



Holbrook Academy

Attendance Policy

Date Approved	12 th May 2020
Signed	L Cullen Chair of Governors
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This policy takes account of the Academy's public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with students even where this is away from the Academy, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.

Amendments 20th November 2020: –

- Attendance codes amended for Covid related absence
- Fixed Penalty fine increases to £120 if not paid within 21 days

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Roles and Responsibilities	3
3. Attendance : Roles and Responsibilities	5
4. Penalty Notices	7
Appendix A : Coding for Registers	8
Appendix B : Parental Guidance	9
Appendix C : A Guide for Students	12

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Holbrook Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its students. To ensure this, regular school attendance and good punctuality will enable our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available within our school. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have an important role to play in encouraging and enabling our students to attend school so that they can achieve their full potential.
- 1.3 Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (home schooling). (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Holbrook Academy actively promote and support excellent attendance and punctuality by providing a safe environment in which students are keen and eager to learn. Students should feel valued members of the community and look forward to attending school every day. Staff should also set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 To promote and ensure excellent attendance and punctuality the Attendance Officer (AO), Family Liaison Officer and Assistant Headteacher (AHT) – Pastoral, will meet weekly to ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Assistant Headteacher will also meet regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) assigned to the school to address attendance issues by meeting with students, parents and other outside agencies as appropriate. These people will share up to date attendance information and issues with both the Pastoral Team and Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The school community (teaching and support staff, students, parents & carers) will also be informed regularly of the school's current attendance data. The governing body will be informed of attendance figures via a report on a termly basis. These strategies will help to ensure that attendance issues are identified in the initial stages and support is implemented promptly.
- 2.3 **Registration**
 - i) The school is required to mark the register twice a day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the codes prescribed (see Appendix A).
 - ii) The morning statutory registration time is **8:30am**. Registration will be closed at **9:00am**. The afternoon registration time is **1.05-1.15pm**.
 - iii) Students who arrive late but before the register closes will be counted as present but will be coded as L for lateness and dealt with according to the Academy's Behaviour and Rewards Policy.
 - iv) Any student arriving after the register has closed and has been 'sent' will be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any child not present at the time of registration will be marked as **N, reason for absence not yet provided**. Where a reason for an absence is given and accepted as legitimate by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended and the appropriate code inserted. The decision as to whether the absence is authorised/unauthorised rests ultimately with the headteacher.

- ii) If no explanation is received by the school following home contact, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- iii) As a school, Holbrook Academy recognises that attendance has an impact on a child's attainment and also safeguarding. The school recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging as unauthorised absence to a child's education and well-being; and potentially send a message to parents/carers that any reason for school non-attendance is acceptable, placing the child in a potentially vulnerable situation and at risk from harm. If absence is frequent or continuous without medical evidence, staff at Holbrook Academy will challenge parents/carers about their child's absence and offer support, if needed, to improve attendance. A note or explanation from home for a child's non-attendance will not always mean the absence is authorised. The decision to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - a) where leave of absence has been agreed in advance, eg:
 - A student is to participate in an approved performance in which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
 - A student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion;
 - In **exceptional** circumstances permission is granted for a family holiday in which parents have sought permission in advance;
 - b) where the school is satisfied the student is too ill to attend;
 - c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents are requested to make the appointments outside of school hours wherever possible, or return to school promptly after the consultation);
 - d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions.
 - e) the student is entitled to home-school travel and no transport has been arranged by the local authority;
 - f) the absence occurs on a day of religious observance by the religious body to which their parents or the student belongs;
 - g) The student is of no fixed abode, his/her parents are engaged in trade **in** which he/she travels, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of eleven, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding twelve months;
 - h) In other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a limited time.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
 - No explanation given by parent/carer;
 - Attendance is below 92% and, if requested, no medical evidence has been provided
 - The school is not satisfied by the explanation given;
 - The student is shopping during school hours;
 - The student is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
 - The student is absent for a family holiday without prior permission;
 - The student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved Educational Activity

Where a student is engaged in an approved educational off-site activity, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, subject teachers will take a class register near to the beginning of a lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences can then be picked up and reasonable measures can be put in place to locate the student. Teachers alert the office and/or SLT of any 'AWOL' students and follow safeguarding procedure.

