



ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2021

Philosophy

Holbeton Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the School

Responsibilities and Roles:

Parents

- Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absences by 9.15am on each day of absences.
- Parents should not take their child on holiday in term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a penalty notice being issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the schools prior written consent.

School

- All registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 10 minutes of the start of the school day at 9.00 am and 10 minutes of the end of lunch at 1.25pm.
- If no reason has been given for a child's absence at the close of register, staff will contact parents.
- If contact with the school has not been made by 9.30am regarding a pupils absences this becomes a safeguarding concern as the school is unable to account for their whereabouts. NB absence must be reported by parents every morning of a child's absence, even if it is for the same reason as the previous day (eg chicken pox). This is to ensure the safety of the child and the parent.

- The school will ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through a variety of media: website, newsletters and parents meetings.
- The school will celebrate 100% attendance and improving attendance using a bronze, silver and gold system.
- School will have a clear process to identify and follow up all absences and lateness.

All absences must be explained by a parent. The School will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Statutory Duty of Schools

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests.

Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why children might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc.) the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.

Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- *Genuine illness*
- *Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but parents are encouraged to try to make these after school if possible)*
- *Days of religious observance*
- *Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces*
- *External examinations*

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by the school.

If the school refuses a request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make parents liable to a Penalty Notice or Court proceedings.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. These would include 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 6 month period **(please note that each day counts for two sessions, so a week's holiday during term time would meet the trigger point immediately.)** Attendance registers are routinely monitored by the School's Education Welfare Officer. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when:

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

This school has a duty to notify the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for

£120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated

Please be aware that Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The courts have powers to fine parents up to £2500 and summons could lead to a criminal record. In extreme cases courts may imprison for up to 3 months. In addition, a court appearance would attract significant costs if found guilty. For further information, please see below:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-attendance>

Summary

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role of maintaining standards and adhering to the law. Responsibility to promote attendance is the duty of the whole School community, which will ensure maximum engagement in promoting attendance.

If a child under the age of 5 years takes a place in full-time education at Holbeton Primary School, the parents are deemed to accept that their child will be treated in the same way as a child of statutory school age.

Please see

Appendix 1

Procedural Flow Chart.

Appendix 2:

Letter of concern (1)

Appendix 3

Letter of concern (2)

