



# **Policies**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Next Review – June 2025**





# HCCS Attendance Policy June 2024



## Part A: Key principles, roles and responsibilities

### 1. Introduction and aims

At Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School (HCCS) our core purpose is to enable all children to learn and achieve successfully in school. Students develop academically and socially through consistently high attendance and through a culture which values learning, community, ambition and high standards.

The policy seeks to ensure that all parties are aware and informed of the principles underpinning attendance at HCCS, and that they understand our commitment to raising student attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support. Our attendance policy is written with reference to the guidance in 'Working together to improve school attendance', DfE May 2022. This guidance applies from September 2022. This document is also supported by our policies on safeguarding, and behaviour.

### 2. Key principles and context.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives an education. If a student is enrolled in a school then parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure that their son/daughter attends that school.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Executive Headteacher**

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Liaising with the Local Authority to Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading on attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Ensuring that individual pupil attendance data is reported to parents
- Establishing clear processes for tracking and monitoring attendance
- Having an oversight of attendance data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Ensuring the creation of intervention plans in partnership with the welfare hubs
- Ensuring that there is targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Matt Lowe (Deputy Headteacher).

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Executive Headteacher
- Working with the Local Authority attendance team to tackle persistent absence
- Working with the designated lead and the LA on when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Roz Tomkinson.

#### **3.5 Welfare Teams (Hub Directors, Pastoral Leads and Welfare Managers)**

Welfare teams are responsible for

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data for their year groups and key stages
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Liaising with form tutors to ensure that initial concerns are raised with parents / carers
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Ensuring the creation of intervention plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Ensuring that there is targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Liaising with the LA attendance team and the attendance officer in the issuing of fixed penalty notices

### **3.6 Class teachers/form tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the school's MIS system (Bromcom) to apply the correct codes according to the school's processes.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data for their tutor groups
- Making first contact with parents/carers of students where there are concerns about the attendance of their child.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school before 8.45am using the school's web based absence notification process
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day
- Attend all timetabled sessions on time

## **Part B - Key processes relating to attendance recording, tracking and monitoring**

### **Definitions:**

#### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent reports this absence via the school's procedures.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents and carers do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. Executive Headteachers have the responsibility of deciding whether an absence can be considered exceptional circumstances, and may authorise based on this.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- An absence is recorded as unauthorised if the child is away from school and we have received no contact from parent (carer) or no response from our first contact procedures, to give a reason why the child is off school.

#### **Local Authority support and penalties for unauthorised absence**

Details of how the Local Authority will support schools and parents / carers in improving school attendance and responding to unauthorised absence can be found via the following link <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/action-when-children-miss-school.aspx>

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any 2 consecutive half terms.
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in any 2 consecutive half terms. "Persistent" means at least 10 instances of late arrival.

### **Requests for leave of absence – Including Holiday requests.**

- Students need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents and carers to contact the school in advance (whenever reasonably possible). A leave of absence request form then needs to be completed by parents, and this will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher. If a child is absent with no permission given from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Significant family circumstances such as a wedding, funeral, or family illness.
  - Representative competitions or events, such as sporting academies, or within the arts
  - Activities that could be deemed particularly relevant to the child's education
- No requests for any leave of absence will be authorised during any national statutory assessment period
  - No requests for any leave of absence will be authorised for all other year group non-statutory assessment weeks
  - In line with Government legislation, parents and carers are not entitled to take their child on holiday during term time. The legislation makes clear that the Executive Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Only the Executive Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in the Executive Headteacher's absence) should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
  - For any leave of absence request parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form (available on the school [website](#)) and provide a written explanation for the exceptional circumstance in which they wish to take their child out of school. The Executive Headteacher will consider all requests individually and will take into consideration the parents/carers reasons.

The parents/carers will then be notified in writing whether their request for leave of absence has been approved or not. If the absence/holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

### **If a child is absent**

1. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the register, and this will notify the attendance officer who will note all Ns in the am or pm registration, then they will endeavour to contact the parent or carer as part of the first response procedures.
2. A note or email should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment. Evidence of appointments can be requested.
3. If there are any doubts about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will notify attendance, or the hubs or safeguarding. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

### **Lateness:**

1. School begins at 8.45am and all students are expected to be in school for registration before this time (the school gates open at 8.25am). If your child arrives after 8.45am they will be marked as L. If they arrive after 9.10am they will receive a U. Registers officially close at 9.10am. Students who are consistently late are not just disrupting their own education but also that of others.

2. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting will be held between the welfare team and parents / carer(s). If improvements are not made, further action may be taken.

### **Long-term absence**

- When students have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, learning material home can be accessed on the google classrooms school work.
- For any long-term absence (longer than 5 school days) due to sickness or ill health, then the school will request to see evidence of medical treatment in the form of a prescribed medicine or a signed Doctor's note/letter.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact Parents to arrange a meeting to discuss absences. If necessary, we will seek further advice and guidance from other outside agencies such as the Local Authority or School Health, to support any child who is likely to be away from school for an extended period.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

- The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who is absent from school or has an unauthorised absence after their return to school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carer(s) will be asked to visit the school to discuss the issue. If the situation does not improve, the school can then contact the Local Authority Attendance & students out of School to initiate a fixed penalty notice or possible legal proceedings.
- The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their students to school on a regular basis.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

- All the students who have between 95% and 100% attendance in any academic year, will be rewarded through the house points system.