3. Attendance: Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- To be aware of the importance of regular school punctuality and attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent good attendance, they should speak to their form tutor;
- To attend lessons on time, ready to learn.
- To follow school procedures if late to morning registration, by signing in at the office;

Parents/carers (See Appendix B – Parental Guidance)

- Ensure their children attend school regularly;
- Ensure that an absence form is completed or evidence is provided in advance of any planned absences
- Ensure that medical evidence is provided to confirm absence as a result of illness if requested by the school
- Ensure the school has accurate phone contact numbers;
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- To notify the school on every day of absence, using the School Gateway or leaving a message on the absence line;
- Ensure their children arrive on time, properly dressed & with the right equipment for the day.

Form Tutor

- Mark registers accurately in tutor time and subject lessons;
- To raise any unusual attendance patterns/periods of absence and discuss with the student and/or parent/carer if required
- To make initial home contact by phone to initiate discussions about attendance with parents/carers;
- Report at least half termly to the form group both the class's attendance record and individual student attendance records.

Attendance Officer (AO)

- To ensure first day response operates for any student who is absent for no known reason;
- To ensure all registers are complete and follow up where necessary;
- To update the school attendance log, have weekly meetings with the Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral, provide half-termly attendance data to form tutors and record information relating to individual cases on the student files.

- To communicate current attendance to parents/carers of students whose attendance drops below 95% to build improved attendance.
- To support the Assistant Head-teacher in appropriate contact with parents/carers to address specific attendance concerns

Family Liaison Officer

- To encourage an active partnership between children/parents/carers/Academy by working creatively and positively with parents/carers to achieve maximum involvement in their child's education. This is particularly important in response to Covid-19 and pressures on young people and families.
- To work to maintain positive and productive relationships between home and Academy.
- To encourage parents/carers to understand the importance of their role in their child's education.
- To contribute to making all the Academy's policies and practices meaningful to parents/carers.
- To empower parents/carers to have confidence in their own ability to deal with issues that relate to their own children.
- To monitor and track attendance at school events and explore ways of encouraging parents/carers to attend Academy functions eg parents evenings.
- To be a point of contact and a source of information for parents/carers about the range of support agencies which are available to support them as well as signposting.
- To support students at school with medical conditions.
- To make home visits as and when required
- To keep accurate records and data which can be used to influence future planning.
- To use information regarding attendance and punctuality to follow up issues promptly.

Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral

- To liaise weekly with the AO and Family Liaison Officer to discuss any students who are raising a concern and create an action plan to tackle attendance issues
- To support tutors with any students whose attendance is causing a concern
- To analyse weekly and termly attendance data and monitor the action plan ;
- To ensure parents have attended meetings with the school if their son/daughter's attendance has dropped below 90% and that strategies to support the family have been implemented and external agencies have been contacted if required;
- To liaise with the EWO to implement a plan of action to address the key issues;
- To provide a termly attendance update for the SLT & governing body
- To monitor punctuality to lessons and follow up any punctuality issues, ensuring parents are informed;
- To monitor and act upon any incidents where students are signing in at the office and not attending registration on a frequent basis for no valid reason.
- To praise individual students and form groups by rewarding high attenders in celebration assemblies.

Educational Welfare Officer

- Liaise with AHT concerning students and discuss course of action;
- To follow escalation process with student and families giving cause for concern and to meet with parent/carers and AHT as appropriate;
- Set targets with families whose children have an attendance below 90% and possible 'Fast Track' cases may be opened. Details can be found on the County website.

Governors –

To ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at Holbrook Academy.

4. Penalty Notices

Suffolk's Education Attendance Service can issue Penalty Notices in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:-

- 4.1 A student has been identified as having unauthorised absence and a referral is made to the Education Attendance Service. The school will make a referral once 8 unauthorised absence marks have accrued.
- 4.2 Where a student is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

The school will be following the Local Authority's guidance on this. If a referral is made for a Penalty Notice, this will result in a fine of £60 per parent/carer. If this is not paid before 21 days, the fine will increase to £120 per adult/carer for each child. Carer can be a step parent and/or carer.

Appendix A – Coding for Registers

Attendance code	Meaning of code
/ or \	Present in school during registration / = am \ = pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity - approved by school
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment .The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational visit or trip with the school or another organisation approved by the school
W	Work experience
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Holiday authorised by the school. Application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave - only Year 11
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or • The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or • A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
z	Pupil not on admission register
X	Covid related absence

Appendix B – Parental Guidance

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.30am** and the afternoon register at **1.05pm**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration closes at **9.00am** in the morning and **1.15pm** in the afternoon.

