



Holly Hill  
Church School

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

*As a Christian school our vision is to promote 'Life in All its Fullness.' Our ethos is based on our 12 Christian values of hope, honesty, patience, joy, forgiveness, tolerance, thankfulness, respect, kindness, friendship, gentleness and love. It is within the vision and the ethos that this policy is written and will be implemented.*

Dated Issued: Sept 2024

Review Date: July 2025

Signed:  (Chair of Governors)

## **The importance of school attendance**

At Holly Hill, we value each one of our children and expect to see all children in school every day except on occasions when they are not well enough to come to school. We expect absences to be kept to a minimum and for children to come to school as much as possible for children to reach their full potential. School attendance is vitally important for your Childs' achievement, well-being and wider development. The expected level of attendance for our school is 96%, children who miss more than 10% of school are classed as 'persistently absent'.

At Holly Hill we will take into consideration the sensitivity and complexity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety. The foundation of securing good attendance at Holly Hill is that school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some children find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, Holly Hill and our partners will work with children and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. It cannot solely be the responsibility of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing and effective use of resources.

## **Persistent absence**

Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence and this means your child is missing 19 or more days of school during the academic year. This is the equivalent to your child missing 1 or more days every two weeks, or around 6 days per term.

Missing this much time from school will have a detrimental effect on your Childs' well-being, progress and sustaining friendships.

### How does your child's attendance compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

### The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

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 they are on roll at or by government agreed, education otherwise than at a school.

This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

#### Overall Aims and Objectives:

- To ensure that statutory obligations are fulfilled. Children must get an education following the school term after their 5th birthday.

Child turns 5 before or on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 - Compulsory school age from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2025

Child turns 5 before or on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 – Compulsory school age from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Child turns 5 before or on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 – Compulsory school age from 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2025

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through attending each day and arriving on time.
- To ensure the school attendance target of 96% is achieved.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents/carers, pupils, teachers and governors by ensuring all stakeholders receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To work with families, to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## **Sharing strong relationships with families**

At Holly Hill we build strong relationships with our families. Families are treated with dignity and respect in line with our ethos and 12 Christian values of *hope, honesty, patience, joy, forgiveness, tolerance, thankfulness, respect, kindness, friendship, gentleness and love*.

We listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them. However, we do not shy away from challenging misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like and communicating the link between attendance and attainment and the wider wellbeing of the children.

In communicating with parents, we will explore where a child or family needs support with attendance. It is important that the best placed person in the school, works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners will work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Where absence intensifies, or remains unchanged, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners. Prosecution will be a last resort where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

## **Working together to improve attendance**

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance. At Holly Hill, all partners should work together to:

### **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.

Holly Hill Church School is a place where every child belongs. We create a welcoming environment to allow all children to gain a sense of belonging and to achieve their full potential through regular school attendance.



### **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.

Concerning levels of absence could result in a monitoring letter being sent to parents. Early intervention considering as a preventative measure and possible Early Help offered. Attendance will be looked at on a case by case basis.



### **LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Concerns regarding attendance could result in an invitation for a meeting in school with Aimee Deane, Learning and Attendance Mentor to explore barriers and implement a programme to try and remove barriers. Early Help support to be offered or reviewed.



### **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.

The child is at high risk of becoming of persistent absence. This could result in a formal letter being sent to parents inviting them to a (SARM). Review of Early help and interventions to take place.



### **FORMALISE SUPPORT**

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 a parenting contract or education supervision order.

The child is at serious risk of becoming persistently absent. This could result in a formal warning notice being sent to parents. Continued internal and external programmes to support. Parenting or supervision order may be considered at this stage. A multi-disciplinary approach to be considered and offered.



### **ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The child is now classed as persistently absent. Persistent absence is when a child's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions. Over an academic year this equates to 19 days. All avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with. The school will now enforce attendance through statutory intervention of prosecution to protect the pupils right to their education.

## **Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. As an inclusive school Holly Hill ensures their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, at Holly Hill we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This should include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions.
- Making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate
- Making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Working with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed
- Working with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at the governing body meetings
- Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.
- Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education,

Holly Hill is sensitive and avoids stigmatising pupils and parents. We talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance. We develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

## Roles and Key responsibilities

The senior lead, attendance champion at Holly Hill is Mrs Kate O'Neill. Mrs O'Neill can be contacted by calling the school office on 0121 675 8700 or by email to [k.jones@hollyhill.bham.sch.uk](mailto:k.jones@hollyhill.bham.sch.uk)

