



# HOLLYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## September 2019

### Pupil Attendance Policy – A Safeguarding Policy

#### **1) Introduction**

Attendance is a key factor in attainment. Hollyfield Primary School is where the pupils spend a large amount of their time and overcoming barriers to learning through attendance is a key focus for the school.

1.1) The Governors, Head Teacher and staff at Hollyfield Primary School place a high priority on every pupil's educational achievement and believe that maximum pupil attendance and punctuality are essential, in order for all children to achieve their full potential. This policy has been introduced in order to help achieve this aim and the staff and governors are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that it is effectively and appropriately implemented.

1.2) Hollyfield Primary School has a legal responsibility to keep records of admissions and attendance. In the event of concerns over attendance, the school will refer the matter to Education Welfare to investigate.

1.3) The Governing Board of Hollyfield Primary School has a legal duty to ensure that an Attendance Policy is in existence for the school and that it is reviewed regularly.

1.4) The school must report pupil's attendance to parents/carers annually, showing the number of authorised and unauthorised absences for the academic year.

1.5) The Head Teacher is responsible for attendance at Hollyfield Primary and will report on all attendance matters to the Governing Board at least termly.

#### **2) Background and Principles**

2.1) The Governors, Head Teacher and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance is an important indicator of the success of other school policies e.g. SEND, pastoral, curriculum provision and development, behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Attendance of less than 95% (i.e. absences of 9.5 days or more out of the 190 pupil days in the school year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. **At 90% attendance pupils miss the equivalent of almost 4 weeks education (19 days).**

2.2) At Hollyfield Primary School, we believe that regular attendance is an essential pre requisite of effective schooling. Parents/carers and children need to develop and maintain good habits of regular attendance and punctuality if they are to make the most of their time at our school.

2.3) A 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, means that the Head Teacher may no longer authorise leave during term time. However, the Head Teacher may authorise absence in exceptional circumstances such as:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)

2.4) Information for parents/carers clarifying their legal responsibilities for attendance, highlighting the impact of absences during term-time will be made available each year through new parent/pupil induction, in the school's prospectus and as part of parents' evenings.

### **3) Leave of absence requests**

If a parent/carer wishes to take their child out of school during term time for any reason, then that request must be made in writing to the Head Teacher before leave is taken. All responses from the Head Teacher will include an attendance printout, as well as a 'How good is your attendance' sheet to highlight the importance of good attendance at school, as well as the damaging effect that any prolonged absence can have on achievement.

3.1) Hollyfield Primary School operates a formal application process for parents/carers wishing to take their child/children out of school during term times. **An application should be made to the Head Teacher on a form obtained from the school office or in writing at least six weeks or half a term in advance. The application does not, in itself, guarantee that the request will be authorised.**

3.2) The Head Teacher will consider each individual application taking into account:

- the reason is considered to be exceptional circumstances

- the number of previous requests
- the year group the pupil is in
- proximity of major tests/exams
- the time of the academic year proposed
- the duration of the absence and its impact on continuity of learning

As part of their application for leave in term time in exceptional circumstances, parents/carers will be expected to demonstrate a willingness to make arrangements that cause the least disruption to their children's learning.

**3.3) The Head Teacher will inform the parent/carer within 7 school days of receipt of the application regarding the request.**

**3.4) The Head Teacher and Governing Board are within their rights to turn applications down and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time.** Such a decision will have been made in the best interests of the pupil's educational progress and attainment and with due regard to their previous attendance record. In such a case, the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' and may result in a referral to the Education Legal Intervention Team and the issue of a Penalty Notice or fine.

**3.5) Parents taking their children out of school during term time without the Head Teacher's authorisation not only damage their children's educational opportunities but also risk being issued with a penalty notice, prosecuted in court and losing the children's place at the school.**

3.6) The Head Teacher will record the number and frequency of absences taken during term time throughout each pupil's school career.

#### **4) Absence in exceptional circumstances**

4.1) The Head Teacher may, on rare occasions, make a judgement that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term time. For example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening of critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery  
leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required

#### **5) Procedures for Absence/Lateness**

5.1) When pupils are absent for any reason we ask that parents/carers contact school by 9:30 am on the first day of absence. We ask that they continue to contact us if the pupil is unable to return within two days.

We ask that where possible medical evidence is provided for medical and dental appointments. If attendance falls we will ask parents/carers to provide evidence for all absences.

