

The Hollies School



Learning to Flourish

# Attendance Policy

## March 2023

### **Learning to Flourish**

To provide Personalised learning experiences so that every child can communicate, interact, grow and develop to the best of their ability. Together with families, we can ensure that our children have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can and to lead happy and successful lives, through our values of Socialisation, Communication, Interaction, and Play

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### 1. Rationale and Aims

The Hollies School, in partnership with families, the local authority and all relevant agencies, will work together to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education and to attend school regularly.

The school will provide a safe, happy and welcoming environment to encourage excellent attendance for all pupils. All staff are fully aware of the importance of regular school attendance to enable pupils to flourish and achieve their full potential.

At the Hollies we endeavour to take account of all individual circumstances, working closely with families where school attendance becomes an issue. We recognise that a collaborative approach with families and stakeholders to improving attendance is in the best interest of the child.

This policy relates to Article 3 and 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

**Article 3:** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

**Article 28:** Children have a right to education.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that attendance and punctuality remain a key focus for all, including parents, pupils, teachers, governors and partner agencies. We will strive to:

- Offer a safe and friendly environment which welcomes all learners

- Raise standards and ensure all pupils reach their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all stakeholders receive communication about information on the importance of regular school attendance.
- Identify those pupils with irregular attendance at an early stage and to work with families and partner agencies to try and address any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.
- Keep accurate and up to date attendance data.
- Ensure all pupils are safe, and for schools to follow the local authority's 'Children Missing Education' guidance.
- To celebrate 'attendance' achievement

This document is supported by the All Wales Attendance Framework:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Governors**

The governing body is responsible for:

- Approving the policy and amending if necessary
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis

### **2.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Work closely with the governing body and the school's designated SLT staff member for attendance, including regular attendance reports shared with and provided to governors
- Set attendance targets with the Central South Consortium (CSC) Improvement Partner and governors, and take advice from the local authority (LA) if needed
- Using discretion when receiving applications for long term absence/holiday requests and providing reasons to parents
- Work closely with the LA's lead EWO and other support services.
- Notifying the LA when a 'child is missing education' and follow the LA's CME procedures

### **2.3 SLT staff member for attendance**

The SLT staff member for attendance is responsible for:

- Working with all staff responsible for attendance and punctuality

- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Work with EWO's to support families to improve attendance (in the case of persistent absence)
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

### **2.3 Attendance Clerk**

The attendance clerk is responsible for:

- Working with the SLT staff member for attendance, including the provision of attendance data and highlighting individuals whose attendance falls/is persistently poor
- Speaking with parents to establish reasons for pupil's absence
- Recording and monitoring of daily absences/class registers, raise any issues of staff not compliant with the completion of registers
- 'Mop up' missing marks, inputting reasons on the red flag system on SIMS
- Sending messages to those parents who haven't contacted school, or telephoning them individually
- Work closely with the EWO

### **2.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Carrying out the statutory role of completing attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon
- Ensuring absences are accounted for by ways of a note/Class Dojo message provided by parents, informing the office/attendance clerk (by 9.30 a.m. every day) of any absences that are not accounted for
- Contact the attendance clerk with any queries

### **2.5 Parents/carers**

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Notifying the school if their child is unable to attend, on the first day of absence and every day thereafter
- Keeping the school up to date with parents/guardians contact details, including mobile numbers, email addresses and any changes to the home address.
- Work with the school and partner agencies to address any issues of irregular attendance of their children
- Attend meetings as and when required

### **3. Recording Attendance**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

The school's register is a legal document, and under The Education (pupil registration) (Wales) regulations 2010 the school is required to keep an accurate record of attendance. We will take our register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

See appendix 1 for attendance codes.

Registers may be needed in a court of law if deemed appropriate.

By the end of each term the school's attendance registers will be completed and an overall attendance figure will be calculated by the school.

See appendix 1 for attendance codes

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parents/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 a.m. or as soon as practically possible.

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.

#### **3.3 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.

#### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

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

- Punctuality is a legal requirement and pupils must attend school on time. Persistent lateness can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning and also disrupts other pupils within the class and throughout the school

Depending on individual circumstance, the headteacher will decide on the appropriate action for those pupils who are persistently late.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by way of a telephone call/message on Class Dojo/Parent text
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will be kept informed of their children's attendance record via their annual end of year report. Where there are attendance-related issues, school may write to parents to make them aware of their child's current attendance figure, school will usually request that that parents contact school for a discussion.

## **4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **4.1 Approval for term-time absence**

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school during the school term for a holiday. Under the Education (pupil registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, headteachers have discretion to authorise a holiday of up to 10 days during term time, over 10 days can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holidays must be completed on the school's holiday request form (see appendix 2) by parents/guardians.

The headteacher will make the decision and may include the following contributory factors in their deliberations:

- Time of year
- Length of time
- Overall percentage of attendance
- Possible impact on the pupil's learning

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

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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes
- Holidays during term time (see conditions above).

## 4.2 Reducing persistent absence

It is unfortunate that on occasions, a punitive approach may be needed which may result in a fine or prosecution of parents. However, this is not taken lightly and school will always do everything in its power to work with parents and support them to improve their child’s attendance. We recognise that improving attendance through collaboration is in the best interests of the child.

As a school we have a duty to safeguard all our pupils and the Education & Inspections Act 2006 requires the LA to make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children residing within Cardiff who are not receiving an education, for example, these may be pupils who have not attended school for an excessive amount of time without any contact or reason for the absence. The duty lies within the LA to investigate further.

## 5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

We aim for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance, however there maybe instances where pupils unfortunately are unwell. We also understand that, when a child has a diagnosis of autism, there are many factors which can impede a child’s ability to attend school. Where there are issues with attendance, school is committed to working closely with families and health and social care services, to provide as much support as possible for both the learner and their family.

The school operates a process which keeps parents up to date parents with information about their attendance. Parents are reminded on a termly basis that attendance to be considered ‘good’ it must be at 95% or above’ and they are informed of their child’s attendance percentage.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with school about ANY issues their child may be experiencing with attendance and not just physical illness

## 6. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **every year**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governors.

Person responsible for this policy

Lisa Marshall

Link governor

Lisa Gerson (Chair)

Reviewed

October 2022

Date for next review

October 2023

Links to other policies

Safeguarding, Child Protection, ALN Policy,  
Distance Learning Policy, Curriculum Policy,  
Teaching and Learning Policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

/\	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (present at another school of PRU)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based learning)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised absence
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	



Y	Partial and forced closure	Not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	Not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	Not required to attend

**Appendix 2 – Holiday Request Form**

**Section A**

**To be completed by the Parent/Guardian at least 2 weeks in advance.**

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Holiday dates:

From: ..... to .....

Destination .....

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

Declaration:

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the head teacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child’s circumstances. If the head teacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority Lead EWO which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Guardian .....

**Section B**

To be completed by the head teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Reasons for unauthorising

.....  
 .....

Reasons for authorising

.....  
 .....

I, as head teacher authorise/unauthorise (\* delete) the following holiday request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed .....

Headteacher

A copy will be retained on file for our records.