



The Holt School Attendance Policy

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The Holt School's Attendance Policy is based upon the requirements contained within the following:

- **The Education Act 1996**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**
- **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**
- **Department for Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Education Act 1996 requires parents /carers to ensure their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 1.2 Under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, if a child “fails to attend regularly” at the school where he/she is registered, his/her parent is guilty of an offence. The Supreme Court has determined that “regularly” in this context means that which is **“in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”** *Isle of Wight Council v Platt* 6 April 2017.

2 The Holt’s Commitment to Attendance

- 2.1 As a school, The Holt recognises the clear connection between regular attendance and achievement and will therefore work in partnership with parents/carers, The Holt’s governing body and the Wokingham Local Authority to ensure that students achieve maximum possible attendance by:
- 2.1.1 ensuring Registers are taken promptly at 8.40am and again at 2.30pm at the start of the afternoon session;
 - 2.1.2 contacting parents/carers when a student has failed to arrive at school and where no message explaining absence has been received by 11.30am;
 - 2.1.3 telephoning or sending a written request to parents/carers where a student’s absence is unexplained (see section 4 entitled Authorised and Unauthorised Absences below);
 - 2.1.4 providing parents/carers with their child’s percentage attendance at regular intervals through reviews home (attendance is also available to parents on Frog);
 - 2.1.5 working with parents/carers when there are concerns over a student’s lack of regular attendance;
 - 2.1.6 notifying the Education Welfare Service when, in accordance with this Policy, a student’s attendance causes concern; and
 - 2.1.7 making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service when absences persist.

3 Attendance Rules

- 3.1 The Holt expects that all students will:
- 3.1.1 attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence (see section 4 entitled Authorised and Unauthorised Absences below);
 - 3.1.2 arrive at school to be in form room for 8.40am (see section 8 entitled Punctuality/Lateness below);
 - 3.1.3 be appropriately prepared for the day; and

3.1.4 bring to the attention of their form tutor, Head of Year or Student Support any issues that may affect their school attendance.

3.2 The Holt expects that all parents/carers will:

3.2.1 ensure they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy and their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education;

3.2.2 ensure they are aware of the school term dates, INSET days and other important dates which are published on the school's website and take note of these when planning holidays and family events;

3.2.3 encourage their child to attend school every day throughout the academic year;

3.2.4 ensure their child arrives in time to be in registration at 8.40am prepared for the school day;

3.2.5 email absence@holt.wokingham.sch.uk or telephone the school each day if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance stating, if the absence is only for part of the day, the time of leaving and the expected return time;

3.2.6 avoid, where possible, making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day;

3.2.7 notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance;

3.2.8 advise school immediately of any changes to contact details; and

3.2.9 inform the Co-Headteachers, where possible, at least a month in advance of any planned absence to request that the absence be authorised.

4 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Authorised absence is when The Holt:

4.1.1 accepts the explanation for the absence offered as satisfactory justification for the absence; or

4.1.2 has given approval for the absence in advance.

4.2 Unauthorised absence is when The Holt:

4.2.1 does not accept an explanation for the absence as being reasonable justification for the absence; or

4.2.2 when no explanation for the absence has been provided; or

4.2.3 when the Co-Headteachers (or someone authorised on their behalf) have not approved a request for leave of absence.

5 Notifying School of Absence and Applying for a Leave of Absence

- 5.1 In accordance with section 3.2.5 above, parents/carers are expected to email absence@holt.wokingham.sch.uk or telephone the school each day if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance or unplanned absence.
- 5.2 If a parent/carer wishes to apply for a leave of absence for a student, in accordance with section 3.2.9 above, they must email the Co-Headteachers using holt.school@holt.wokingham.sch.uk at least one month in advance of the proposed absence. The Co-Headteachers (or someone authorised to do so on their behalf) will consider the application and will decide in accordance with the guidelines set out in section 6 below as to whether or not the application can be granted. The Holt will endeavour to respond within 5 working days to the parent/s or carer/s who submitted the application whether or not the leave of absence has been authorised.

