator is responsible for the monitoring of attendance and for reporting any concerns to the Attendance Leader to ensure that the school intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage. The Office Administrator and Attendance Leader will meet regularly (e.g. fortnightly) to review attendance and identify any pupils for whom action is required; these actions are outlined in the Attendance Flowchart (Appendix B).

The Office Administrator will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Attendance Leader. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance.

Attendance is monitored by year group, class, term, academic year and by groups of learners who are vulnerable to underachievement:

- Gender.
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals.
- Pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding.
- Pupils with multi-agency involvement.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- White British pupils.

## **13. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **13.1 Parents / Carers Responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers, who will be supported and encouraged by the school.

The school expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend school every day available to them.
- Support their children's attendance by keeping absence to a minimum.
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for leave of absence.
- Not condone unjustified absence from school.

- Notify the school each day their child is absent (if we have not received a phone call by 9:30am, we will call to find out why the pupil is/remains absent).
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending meetings and consultations as requested.
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school life.

### **13.2 Pupils Responsibilities**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school every day that is available to them, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late, particularly pupils in Years 5 and 6 who may walk to school unaccompanied by an adult.

### **13.3 Governors Responsibilities**

The Governing Body shall make arrangements to monitor the implementation of this policy as part of their duties to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the best outcomes for every pupil:

- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.
- The school curriculum teaches children to be healthy.
- Schools and the Local Authority have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children.
- The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school every day that is available to them.
- Good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings.
- Membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the wellbeing of others.
- Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling lifestyle.

The school will recognise the importance of good attendance by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately.
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers (see Appendix A).
- Analysing attendance on a fortnightly basis.
- Ensuring prompt follow up actions in cases of non-attendance.
- Reporting children missing education to the Local Authority.

- Rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance through newsletters, assemblies and certificates.

Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education as well, as reflecting badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong messages about the importance of education which may lead to problems later in their education. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.

**APPENDIX 1:****REGISTER CODES**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual Registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason provided yet for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

**APPENDIX 2:**

**ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART**



## APPENDIX 3:



### WHY IS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SO IMPORTANT?

- Children who attend school every day that is available to them are more likely to achieve good results and reach their full potential.
- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.
- Good attendance will help you to give your child the best possible start in life.
- Good attendance helps develop learning habits that will last into later life.
- Children who have attended school every day that is available to them have a better chance of getting and keeping a good job.

### **£60 Penalty per parent/carer, per child**

#### **NEWMARKET SCHOOLS WORKING TOGETHER:**

Newmarket Academy, Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy, All Saints CEVA Primary School, Exning Primary School, Laureate Community Academy, Moulton CEVC Primary School and Paddocks Primary School.

**Leave of absence must be taken in school closure periods unless there are rare and strictly exceptional circumstances.**

The criteria for issuing a **Fixed Penalty Notice Fine** is:

Where a pupil has missed **4 school days** or more due to **unauthorised absence**.

The Penalty is **£60 per parent/carer, per child**, payable within **21 days**. If not paid within 21 days, the Penalty increases to **£120 per parent/carer, per child**, payable between **21 and 28 days**. If the Penalty is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority will start legal proceedings against you which may lead to a fine of **£1000**.

**APPENDIX 4:**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

**£60 Penalty per parent/carer, per child**

Parents/carers: Please read the information overleaf before completing this form.

Name of child		Year Group
Name of siblings attending other Newmarket schools for whom leave of absence is being requested	Name of school	Year Group

The reason for taking my child/children out of school during term time is:

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First day of absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last day of absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of days absent from school: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the information overleaf and understand my responsibilities.

Parent/carer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Leave of absence **has not** been authorised for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

In view of the exceptional circumstances, leave of absence **has** been authorised for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_