



Holderness Academy & Sixth Form College

Access to Education Policy and Procedures

Effective Date: October 2021

Date of minuted approval by the Governing Body: 18 October 2021

Review Committee: Local Board

Review Date: September 2022

Owner: Associate Headteacher

Version: 3

Rationale

The Education Act 1996 states it is a legal requirement, once a parent has chosen a school as their child's educational provider, to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. Holderness Academy views a good pattern of attendance and punctuality at school as being a life skill and having a direct impact on the outcomes and attainment of children.

This policy outlines the procedures which the Academy uses to address attendance and punctuality and also the statutory obligations of both the school and the Local Authority in ensuring learners achieve outstanding attendance and an exemplary record of punctuality.

We will take every opportunity to raise the profile of outstanding attendance and punctuality with parents and learners. In addition, we will offer support such as Youth & Family Support Services, Educational Psychologist, Pastoral Support and Attendance Support to families and learners to improve areas of difficulty.

We will always comment on attendance and punctuality in any reference that is written by the school. Key staff will meet weekly, and on a half termly basis to monitor and review attendance procedures.

Associate Headteacher – Mr D Wobbaka
Attendance Officer – Miss P Jennings

Background

For a number of years schools have published figures for overall absence and unauthorised absence. Local Authorities were instructed in summer 2008 that from this point overall absence and persistent absence would be published (AAT).

The persistent absence indicator was developed because learner level data revealed that absence is highly concentrated among relatively few learners who account for a large proportion of all absence nationally. Following changes recently announced by The Department for Education 'Persistent Absentee' learners miss the equivalent of 10% or more of school over a typical school year. The legal requirement is 90% attendance, but this does not constitute 'good' attendance.

The persistent absence (% PA) is the number of learner enrolments with 10% or more absence expressed as a

percentage of the total number of learner enrolments.

Aims

We aim to achieve the highest possible attendance by our learners. Good attendance is an essential prerequisite to achieving high standards and we will take every opportunity to promote the importance of attendance with learners and parents. We provide appropriate intervention and support plans for learners with a record of poor attendance and monitor groups of learners so that individuals are given the best opportunities to learn and achieve success. Attendance is a key priority for improvement in the Academy Improvement Plan.

Promoting 'Good' Attendance

Learners achieving 100% attendance and also good punctuality with 100% attendance the previous week, will go into a draw for the Executive VIP pass. This allows two learners from each-year group to go into dinner five minutes early with two friends of their choice. Learners with 100% attendance will achieve 5 Reward Stamps for every week of 100% attendance. Year group attendance is published on a weekly basis. In addition, Learners have the opportunity to participate in a number of 'Celebration Assemblies' at strategic times throughout the year.

Senior Staff, Progress Leaders, Pastoral Managers and Tutors will be emailed the weekly attendance figures to enable them to keep track and reward learners in passing and during tutor time. One tutor group session will be dedicated to updating the Student Attendance tracking document in Planners. Rewarding good attendance is an integral part of Holderness Academy's Positive Discipline Policy

Across the Academy attendance is shared on Progress Reports sent home to parents to explicitly make the link between academic progress and attendance.

Recording Attendance

Learner attendance and punctuality is recorded electronically using SIMS and Lesson Monitor.

Holderness Academy learners are registered in each lesson of the day. This enables the Attendance Team and Progress Leaders to track internal truancy. Period 1 and Period 4 marks become the statutory recorded attendance marks.

Absence codes used in line with DFE Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities 2008 can be found at Appendix 1

Learners registering after 10.30am and 1.20pm will be marked as a U and given an unauthorised absence mark.

Absence Guide

- Day 1 of absence – Parents/Carers inform the school before 8:30am of the reason and expected date of return of their child. Any medical advice given, or visits made.
- Day 2 and beyond – Update the school on your child's progress, any medical advice given and confirmation of when your child will return to school especially if the condition worsens.
- Day 5 onwards – Update school on your child's progress regularly. Medical evidence will always be requested for five days of absence or more.
- Medical appointments – if your child is absent due to a medical appointment, you will be required to provide an appointment card or letter from the practice, and alternatively, medical appointment cards are available in reception areas.

Monitoring Attendance Daily Monitoring

- Parents are frequently reminded of the need to inform the school if their child is legitimately absent on the morning of each day of absence. This is done via the Academy website, newsletter, Academy planner and the Annual Summer Holiday letter.

- Attendance is checked at least twice daily by the Attendance Team. The Attendance Officer or Pastoral Manager will make contact with the parent on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be made, then a letter will be issued that day. If no response to the letter is received within three days of posting, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Whenever a learner absence is recorded as unauthorised, parents will be sent a letter explaining that this has been done and providing an opportunity to discuss the absence further (Appendix 2). When a learner has 10 unauthorised absences in a 13-week period the Attendance Officer will issue a formal warning letter informing parents if their child has any further unauthorised absences in the next 15 school days then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who will consider issuing a Penalty Notice on behalf of the Local Authority. Weekly attendance totals will be issued to Progress Leaders, Pastoral Managers, Senior Staff and Headteacher for review.

