



Hollinsclough CE Academy

Attendance Policy: 2021

Mission Statement

To encourage high levels of achievement through the enthusiasm and joy of learning, coupled with a creative curriculum and a holistic approach to education that reflects Christian values and supports our community.

We guarantee accessibility and availability to all.'

Developing potential

Pre-amble

Our academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We continuously strive to ensure that everyone in our academy is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential with positive regard to gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, faith, sexuality or disability.

We provide an inclusive and creative curriculum, which will meet the needs of all its pupils including those with disabilities, special educational and/or additional needs, from all cultural backgrounds and faiths and pupils with English as an additional language.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Flexi-schooling policy and its Memorandum of Understanding; the two together will add a further tier to how attendance is managed and how the register is maintained.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to safeguard children by ensuring that they attend school regularly and when they do not attend, school is aware of the reason for the absence. By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance.

This policy has due regard to the **DfE Departmental Advice on School Attendance – November 2013 (DFE-00257-2013)** which summarises legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

These requirements are contained in:

- **The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1) (3) (4) and (6) and 458 (4) and (5)**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**

Arrival and registration

All children should be in their registration class by 8.45am each day for registration – the school gate will close at 8.45am, and registration occurs at this time also.

Arrivals after the gate is closed will need to enter via the school office and are recorded as late.

We accept that our rural location can present travel and other linked timing issues and to assist with this; we accept children in the building from 8am.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where pupils are boarders, an attendance register. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances.

The morning register closes at 9.30am. If a child arrived after initial registration point up to the close of the register, they will be marked as **late**. The afternoon register is taken at 1pm. No children currently go home for lunch so afternoon lateness should not be a problem except for those who may have missed the morning session due to a medical appointment. The afternoon register will close at 1.30pm.

Parents are advised to contact the school if they are going to be late arriving, especially as school meals need to be booked by 9.15am

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in/out at the office. The class registers will be amended to reflect a child's attendance, and it is vital it is kept up to date in case of fire.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons for and incidence of any absences or persistent lateness, both of which can attract a fine in the first instance of approx. £60 per adult per child (inflation rises may be applicable).

Flexi-schooling – (also see policy) **(B and C Codes – see Appendix 1 for code explanation)**

The **Education Act 1996 (Section 7)** clearly states that it is the Duty of Parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

We provide a legal option for parents who wish to combine home education with attendance at school. In relation to Flexi-schooling here at Hollinsclough, attendance at our school consists of the minimum of what we term the **Three 'Core Days' of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.**

When a child attends school, the standard marks are used to indicate said attendance. When the child is being Flexi-schooled, the **C code** is used.

Using the C code reflects that the parent is following their own scheme of work at home or elsewhere, again under the parent's control and responsibility.

With regard to parental responsibility – this is reaffirmed by signatures within the Flexi-schooling Memorandum of Understanding document.

Other codes used are in line with common practice nationwide.

Attendance levels

The Principal/Bursar will inform parents if attendance is becoming a concern.

Children with the highest attendance percentage may receive an award at the end of the year. At the end of the summer term, parents will be provided with an attendance report as part of their child's annual report.

Persistent Absence, Lateness it's management and Penalty Notices

We constantly monitor pupil attendance patterns for the range of attendance modes we offer with Flexi-schooling. Absence is followed up on a daily basis, and pattern checked on a monthly basis if a concern is noted.

Parents are **required** to contact the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health, for medical appointments or similar situations.

If a pupil's absence occurs, and no contact is made by the parent(s), we will attempt to contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. This contact will be via all means available to the school at that time, other than direct face-to-face contact.

The school has a statutory duty to escalate its concerns to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or the relevant local Safeguarding Team at any time, for persistent lateness or absence..

Parents only need to contact the school once to at the beginning of the illness to confirm an illness related absence. However, if this absence is longer than 5 school days, a doctor's letter will be needed to advise the duration of any further absence.

Should the absence over 5 days occur it would be beneficial for the parents to seek a medical opinion to confirm if the child concerned is capable of work at home once this is achieved arrangements can then be put in place to support this through our Google Education Platform.

If after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will automatically involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Our persistent absence threshold is 10% - this percentage applies to all pupils, including those who Flexi-school. However, the rate will be applied on a 'pro-rata' basis according to the flexi-school attendance pattern agreed by our Principal and is subject to any variances applied after that. If a pupil's overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. However, the comparison at this level is not effectively possible as these tables will not take into account Flexi-schooling, and as a result, we will show a lower than expected level of overall attendance. All data relating to attendance is shared with governors at each termly meeting.

