

Attendance Policy

Status	Approved
Date Approved	September 2026
Review Date	September 2027
Head Teacher	Miss S French
Chair of Governors	Mr J Dunmore
Adaptation of Herts for Learning Attendance Policy	
Statutory policies are approved and ratified by the Governing Body and the approval of policies are recorded within the minutes of the meetings.	

At Holwell Primary School we are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Good attendance helps the children in our school community to maximise their learning.

We recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil progress. Good attendance helps the children in our schools community to maximise their learning. This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Holwell Primary School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, and to reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

Working together to improve attendance (DFE 2024)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvements across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

This policy links to the schools Attendance Strategy which is available to view on the schools website.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parent/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parent/Carers may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Responsibilities & Expectations

Holwell Primary School will:

- provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity
- provide attendance details on the child's annual report.
- follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- provide details of poor attendance/punctuality to subsequent schools.
- support the attendance of pupils and for deal with problems that may lead to non-attendance.
- record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.
- ensure if notification is not received, parents/carers are sent a text via Arbor by 10.00am or (closest possible time)am on the first day of absence. We will record the outcome in Arbor.
- maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence.
- keep written notification from parents/carers on file.
- inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- write to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.

Parents/carers should:

- be aware of their legal obligation to ensure their child attends school. They do not automatically have the right to take them on holiday during term time. Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.
- ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed, well equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- inform the school on the 1st day of absence and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also need to maintain daily contact with the school until child returns to school, unless an agreement is made with the school office in the case of a long-term illness.
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.

- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- A child's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- avoid booking holidays during term time.

All pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually.
- remember to hand any note to school providing reasons for absence.
- be ready to learn.

School Timings

- The school day starts at 8.35am and finishes at 3.05pm. The school external gates will close at 8.45am. All children must be in classrooms and all *non-staff pedestrians* should be off site by 8.45am. Any child who enters the school site after 8.45am must enter via the main office. The registers will start to be taken in classrooms from 8.35am *prompt*. All registers must be completed by 8.45am. Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.

Punctuality

- Any child who enters the school site after the gates are closed at 8.45am will be registered as late (L).
- When the afternoon session begins, the register is taken again. For Reception this is 12.15pm, Year 1 this is 12.30pm, Year 2 is 12.35pm, Year 3 and 4 is 12.45pm and for Years 5 and 6 this is 1.05pm. Children returning after home lunch after this time will be recorded as late.
- In the morning any child arriving after 9.05am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) for the whole session (unless there are exceptional circumstances for such late arrival). In the afternoon, any child arriving after 12.45pm (Rec), 1.00pm (Y 1), 1.05pm (Y2), 1.15pm (Y3/4) and 1.35pm (Y5/6) will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) for the whole session.
- Parents/carers will be expected to sign into the Sign-in app to give a reason for their child's lateness.
- It is important that children are safe and therefore always accounted for during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff, who will work with parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

Granting Leaves of Absence

- As detailed in the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance 2024, Holwell School can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at their discretion. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally resides with. Holwell School will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Appendix A details reasons where absence will be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Absence due to Illness

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and Holwell Primary School will always follow this up. Absences are authorised by the headteacher only. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register.
- The school operates a '1st day response' policy. This means that if we have not been notified by 9:30am (at the very latest) to tell us why a child is not coming to school that day we will contact his/her parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not enough.
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence stating that their child is too ill to attend school.
- Unless a doctor has given children a particular time of absence through illness, parent/carers are expected to contact the school each day to let us know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis by our Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or group absences, attendance of siblings, etc. They may ask to see parents/carers if attendance is not satisfactory.
- Children should stay home from school for at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea to prevent the spread of infection in line with NHS guidance <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

When a child has an illness that means he/she will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the home education support service, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Absence due to Medical Appointments

- We would request that all medical appointments, if possible, are made out of school hours.
- If a medical appointment is known in advance, parents/carers must notify the school in writing and evidence of the appointment will be requested. If an emergency appointment is made, please phone the school before 9am. Evidence of the appointment will be requested. If medical evidence is unable to be provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The relevant book must be signed at the office and again on return.

Absence due to prospective secondary school visits, open mornings/afternoons & entrance exams

- Pupils within Year 6 only, will be allowed up to a maximum of 3 authorised sessions (either am or pm) for visits to school open mornings. In addition, pupils will also be

allowed up to 3 full day authorised absences for entrance exams.

Visits to secondary school open mornings/afternoons will not be authorised for pupils in any other year groups (i.e. Year 5 and below). Absence leading up to an entrance exam for pupils in Year 6 may not be authorised if it is believed the absence was for revision/extra practice for the exam.

- Parents will be asked to provide evidence of the visit by such methods as an email or text message from the secondary school. Secondary schools within the Welwyn and Hatfield Consortium will be requesting that pupils return to school immediately after their visit. Registers will be taken at the visits and will be shared with primary schools at their request.

Term Time Holiday

- As detailed in the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance 2024, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance therefore Holwell Primary School will not grant leave of absence for a holiday. If we become aware that a child has been on holiday this will also be unauthorised.

