



Holmer Green Senior School

Attendance Policy

February 2024

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Attendance Policy

Holmer Green Senior School recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individuals, groups and the student body as a whole.

In order to achieve this, all members of the school community have an important contribution to make. This includes the 'ownership' of attendance by both parents and carers. School staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

HGSS does not support home schooling and believes that the child will be missing out on vital education and the wider school experience.

There is an irrefutable link between a student's attendance and attainment which is summarised below, but can be viewed in more detail in Appendix 1:

- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five grade 5-9 GCSEs including English and maths.
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve five grade 5-9 including English and maths.

Early poor attendance habits follow through into Sixth Form/College and employment.

This Policy is linked to the Behaviour Policy and the Anti Bullying Policy.

Policy Outline

Encouraging Good Attendance for All

- The accompanying Guidelines provide detail of strategies for raising levels of attendance. All staff should ensure that these are followed.
- Roles and responsibilities for each member of staff are clearly indicated in the Guidelines.
- An appropriate curriculum, including the use of alternative provision for some students, is essential and will be kept under constant review.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised, if we are to maintain and encourage good attendance.
- Students are provided with appropriate support so that problems do not drive them away from school. The school's approach to bullying is of particular significance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a student's attendance, an appropriate level of multi-agency support will be provided.
- Students with Special Educational Needs are identified and given appropriate support.
- Effective partnership with parents through regular contact and support is provided. Parents are kept informed of their child's attendance through first day contact,

through letters of praise and concern and through individual interviews when appropriate.

- **Parents are informed that holidays taken during term time will not be authorised by the school. Parents may be given a penalty notice under Section 444 of the Education Act.**
- Attendance is given a high profile within the school including through whole staff training, assemblies and students' reports, appropriate displays during Parents' Evenings and other events also help to raise the profile of attendance.
- Governors are kept informed of attendance issues through the People and Personnel Committee.
- Punctuality is highlighted as an important issue through the use of appropriate sanctions.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. Parents must call or email in to explain any absence by 8am on every day of absence but this does not authorise the absence.

Authorisation is given by the attendance officer and often requires medical evidence.

It is important to note: A student's attendance percentage will decline for both authorised and unauthorised absence.

Authorised Absences

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Authorised absences are **still counted as an absence** and **will** affect pupil attendance data.

We advise parents to book medical or dental appointments outside of school hours, but where this is not possible, we require parents to provide the school with evidence and this will not be authorised until evidence has been supplied. Evidence may be in the form of:

- Appointment card or letter
- Copy of a prescription that was prescribed on the date of absence

Unauthorised Absences

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (this includes due to unresolved issues within the school)
- Anxiety in regards to Covid-19 or other related national medical issues, despite the Government issuing contrary guidance and being explicit in regards to compulsory attendance
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register closes
- Shopping, including for items of school uniform, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips

- Exceptional leave in term time which have not been agreed with HGSS
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Children acting as carers

Parents **must** contact HGSS on **every day** of student absence. If this does not happen, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence in the first or last week of any half term will be recorded as unauthorised holiday unless medical evidence is supplied. See authorised absence section for what constitutes appropriate evidence.

Regular Attendance

Whilst a child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between HGSS, the parents/carer and the child.

Parents can support their child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Supporting children in completing their independent learning at home
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with HGSS
- Being positive about school (even if their own experience was less than positive)

Punctuality

HGSS is open from 8am and all students must be in school by 8.45am.

- The attendance register is taken at 8:45am
- The attendance register closes at 9:00, lateness past this time is marked as an **unauthorised absence**
- If there is a genuine reason for a student being late to school (e.g. a transport issue or the student was ill first thing in the morning but arriving later), then parents are expected to call attendance before 8.45am to explain this in full. If an acceptable reason is provided this will ensure that the student does not receive a detention and the parent will not get a text message from the school.
- Students are expected to arrive on time to all lessons during the day. Failure to do this will result in a detention. Repeated failure to be punctual to lessons may result in the student being placed onto a report. Parents will be contacted and the student will be issued a 30-minute immediate detention for each further instance of lateness to lessons.

Identifying and Tackling Poor Attendance and Punctuality

- Attendance and punctuality levels for individuals, form groups, year groups and the whole school are carefully monitored and action taken to address poor attendance and punctuality at each of these levels.
- Attendance and punctuality levels of other groups of students, such as boys and girls, those from an ethnic minority background, and those with Special Educational Needs are carefully monitored and action is taken to address significant differences.
- The school seeks to address patterns of non-attendance, for example at particular times in the week or year.