Students who arrive late but before the register closes will be counted as present but will be coded as L for lateness and dealt with according to the Academy's Behaviour and Rewards Policy.

Any student arriving after the register has closed and has been 'sent' will be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Except in special circumstances -

If your child arrives after registration has been taken, without good reason, he/she will be marked late. Students who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign in. If a student is late, without good reason, on two or more occasions in a week, a member of staff, either the Form Tutor or Pastoral Support Manager may give a lunchtime detention.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or is a phone call acceptable?

We expect a parent/carer to send a message via the Gateway or telephone the school on every day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will endeavour to phone you as soon as we can. If we cannot contact you we will send you a text message.

If we do not receive a response from the first priority contact details you have provided for your student we will telephone the other contacts you have provided in order to ensure that the whereabouts and safety of your child is known. If we are unable to make contact other agencies will be informed as appropriate. We will send a letter asking for confirmation of the reason for absence. A deadline will be set for your reply and the letter will inform you of this. If you fail to reply by this date or the explanation you give is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. Any unauthorised absences will be shared with the Academy's EWO.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- i. where leave of absence has been agreed in advance, eg:
 - A student is to participate in an approved performance in which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
 - A student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion;
 - In **exceptional** circumstances permission is granted for a family holiday in which parents have sought permission in advance;
- ii. where the school is satisfied the student is too ill to attend and medical evidence is provided if requested;
- iii. where the student has a medical appointment and evidence is provided in advance (although parents are requested to make the appointments outside of school hours wherever possible, or return to school promptly after the consultation);
- iv. where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions.
- v. the student is entitled to home-school travel and no transport has been arranged by the local authority;
- vi. the absence occurs on a day of religious observance by the religious body to which their parents or the student belongs;

- vii. The student is of no fixed abode, his/her parents are engaged in trade in which he/she travels, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of eleven, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceeding twelve months;
- viii. In other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and **for a limited time**.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details and appointment letters. In cases of recurring absences through illness you will be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you by phone, text and/or letter to discuss the best way forward.

7. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

The school strongly discourages parents/carers from taking their child out of school for a holiday.

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on an annual family holiday during term time, you should put your request in writing to the Headteacher, at least six weeks in advance clearly stating the reason why the holiday cannot be undertaken in school holiday time. Financial / economic reasons, availability of accommodation, ease of travel would not be considered acceptable reasons to grant leave of absence. If the request is due to the limited times a parent is able to take holiday from their place of work, then written evidence of this should be obtained from the employer.

The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission and absence for holidays will not normally be authorised unless:-

- The holiday is a single, annual, family holiday which cannot be taken in school holiday time.
- The number of school days missed by such a holiday will not exceed 4.
- The attendance of the child/children has exceeded 95% in the previous 12 months.
- The child/children will not miss major public exams eg GCSEs, or be absent during the important final preparation time for the examination.

If students miss work as a result of a holiday taken in term time, it is expected that responsibility for catching up on missed work lies with the child and parents/carers not their teachers.

Occasionally some students need to undertake an extended trip overseas. In this situation, parents should contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the arrangements.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a school planner each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it each week for tutorial time. Chat to him/her about school and ensure h/she feels happy and challenged and let us know if you feel they have stopped enjoying coming to school.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's Form Tutor, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons i.e difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school

and work together to tackle the problem. We may involve other agencies to help and support you and your child.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at: Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

Appendix C : A Guide for Students

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Holbrook Academy. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a place at sixth form / college (we share details about your attendance as part of the transition process).
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

Remember, your attendance at school is very likely to be checked by a prospective employer and is on your school reports.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview for a job, college, university, etc.
- selection for a national event/competition/training etc.

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents/carers, a completed request for absence form or copy of appointment letters to explain ALL absences from school including arriving late. If you are unable to provide written evidence or the explanation is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. TALK TO SOMEONE – your Form Tutor, Behaviour Manager, the School Nurse, another member of staff, your parents/carers. We can also organise time with the counsellor or a mentor.

We can only help you if we know there is a problem so talk to us and we will be able to help and support you.