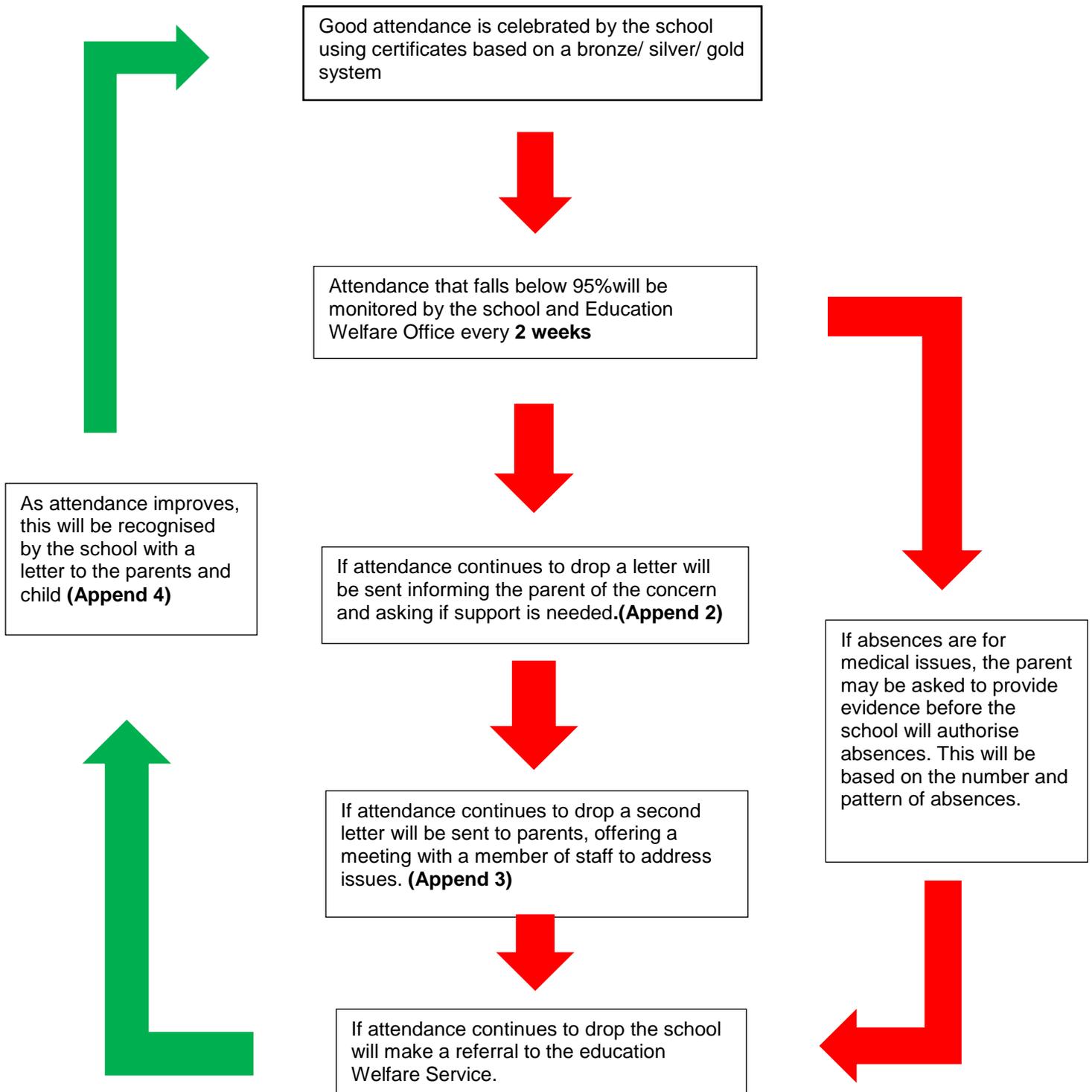
Appendix 4

Letter of thanks for improvement in attendance.

Appendix 5

Letter explaining refusal of request for holiday during term time.

**Appendix 1:
Holbeton Attendance flow chart :**



If, at any time, a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised within a 6 months period, the Head will refer to the Local Authority to consider the legal options available.

Appendix 2

Re: drop in Attendance below 95% in second two week period. *(to be adapted if child is suffering from long term illness, significant bereavement or other known unavoidable reason)*

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

Your child's attendance has dropped below 95% for the second fortnight this year, xx% in xxx and xx% in the last 2 weeks. This will have a significant impact on their ability to learn and thrive at school. We are writing to offer our support in ensuring that your child's attendance improves in the coming weeks. Please contact us if there is anything we can do to help you and your child to achieve this.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 3

Re: drop in Attendance below 95% in third two week period. *(to be adapted if child is suffering from long term illness, significant bereavement and other known unavoidable reason)*

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

Your child's attendance has dropped below 95% for a third time this year. This is a significant cause of concern as this will have a significant impact on their ability to learn and thrive at school.

Please attend a meeting on XXX with myself and [insert Educational Welfare Officer if deemed necessary] to discuss a plan of action to ensure that your child's attendance improves in the coming weeks.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 4:

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

Following a period of poor attendance, your child's attendance has now improved to xx%. Thank you for your efforts in securing this rise in attendance. If you do foresee any further difficulties in the future, do not hesitate to contact us so that we can support in any way possible.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 5

Re: Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'.

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice (assuming one has not been issued in the past 2 years)
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

This school will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above. Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated. If a previous Penalty Notice has been issued within the past 2 years then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Court.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the schools responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances).

Thank you for your anticipated support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dear Name

XXX attendance for the year by the end of the Spring Term was XXX%. Although this is still below 96% attendance that we would aim for to ensure your child thrives at school, I have noted that their attendance has improved since the end of the Spring half term.

I am writing to thank you for supporting your child to improve their attendance in school and hopefully, with the improving weather, XXX attendance will continue to improve over the Summer Term.

Yours sincerely