



Holmer Green Junior School
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HOLMER GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written	Adopted by Governors	Review date	Responsibility
September 2026	September 2026	September 2027	Headteacher and Inclusion Lead

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Aims and objectives

At Holmer Green Junior School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Buckinghamshire Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

As set out in 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory documentation from the Department of Education, we follow this process:

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 improvement 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 and 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

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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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory documentation from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Implementation of this policy at the school

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- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.
- Hold attendance as a standing element of safeguarding meetings

The School Business Manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
 - Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
 - Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/Inclusion lead/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when a referral may be required to be sent to the Local Authority

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office no later than 9:05am

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
 - Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

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- Monitor registers each morning and identify any pupils who are not present
- Send daily updates of absentees to the Senior Leadership team by 10am at the latest

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Clear notes will be made, giving the reason for a child not attending school

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

This will only take place where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:05am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 09:05am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:30 and will be kept open until 13:35.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

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Parents/Carers must call the school office, leave a message on the answer machine or send an email to the office email address. office@hgjs.co.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

We will require evidence of any medical appointments.

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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The school may undertake a home visit if a child is absent for 4 or more days.

A pupil who arrives late:

- After the register has closed at 9:05am will be marked as absent (Code U)

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.

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- In **exceptional circumstances** parents may approach the school governors via the headteacher for a leave of absence. Any authorised absences for exceptional circumstances will be limited to ten days in any one academic year.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here <https://www.hgjs.co.uk/page/?title=Absence%2C+Attendance+and+Behaviour&pid=12> . The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)

- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team will visit the pupil's home address to try to ascertain the reason for the unexplained absence.
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not
 - Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
 - Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels in writing.
- Monitor attendance and absence data every half term across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers' other school leaders including the SENCO, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Meet every two weeks as a safeguarding team to identify any concerns for attendance
- Meet with pupils who have low attendance to identify why they are struggling to get into school
 - Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
 - Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

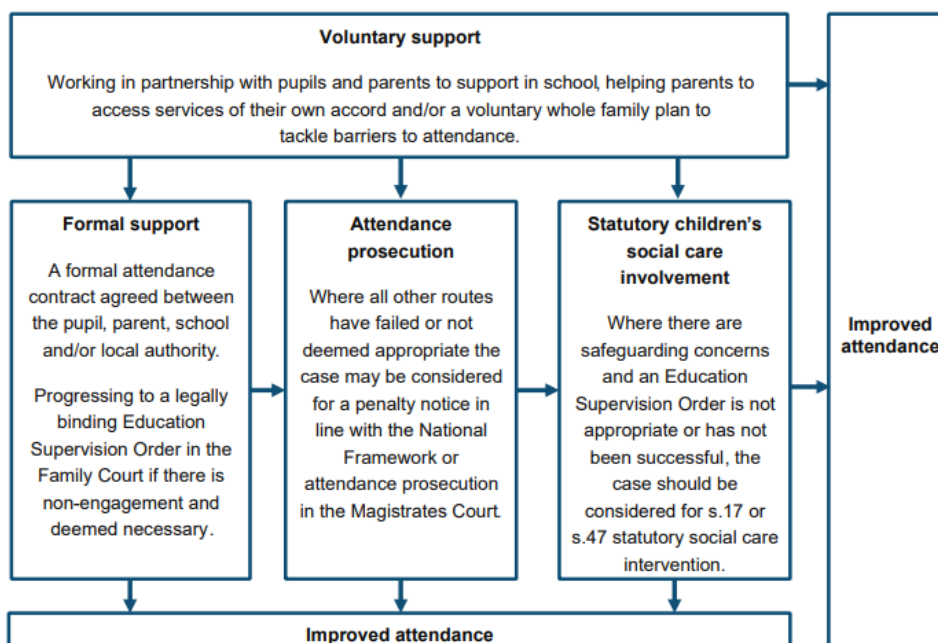
Our process for managing absence is as follows:

Stage	Threshold	Intervention
1	Attendance above 95%	Universal Support This is the support all children receive to inform them of attendance expectations and to support their regular attendance. This includes class teacher discussions, headteacher communications at the gate every morning etc.
2	Attendance below 95%	A phone call home will be made to notify you of our attendance concerns.

		A member of staff will communicate with you about your child's attendance. Monitoring to take place to see that attendance has improved.
3	Attendance below 90%	A letter is sent home to notify you of our continued concerns. This letter will contain information relating to absences and will signpost support to increase attendance. Monitoring to take place to see that attendance has improved.
4	Attendance not improving	All adults to be invited into school for a formal parenting contract meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to formally identify any barriers leading to the poor attendance of a child. Targets will be set during this meeting which will be reviewed in 4-6 weeks.
5	Review of meeting	All adults with parental responsibility will be invited into school for a formal parenting contract review. The outcome of this review could be as follows: • Attendance has improved therefore the case is closed. • Attendance hasn't improved – continue the contract • Attendance hasn't improved – referral to LA.
6	No improvement in attendance	A referral will be made to the local authority for statutory support in the event of continued low attendance. If all of the prior intervention does not lead to improved attendance, we will seek further support from the local authority. It is important to note that our school does not benefit financially from fixed penalty notices.

Guidance from 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory documentation

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



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Children missing in education

Where an unexplained absence remains unexplained after day 1, we will formally risk assess the absence and take steps to contact parents via alternative means. This includes contact to all numbers from school.

If the family are still uncontactable on the second day, a home visit will be made by the headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where we are unable to reach the parents and/or have sight of the child, we will refer to the local authority's children missing in education team and complete a MARF as necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

Whilst the local authority requests this information on day 10 of absence, we seek to send this by day 5. We continue rigorous first day response following a referral until the child is located and/or the local authority confirm removal from roll.

The school follows the local authorities' procedures for ensuring that children who are at risk of missing in education are given the appropriate, prompt support to identify their whereabouts and safeguard their welfare. We also maintain a list of children 'at risk of CME' where additional specific provision is put in place in the case of absence.

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Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

The following link will guide you to our Child Protection Policy and Behavior Policy
<https://www.hgjs.co.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=20>

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.