5.2) Parents/carers of pupils who are absent from school and for whom there has been no letter or phone call to school explaining the absence are contacted by text messaging service or phone call. This service alerts parents that they must contact school to advise the reason for their child's absence. If no message is received, then the absence is marked as 'unauthorised' until a reason has been given, or evidence provided if requested. If a child is absent for a second day, a phone call is made. If the school does not receive a reply then a 'safe and well' letter requesting the parents to contact us is sent. Children who arrive after registers have been marked must report directly to the school office. Any child arriving after 8.55 am for any reason other than medical will be marked late (L). If a pupil arrives after 9.10 am then the child will be given a 'U' code which means the child has an unauthorised absence for that session. Parents must sign out children who have to leave during the school day. School administrative staff will witness this.

## **6) Strategies for maximising attendance**

6.1) Individual certificates will be presented termly to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance that term and for those achieving 100% during the whole academic year.

School will take account of serious, ongoing medical conditions where appropriate (at the school's discretion).

6.2) Attendance and punctuality will be promoted daily in class, through assemblies and in the weekly newsletters. Teachers will put the class attendance as a percentage on their classroom doors daily.

6.3) Each half term the school will send home the most recent attendance printout along with the 'How good is your attendance' guide. The class teachers will speak to the children about their individual attendance and to parents at Parents' Evening to encourage the children to take ownership of their own attendance.

6.4) If a child's attendance level drops below 96%, the Head Teacher will commence close monitoring of that child's attendance level.

6.5) If a child's attendance drops below 95%, the Head Teacher will write to the parents, continue to monitor and then invite them to a meeting if there are still concerns.

6.6) If it continues to drop and falls below 93%, the Head Teacher will consult with the Education Welfare Officer and letters will be sent to parents inviting

them to meet with school and Education Welfare.

6.7) If a child's punctuality rate drops below 95%, the Head Teacher will consult with the Education Welfare Officer

6.8) The Governing Board has agreed to work with the Education Welfare Officer and regular poor attendees will be targeted under the 'FAST- track to Attendance' campaign. Parents will be made aware of this process via the weekly newsletter and through individual letters to parents where attendance is a concern.

To support us in securing good attendance for our pupils and to address concerns regarding any child's poor school attendance and punctuality, we work with Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS).

Your child may be referred to a CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer if their attendance and/or punctuality is causing concerns. They will then contact you by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved.

To enable CSAWS to deliver the services detailed above and support schools in their duty to improve school attendance the following Information Sharing Arrangements will be implemented and agreed:

The School will:

- \* Allow the allocated CSAWS officer access to/provide the officer with personal data (including names, addresses, parents' details, attendance, SEN and FSM information) for identified pupils whose attendance causes concern and requires intervention from the CSAWS officer.
- \* Provide access to the school's registration system to enable CSAWS to provide data analysis, strategic support and attendance targeting to improve attendance.
- \* Provide a named individual/s to share information (including secure confidential email addresses).
- \* Include the fact that they share information with CSAWS in their Privacy Notices.
- \* Update its Attendance Policy and communicate to parents that it engages CSAWS to support the school's duty to secure and improve school attendance.

CSAWS will:

- \* Ensure that all officers follow the eight Data Protection Principles detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998.
- \* Maintain a clear Data Protection Policy.
- \* Publish a Privacy Notice (available on CSAWS website and parent leaflet).

- \* Store, transfer and destroy all data securely.
- \* Ensure that all officers provide written records of contacts with parents and pupils to school.

### **7) Deletion of pupil from school roll**

A pupil is deleted from the school roll if s/he is registered as a pupil of another school or if an absence exceeds the authorised period given for an Extended Leave of Absence. The school will NOT remove a pupil from roll where there is no known destination without consultation with Education Welfare Services.

### **8) Equal Opportunities:**

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff at Hollyfield Primary School firmly believe that regular school attendance is vital if all pupils are to benefit from the wide range of opportunities we offer them in school. Marking, planning, book scrutiny and tracking of individual pupil performance ensures that all pupils benefit from continuity and progression in the learning environment.

School will endeavour, where possible, to make reasonable adjustments to ensure no pupil is disadvantaged because of serious, or chronic medical conditions.

### **9) Children Missing Education**

If the school believes a child has left Hollyfield Primary but there is no record of them being taken on roll at another school, then the school would refer to the CME team for advice and support. School would then follow the CME current guidelines and procedures.

Hollyfield Primary School, Staff and Governors are committed to the safety and welfare of all pupils and will ensure that through the robust implementation of all safeguarding policies, that all pupils are protected from any potential exposure to extremism and radicalisation.

We will ensure that all our pupils, especially those with SEND will be fully supported academically and socially to ensure that no pupil is at risk of bullying or any other form of discrimination.

Date approved by the Governing Board: 25.9.19