A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from a leave of absence where permission has been granted after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s), or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate pupil.

Absence on the first or last day of a school term will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided, or you have an exceptional circumstance. This needs to be granted by the headteacher before the event.

Attendance Procedures

Holwell Primary School value the importance of attendance and will closely monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis and parents/carers whose children are regularly absent or late for school will be challenged in accordance with our attendance procedures. Holwell Primary School will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance.

Please refer to our Attendance Procedures and Attendance Strategy document for information about our strategy towards promoting positive attendance at Holwell Primary School.

<https://www.holwell.herts.sch.uk/our-school/school-information-1/attendance>

Records

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent Absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and this is combined with

academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Rewards for Good Attendance

- Children and parents are regularly reminded of the impact of good attendance.
- Each day, classes show an attendance star on the door. Each week, children are shown their class attendance. The class with the highest attendance will receive 10 minutes extra play.
- An attendance report is provided along with the end of year report with a comment – Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Aim Higher.
- Careful monitoring of attendance ensures patterns of absence are identified and addressed quickly.

Notice to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices

A Notice to Improve will be issued to any parent whose child's absence levels have triggered the national threshold for a penalty notice – ie 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The Notice to Improve may be used to offer parent/s a final opportunity to engage with support and improve the attendance levels of the child concerned. The Notice to Improve will have a validity period of six school weeks. Where a parent fails to engage with the offer of support during the Notice to Improve validity period and/or further unauthorised absences are recorded for the pupil and/or the pupil fails to make significant improvements in their attendance patterns, a penalty notice may be issued. A Notice to Improve is not issued in the case of term-time holidays.

A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required, without a genuine explanation. As of 19th August 2024, pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 10 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court:

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.
- Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Helping Parents Understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance:
<https://www.holwell.herts.sch.uk/our-school/school-information-1/attendance>

Children not in Full-Time Education/Reduced Timetables

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. DfE guidance on the use of part-time timetables clearly states:

"In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and part time package is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision." - DfE school attendance

A part-time timetable must only be used with the consent of parents/carers.

Any proposal to use a part-time timetable must be discussed with parent/carer before the arrangements start. Schools are advised that a reduced timetable should only be used as a short term measure.

The DfE recommendation is 6-8 weeks.

Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as an authorised absence.

A part-time timetable will be used in very limited circumstances such as;

- Where there are behavioural difficulties, and the school is trying a part-time timetable as an intervention to try and avoid exclusion as part of a pastoral/behaviour/individual support plan (PSP) or a planned reintegration package.
- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.
- Where a pupil has an on-going medical condition, which necessitates them missing more than 15 school days (or more than 30 sessions) as a result of the condition, consideration should be given to referring them to the [Interim Tuition Service](#). Any application will normally need to be supported by a medical practitioner. Schools are encouraged to identify early help, support and interventions from outside agencies where there are concerns regarding a child's engagement, behaviour or individual needs such as medical and mental health requiring the need for a [reduced school timetable](#).

Vulnerable children such as those looked after, children with an EHC plan, those open to a child protection or CIN plan, children open to Youth Offending Service, Early Help Family Support or identified as at risk of exploitation, radicalisation or substance misuse should not be placed on a part-time timetable except in the most exceptional circumstances and only with the agreement of key services working with the child and family.

All children with a part-time timetable will have a plan identifying;

- Clearly defined objectives and expected outcomes.

- Be for a specified and limited period of time.
- Be kept under regular review.
- Risk assessment addressing any potential safeguarding, welfare, offending or harmful behaviour concerns.
- Not be implemented without the signed parental agreement and the consent of any key children's service open to the child.

Holwell school will alert the local authority if a child is being placed onto a part-time timetable.

Children who return from exclusion may be placed on a reintegration timetable. Information on a reintegration timetable can be found within our behaviour policy.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Holwell Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to provide the school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parent/carers keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher annually and by the Governing body every two years.

Policy taken from:

Herts for Learning Attendance Policy

DFE guidance on School Attendance

School updated in September 2026.

APPENDIX A

Holwell Primary School

Request for Authorised Absence

Dear

Thank you for your email advising that ~~xxxxxx~~ will be absent from school from xxx to xxx. I regret to inform you that I am unable to authorise this absence.



The table below outlines when an absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised Absences	Unauthorised Absences
• Illness • Medical appointment (Medical evidence will be required) • Funeral • Wedding (only the day of the ceremony will be authorised) • Taking part in a regulated performance in line with a licence issued by a local authority or a body of persons approval	• Holidays during term time • Visits to see family during term time

Children at Holwell are expected to maintain an attendance between 100% and 97%. If a child's attendance falls below this, action may be taken by the school. Please visit the school website to find out more about our attendance strategy and procedures.

If your child has had at least 10 sessions (am or pm) (5 days total) of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week school period, the school will apply to Hertfordshire County Council for a penalty notice to be issued. Please find out more information about penalty notices by clicking this [link](#)

Please contact the school office to arrange a meeting with Miss French if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Miss S.G French
Head Teacher



Learning today for our tomorrow

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