6 When Will Absence Be Authorised?

- 6.1 At The Holt School we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure students achieve their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement. However, we also recognise that there may be occasions when a parent/carer considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Co-Headteachers can only grant leave of absence if the circumstances are considered, at the Co-Headteachers' (or someone authorised to act on the Co-Headteachers' behalf's) absolute discretion, to be 'exceptional', in which case the student's absence will be authorised.
- 6.2 Examples of authorised absence are for approved educational activities with a recognised organisation, participation in national or international sporting events, external examinations, to attend the funeral of a close family member, or for religious observance of the faith to which her parents/carers belong.
- 6.3 In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This evidence could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. The school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost incurred in obtaining it. If medical evidence is not received or the evidence received is, in the Co-Headteachers' (or someone authorised to act on the Co-Headteachers' behalf) view, insufficient to justify the student's absence, then it is at the discretion of the Co-Headteachers

(or the person who is authorised to act on their behalf's) discretion to declare the absence as unauthorised.

7 What if Absence is not Authorised?

7.1 The Holt collects attendance and absence data daily and weekly from the Registers. This information is forwarded to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. This collecting of data also enables The Holt to identify those students whose attendance is giving cause for concern.

7.2 Should a student's attendance give cause for concern, their Head of Year or the Attendance Lead will write to the student's parent or carer to make them aware of the concern. If the student's attendance does not show an improvement, the student's parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting with Head of Year and/or Attendance Lead to agree an Attendance Action Plan.

7.3 If the student's Attendance Action Plan fails to bring about the required improvement in attendance, in accordance with section 2.1.7 above, The Holt will consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service.

7.4 The Holt will also consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service if a leave of absence request is refused, but the student fails to attend school regardless.

7.5 The Education Welfare Service works to support schools, parents and students to promote and ensure good school attendance and punctuality. The Service also has a statutory responsibility to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

7.6 When a student is referred to the Education Welfare Service there are various actions that can be taken to address attendance concerns.

7.6.1 The Fast Track Intervention may be offered as an early intervention measure designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address school attendance concerns. Fast Track involves engaging parents and identifying what improvements and actions need to be achieved over a fixed time frame (usually 8 or 12 weeks).

7.6.2 In certain circumstances, and in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Code of Conduct, Penalty Notices may be used to bring about an improvement in a student's attendance. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (These figures were correct as of 1 September 2017.)

7.6.3 Parents and carers have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings may be initiated in the Magistrates' Court for failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school contrary to Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Similarly, if a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the matter may result in each parent/carer being liable for prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

7.7 If a student is not in school for 20 consecutive school days The Holt will remove the student's name from the school roll. Parents/carers will then have to re-apply for a place at the school on the student's return and there is no guarantee that a space will be available.

8 Punctuality/Lateness

8.1 It is crucial that students arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

8.2 Registration takes place at 8.40am and students who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school.

8.3 Registers close at 9.30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

8.4 In accordance with sections 2 and 7 above, persistent lateness by a student will initially be followed up by school staff and, if not resolved, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

9 Students Leaving During the School Day

9.1 Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

9.2 In accordance with section 3.2.5 above, parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time. In accordance with section 3.2.6 above, where possible, parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency.

9.3 When a student is collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to Student Support before the student is allowed to leave the site. Students must be signed out at Student Support on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.

9.4 If a student leaves the school site without permission, their parents/carers will be contacted. Should The Holt be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the student as a missing person or contact Social Services.

10 Changing Schools

10.1 It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Holt in writing as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from The Holt's roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school; and
- a new home address if appropriate is supplied.

10.2 The student's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and after four weeks the student will be registered on the S2S website as a Student Missing Education.

11 Elective Home Education

11.1 Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

11.2 Should parents/carers wish to follow this route then this needs to be put in writing to the Co-Headteachers with a request that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to monitor the education put in place at home.

12 Governors

12.1 It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate attendance at The Holt. As a consequence attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

12.2 The Chair of Governors has specific responsibility for overseeing attendance matters at The Holt.