Legal Sanctions

The application of penalty notices is a last-ditch occurrence we don't take the issue lightly and will only occur when we have exhausted all other avenues to address the problem.

We are permitted to 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, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days (inflation rises may be applicable).

The payment must be made directly to the local authority as they process and retain the fines as the school does not benefit financially.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal and will follow the local authority's code of conduct in place at that time 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.

Holidays in term time (G and H Codes)

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Education Authority and the Academy.

Parents who have exceptional circumstances to be considered should make an appointment to discuss this with the Principal well in advance.

Parents should be aware that term time holidays are not an automatic right.

Holidays will not be authorised during SATs week for Y6 pupils.

Education authorities have the power to issue fixed penalty notices if a pupil has more than **5 days / 10 sessions** of unauthorised leave a term.

Work will not be set for completion during the holiday, but children should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences; holidays can be an excellent source of extended learning.

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission will incur **unauthorised absences** for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in a home visit and/or court action and a subsequent fine.

If a pupil does not return to school within ten days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll by referring the pupil to the Local Authority **Children Missing from Education** Team. The school has the right to do this under government legislation. Provision exists for a child to be removed from the school register after 10 days of unauthorised absence.

Process for requesting holiday absence

- By law, applications must be made by a parent normally residing with the child.
- Parents should seek permission for authorised holiday absence before making firm bookings/arrangements/payments for your holiday.
- Applications should be made in writing to the Principal at least 1 month before the absence is due to begin. The requests should be sent to the academy office.
- Absence will not be granted retrospectively.
- After consideration of the above criteria, the Principal will in writing, advise the parent of either a refusal with reference to why the holiday request is declined or an authorisation granting the absence and its limits therein.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances

Illness and Medical appointments (I and M Codes)

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school, for this reason, the child should be returned to school at the earliest time after the appointment, or the appointment timed to minimise disruption to the school day, i.e. close to the end of the morning session or prior to the end of the school day in the afternoon.

As noted above

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health, for medical appointments or similar situations.

Parents only need to contact the school once to confirm an illness related absence. However, if this absence is longer than 5 days, a doctors letter will be needed to advise the duration of any further absence.

Should the absence over 5 days occur it would be beneficial for the parents to seek a medical opinion to confirm if the child concerned is capable of work at home and arrangements then put in place with the school to support this.

If parents have not contacted the school, they will receive a Telephone call, text message or email asking them why the child is not at school. Unexplained absences will also be followed up by letter. Parents will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters, or more frequently if their child's attendance is causing concern.

Exceptional circumstances: (Y Code)

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to the academy. It is essential that the academy office is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Other circumstances

A range of other circumstances can occur to which a code is applied – but these are rarely used.

Equality Duty

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

British Values

Children who attend our academy experience an enabling environment in which they will develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Coupled with this, they will develop the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England.

Within this enabling environment, your child or children will develop the ability over time to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely.

While with us, our parents can expect their children to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England, and to develop a personal character that is tolerant and can foster harmony between different cultural traditions, along with respect for their own and other cultures.

We firmly believe and encourage our pupils to show respect for other people; and for democracy and the support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

To be part of our academy, it is unacceptable on the part of any stakeholder to promote discrimination against people or groups based on their belief, opinion or background.

Implementation of this procedure/policy

Our academy will manage the implementation of this procedure/policy with the support and guidance of the appropriate body/bodies as defined at the time of writing.

General

This procedure/policy and its guidance will always reflect the present and future needs of all stakeholders and to support this we are always open to suggestions for changes and alterations of and to any specific individual provision/requirement to ensure full access to all.

Signed...

Designation: Chair of Governors

Date... January 2021

Signed...

Designation: Principal

Date... January 2021

This procedure/policy is to be reviewed by Governors / Trustees during Autumn term 2023

Appendix 1: Attendance codes (inc references to COVID-19)

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	An authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	The pupil has been excluded, but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	The pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness(also see additional COVID-19 subcategory codes)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The 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	A pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	The 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 the reason for a 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 (also see additional COVID-19 subcategory codes)
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The 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 the pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Additional COVID-19 Subcategory Attendance Codes

For the Academic Year 2020, our school MIS is using updated **COVID-19 Subcategories** in the register to reflect the latest DfE guidance.

In the registration sections of the MIS administrators now have the option to add I and X codes under the following subcategories:

- I = Confirmed case of COVID-19
- X = Suspected case of COVID-19
- X = Quarantine
- X = Local lockdown
- X = Self-isolating
- X = Shielding

These codes will remain in place until such time as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides and may eventually be removed. This policy will be revised at this date if required.