



# Holbrook Academy

## Attendance Policy

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| <b>Date Approved</b>       | Q&M Committee - 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2016<br>WGB – 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2016 |
| <b>Signed</b>              | F Rolfe (Acting Chair of Q&M Committee)   |
| <b>Minuted</b>             | 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2016   |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b> | Autumn Term 2017  |

*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.*

## 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, together with 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. School's 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), Pastoral Support Manager (PSM) and Assistant Headteacher (AHT) – Pastoral, will meet weekly to ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Pastoral Support Manager and 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 then share up to date attendance information and issues with both the Pastoral Team and 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-8:35am**, this registration will be closed at **9:00am**. The afternoon registration time is **2:15-2:25pm**, this registration will be closed at **2:30pm**.
- 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 absent. 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 help keep absences to a minimum. 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 lives more than three miles away 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 which him/her travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, have 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;
  - 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** (See Appendix C – A Guide for 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 or Pastoral Support Manager;
- To attend lessons on time, ready to learn.
- To follow school procedures if late to morning registration, by signing in at the office;
- If they have been absent to provide a parental note to their form tutor.

### **Parents/carers** (See Appendix B – Parental Guidance)

- Ensure their children attend school regularly;
- Ensure we have 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 phone number;
- 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;
- Practise good house keeping – chase up absence letters for coding, pass on letters for filing;
- To raise any unusual attendance patterns/periods of absence with Pastoral Support Manager;
- To update a **Pupil Attendance Tracker** if required by a student within the form group, making initial home contact by phone to initiate discussions about attendance with parents/carers;
- Report half termly to the form group both the class's attendance record and individual student attendance records.

### **Attendance Officer (AO)**

- To liaise with the office 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 monitor and highlight any students whose attendance has fallen below 95 % to form tutors;
- To refer students with attendance below 95% to PSM and trigger Level 1 attendance letter by alerting the PSM;
- If attendance continues to fall to 92-95%, to trigger Level 2 letter by alerting PSM and AHT ;
- If attendance continues to drop below 90% to trigger Level 3 letter by alerting PSM and AHT;
- To update the school attendance log and have weekly meetings with the PSM, with any additional information to be recorded for individual student cases.

**Pastoral Support Manager (PSM)**

- To meet weekly with the AO & act upon any issues raised, including communicating with parents and students directly.
- To support tutors with any students whose attendance is causing a concern.
- To arrange meetings with parents whose children's attendance is falling below 95% to create appropriate support plan;
- To meet weekly with the AHT-Pastoral to update on any attendance concerns;
- To liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) assigned to the school to discuss Level 2 and 3 attendance concerns;
- To analyse weekly the school's attendance data and create an action plan to tackle attendance issues;
- 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.

**Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral**

- To liaise weekly with the AO and PSM to discuss any students who are raising a concern.
- To analyse the weekly and termly attendance data and monitor the PSM's action plan;
- To ensure parents have attended meetings with the school if their son/daughter has been raised as a Level 2/3 concern and that strategies to support the family have been implemented and external agencies have been contacted if required;
- To organise and invite families to a governors' panel meeting to review the support in place where it is felt this may be of benefit.
- To liaise with the EWO to discuss Level 2/3 cases and produce a plan of action to address the key issues;
- To provide a termly attendance update for the SLT and governing body concerning impact strategies.

**Educational Welfare Officer**

- Liaise with PSM and AHT concerning Level 2 and 3 students and discuss course of action;
- To follow escalation process with student and families giving cause for concern;
- Set targets with families whose children have an attendance below 85% 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 for the first time as having unauthorised absence and a referral is made to the Education Attendance Service.

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.

## 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"> <li>• The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.</li> </ul> |
| z               | Pupil not on admission register  |

## 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 **2.15pm**.

#### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration closes at **9.00am** in the morning and **2.30pm** 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 would expect a parent/carer to 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, 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;
- iii. 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);
- iv. where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions.
- v. the student lives more than three miles away 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 which him/her travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, have 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. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may 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.

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 10.
- 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, or the Pastoral Support Manager, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons ie 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:

Southern Area Education Office,  
St Edmund House, Rope Walk  
Ipswich  
IP4 1LZ

Tel. No. 01473 584950

## **ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY**

### **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 to explain ALL absences from school including arriving late. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note 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, Pastoral Support 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.