- Persistent absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school.
- Early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work during transition.
- Attendance panels, involving Heads of Year, Attendance officers, members of the school's Senior Leadership Team, governors and the Education Welfare Service, are used to encourage and support parents.
- Effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service is central to improving attendance and close communication between the Education Welfare Office and the school is carefully maintained.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays (exceptional leave) in term time is illegal and will significantly affect a child's schooling and progress. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances as the September 2013 amendments to registration regulations stipulate.

Under no circumstances will requests for holiday in term time be granted.

It is, however, acknowledged that there may be special circumstances where a parent feels that their child needs to be taken out of school. In these circumstances, parents should email a request for exceptional leave of absence to the attendance office at least 2 weeks prior to the requested date. The Headteacher will then consider the circumstances and write in response with reference to national recommendations.

Exceptional Leave is likely to be refused in the following circumstances:

- When a child is in year 11, 12 or 13
- Where HGSS is aware of any truancy
- Where there are trends to requests
- Where the student's attendance is of concern

Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

Where the decision is taken to refuse permission for an exceptional leave of absence, the absence will remain unauthorised should the parent ignore this decision. HGSS may also refer this for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Charge Notices / Legal Proceedings

The Education Act 1996 states that legal action can be taken when parents fail to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Penalty notices – a penalty charge notice can be issued on behalf of the local authority for the following reasons:

- They fail to ensure their child attends school regularly
- They allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's agreement
- They fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
- A child is found out of school without permission on two truancy sweeps within the same school year
- A child persistently arrives late for school after the register is closed

If there is proof that the parent/carer was aware of the absence and failed to take steps to address the problem, a higher penalty may be incurred.

Staff Responsibilities

Form Tutor (FT)

The main role of the Form Tutor with regards to attendance is one of relationship building with both students and their parents. Form tutors will be expected to carry out the following tasks:

- To follow up on medical evidence for absences
- Contact parents regularly regarding attendance on instruction from the HOY
- Call home if a student is absent for a period of 3 days
- Reintegration – upon return from an absence check the pupil has caught up on missed classwork and homework
- Speak to the HOY immediately regarding student attendance concerns
- Pass on information from parents concerning attendance to the HOY and attendance officer immediately
- Promote the reasons for good attendance and punctuality

Head of Year (HOY)

The main role of the Head of Year is to monitor year group attendance and decide upon necessary interventions. Alongside this, HOYs are expected to:

- Share Form Tutor good practise across their year team
- Meet regularly with the attendance officer
- Effectively disseminate attendance data to Form Tutors
- Organise and attend contract meetings with parents
- Liaise with Pastoral Managers regarding any related cases
- Complete Early Help referrals
- Attend termly Early Help meetings
- Arrange any relevant meetings
- Contact home for continued poor attendance

Attendance Officer

Authorise / Un-authorise absences

- Respond to Exceptional Leave of Absence requests
- Daily absence calls / emails
- In-Touch messages daily
- Register monitoring
- Liaise regularly with Pastoral Managers and HOYs
- Attend meetings where appropriate
- Prepare attendance reports for Governors meetings and on request from SLT
- Work alongside pastoral team to target engagement with PA students and families

Classroom Teachers

Registers:

- Complete registers accurately within the first 10 minutes of every lesson, every day

- If a student is late, change the code to L and enter the minutes late when they arrive

Ensure that students are reintegrated after a period of absence (including 1 day). Talk to students about work to catch up on. It is an expectation that students who are absent complete all work missed.

Provide work for students who are absent for long term illness and mark appropriate work in line with department expectations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation is crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of our policy.

It is carried out in the following ways:

- Annual critical self-evaluation, led the Senior Leader responsible for Whole School Attendance
- School Improvement Plan
- School Self Reviews including Pastoral Reviews and Safeguarding Audit Attendance monitored through Pastoral Manager and tutor meetings.
- Weekly monitoring of attendance for all students, plus tiered intervention of half termly and termly and more frequently for targeted groups of students and individual students. Regular updates to the Governing Body

Conclusion

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance and punctuality is only a part of the school's approach to this issue. Whole-school issues such as providing effective pastoral support and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact on attendance. HGSS attendance data must be made available to the Local Authority and DFE. Parents and carers have a duty to make sure that their child(ren) attend. All HGSS staff are committed to working with parents/carers and students to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