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Mr Keith Campbell	Attendance Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.</li> <li>• Set attendance targets with the Executive Headteacher.</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures and actions taken to improve attendance of groups of pupils (particularly PEPP and SEND) and targeted pupils.</li> <li>• Agree and Review School Policy.</li> </ul>
Mr Mark Carr	Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.</li> <li>• Consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Review and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken.</li> <li>• Conduct daily checks of 'comments report' of reasons for children's absence.</li> <li>• Ensure action is taken to safeguard children by ascertaining reasons for absence are identified for every child on their first day of absence.</li> <li>• Arrange for a home visit with Learning mentors when telephone contact cannot be made with parent/carer.</li> </ul>
Mrs Kate O'Neill	Deputy Head Teacher/SENCO/Senior Attendance Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.</li> <li>• Ensure action is taken to safeguard children by ascertaining reasons for absence are identified for every child on their first day of absence.</li> <li>• Overall management and implementation of the policy.</li> <li>• Making sure staff are up to date with Attendance training.</li> <li>• Consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Lead half termly attendance meetings with Attendance and learning Mentor.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken.</li> </ul>
Mrs Jackie Ingleby	Office Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the school answer phone and record messages regarding pupil absence.</li> <li>• Prepare and deliver the daily attendance report for classes to use in emergencies "fire register".</li> <li>• Ensure the accurate admission and induction of new pupils.</li> <li>• Report to the Local Authority, as requested in response to children missing in education.</li> <li>• Record reasons for absences received from parents.</li> </ul>
Mrs Aimee Deane	Attendance and Learning Mentor/ School Pathfinder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure action is taken to safeguard children by ascertaining reasons for absence are identified for every child on their first day of absence.</li> <li>• Conduct home visits as discussed by Head Teacher.</li> <li>• Implement the daily checks of SIMS registers after morning and afternoon registration sessions.</li> <li>• Liaise with parents/carers of identified children by letter, telephone, meeting or by other methods to improve children's punctuality and attendance.</li> <li>• Respond to parental requests for leave in term time, in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school if no reason has been received.</li> <li>• Record reasons for absence and update class registers daily.</li> <li>• Prepare a 'comments report' providing reasons for any absence on a daily basis and present this report to the Head Teacher/ Designated Safeguarding Lead</li> <li>• Ensure staff are accurately recording attendance on SIMS.</li> <li>• Inform parents / carers of school policy and procedures when parents have failed to inform the school of a pupil's absence.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evaluations of Attendance and punctuality for the half termly review meetings.</li> <li>• Support families using Early Help and Pathfinder model.</li> <li>• Promote good attendance /punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with parents/carers.</li> <li>• Consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Birmingham Local Authority policies and procedures.</li> </ul>
Miss Michelle Watts	Learning Mentor Designated Safeguarding Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct home visits alongside Attendance and Learning Mentor as discussed by Head Teacher.</li> <li>• Promote good attendance and punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with parents/carers.</li> <li>• Ensure action is taken to safeguard children by ascertaining reasons for absence are identified for every child on their first day of absence.</li> </ul>
	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.</li> <li>• Keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system, taking a register twice a day.</li> <li>• Update the fire register as a live document.</li> <li>• Regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.</li> <li>• Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.</li> <li>• Discuss pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.</li> <li>• Discuss any concerns with Headteacher or Attendance and Learning Mentors.</li> </ul>
	Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring your child to school every day and on time. School opens at 08.30am and starts at 08.40am. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as late. Pick your child up on time after school. School closes at 3.10pm.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform school if your child is absent and the reasons for this. This can be by phoning the school office on 0121 675 8700, or by leaving a message on the school answering machine at any time, or by emailing school at <a href="mailto:enquiry@hollyhill.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@hollyhill.bham.sch.uk</a>. The message needs to contain your child's name, class and a clear reason for your child's absence.</li> <li>• Do not take holidays in term time.</li> <li>• Make appointments after school or in the holidays wherever possible.</li> <li>• Ensure that the school has at least three current contact numbers and ensure that the school they are kept up to date of any changes.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.</li> </ul>
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## Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

### Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed, and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

### Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 08.40am. At that point, the teacher must submit their final register. From 8.40am the school doors are closed. The office staff ensure children are signed in late using Inventory. Children arriving after 08.40am are recorded as 'L' (late). Children who arrive more than half an hour late will receive a 'U' code. This means that their mark for that day is unauthorised. Unauthorised absences impact attendance.

### Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

## **Monitoring First Day Absence**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made by school.

Following this system:

- Phoning parents' contact number(s).
- If a parent / carer cannot be contacted using their contact numbers, then we will phone the other emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- When contacted, the parent/carer will be asked to provide a reason for their child's absence. The absence reason is written as a 'comment' on SIMS and the register code will be updated (for example I – illness, C – authorised under other circumstances, G – holiday not agreed by school, O – unauthorised.)
- A reason for every absence should be established. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code.
- The 'Comment Report' will be printed and given to the Headteacher, learning mentor (or a member of the leadership team in their absence).
- The Headteacher will check the 'comment report'. If any parent has not been able to be contacted, then the Headteacher will consider options to establish that the child is safe and well. This may include a Home Visit.

## **Incentives**

Weekly:

During Monday's worship, the class with the highest attendance from last week will receive a certificate for their class and have a photo taken. They will also have 15 minutes for a reward of their choice at the end of the day. (This could be extra playtime, mindfulness colouring, story/song time etc with Mrs Deane). Parents of children in the winning class will receive a message on the app.

On Fridays, the class with the most improved attendance will have a special mention during assembly.

Winning classes will be displayed on the attendance board.

Half termly:

Messages sent to parents via school app, to praise good punctuality and attendance of 96% and above.

### **Regular analysis of whole school data**

As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial, therefore regular data analysis takes place half termly to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and or groups of pupils. We also use our school data to compare with similar schools both locally and nationally.

### **Attendance Review Meetings**

The Headteacher with the attendance team (office manager, attendance and learning mentors, SENDCo) monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. Actions are taken in response to address concerns and these actions are evaluated as to their effectiveness.

*Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.*

### **Extended Holidays**

In line with Birmingham Local Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that children are safe.

Headteachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- Religious observance

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete a 'leave of absence' form which you can obtain from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be

lawfully authorised and will only do so if there is an exceptional reason for a child to be absent during term time.

## **Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality**

### **The Legal Framework**

The headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

## **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#).
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.