Approved by Governors: February 2024

To be reviewed: February 2026

Appendix 1

Attendance over One School Year

If a student had:

98% attendance = less than 4 days absent from school

95% attendance = 10 days absent from school (50hours of learning to catch up)

90% attendance = 4 weeks absent from school (100hours of learning to catch up)

85% attendance = 5 ½ weeks absent from school

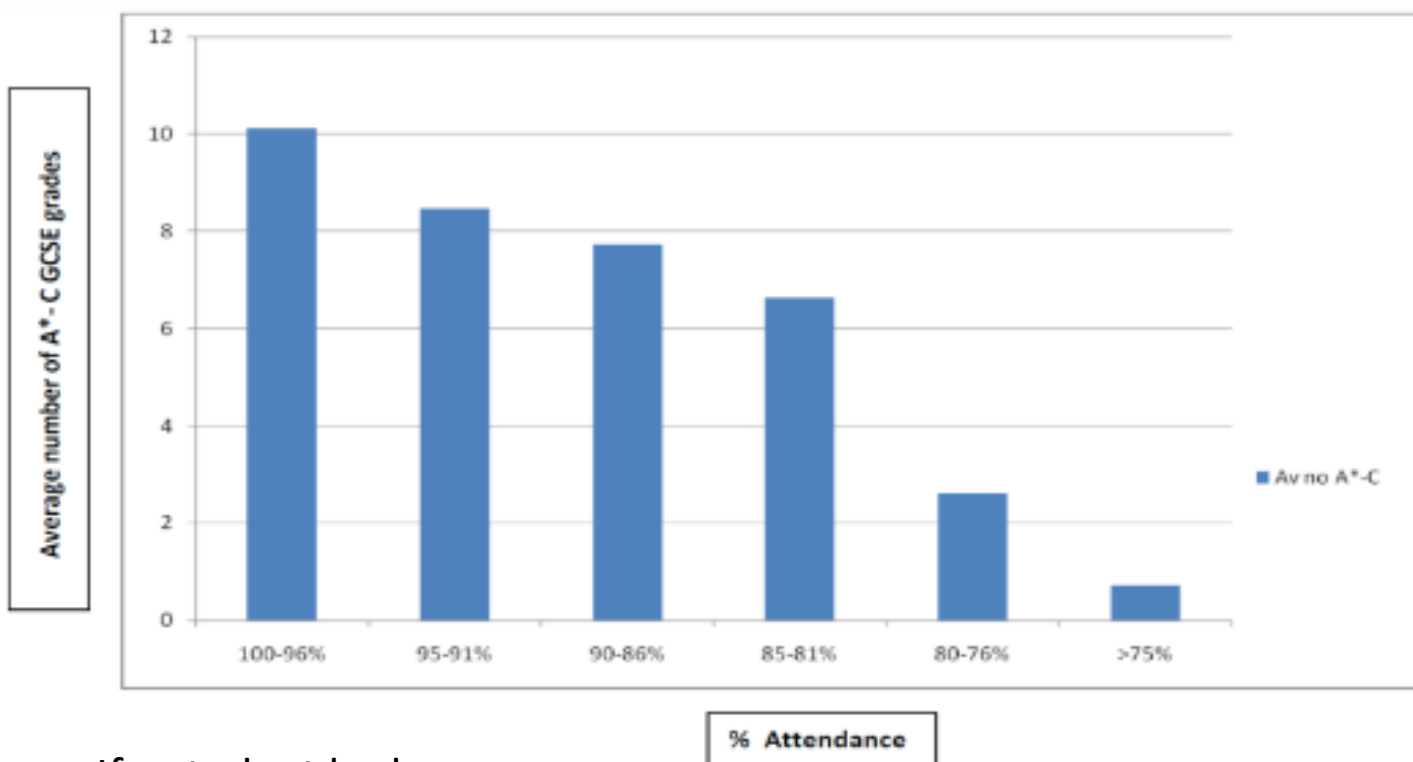
80% attendance = 7 ½ weeks absent from school

Attendance over 5 years (Years 7-11) ...

If a student had:

85-90% attendance = having about half a year off school!

80% attendance = 38 weeks off school = one whole school year missed!



If a student had:

≥96% attendance = likely to get 10 GCSE grades at 9-4.

95% attendance = likely to get 8 GCSE grades at 9-4.

} Tend not to go to college/sixth form