Longer term Monitoring

- The Attendance Officer will work closely with the Assistant Headteacher and Pastoral Managers to identify learners causing concern. The team will work together to monitor learners with 90% or less at Holderness Academy on a fortnightly basis to attempt to resolve any issues and put together attendance support plans for learners/families when required.
- Learners with 90% attendance or less and not already on an attendance support plan, parents will be sent a letter and attendance certificate from the Academy indicating a cause for concern. (Appendix 3).
- Learners affected will be closely monitored and if significant improvements are not made, parents will be given the opportunity to attend a school-based Attendance Support Plan Meeting. The Support Plan Meeting will be led by the Assistant Headteacher and the Pastoral Manager. During this meeting the reasons for absence will be analysed and support offered by the Academy to help improve attendance/punctuality. Medical evidence may be requested at any stage to support a learner's absence if attendance is below 90%; this requirement may be removed once a learner is sustaining attendance levels above 90%.
- If the learner's absence does not significantly improve over the next four weeks a Non-Attendance Panel will meet with representation from the Local Governing Body.
- The monitoring of the 90% or lower learners will continue at fortnightly intervals and follow the above procedure.
- If a learner continues to achieve attendance of 90% or less despite the above procedure being followed, then the Assistant Headteacher will refer the learner to the Education Welfare Service who would then compile the case for the legal team. This is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances - Information for Parents/Carers

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly (see explanation on page 1). There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence only in Exceptional Circumstances. Please note this is not an entitlement (see Appendix 5). The Headteacher will only authorise absence in line with the East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy'. Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

There is no longer a provision in law for any Headteacher to authorise an absence for the purpose of a Term Time Holiday.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete.

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on a child's attendance record. This may result in legal proceedings against Parents/Carers, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an acceptable explanation has not been provided by the Parent/Carer.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a Parent/Carer after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes learners caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration or unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances. In these cases, the warning is given on the absence request form and detailed within this procedural document.

If your request for term time absence is declined and you still take your child out of school, each parent within your household, may be issued with a £60 Penalty Notice for each child you have taken out of school. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 21 days, it will increase to £120. If after 28 days, it remains unpaid you may be summoned to appear before the Magistrates' Court to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000.

If you believe, at any stage, that your child's absence from school may leave you liable for prosecution or a Penalty Notice, it is important you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, then please contact the Academy to discuss this with the relevant personnel.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent without speaking to the Academy first to obtain prior approval. The Headteacher cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.

Please note the school day is divided into two registration periods; for example, if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five-day absence equals 10 sessions.

Court Action

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority. Where penalty notices are not paid within the published time frame then the Local Authority may be required to initiate legal proceedings in line with their statutory obligations. Any queries regarding penalty notices should be referred to the Local Authority:

Telephone: 01482 887700

Website: <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-Academys-and-academies/school-attendance/attendance-in-school/>

Internal Truancy at Holderness Academy

All learners are registered electronically in each lesson by lesson monitor. The Attendance Officer/Pastoral Managers will check the registers twice daily and, if staff do not mark registers they are immediately prompted to do so, the accuracy of the register marks is checked by the Attendance Officer. In cases of suspected internal truancy, the Pastoral Managers/Progress Leaders will perform initial investigations and then refer the issue to the Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher if necessary. Internal truancy is likely to lead to internal exclusion.

Maintaining high standards of punctuality

Staff are given regular reminders regarding the accurate marking of registers which are statutory documents, in terms of absence as well as arriving late. Parents will be contacted on the same day as each late arrival via School Comms.

At Holderness Academy learners will receive a sanction for late arrival.

A half termly review of learners who are frequently late across the Academy may result in further action from the Directors of Key Stage, Progress Leader or Pastoral Manager, this may include a Punctuality Panel (SLAP) with the involvement of Senior Staff and members of the Local Governing Body.

The Attendance Officer/Pastoral Managers will monitor punctuality to all lessons at Holderness Academy and report concerns/patterns to the relevant Progress Leader and Assistant Headteacher who will initiate appropriate action.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Tracking learners who are missing education is a statutory duty shared between all schools and the Local Authority and all schools follow the locally agreed policy on this matter. Any learners who have not attended school, without a parental reason being provided for their absence, for ten school days or more will be referred to the Local Authority.

Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education is the term used by the Department of Education to describe parents' decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

Parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 as follows:

'It is the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age "to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".'

Further information for parents considering educating their child at home is available from:

<http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-Academys-and-academies/schools-and-school-places/elective-home-education/>

Supporting Guidance

Definition of terms

PACE caution	The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PA	Persistent absence (legal requirement is learners with 90% attendance or less)
OA	Overall absence
DFE	Department for Education
LA	Local Authority
HA	Holderness Academy
U	Unauthorised absence (late after registers have closed)

List of attendance codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Dear Parent

I regret to inform you that *learner name* has a recorded unauthorised absence on *date*.

As you are aware the Academy closely monitors absences. It is therefore important that *name* does not receive further unauthorised absences.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Dear Parent

As you may be aware the Department for Education (DfE) reduced the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold to 10% from September 2015. The DfE defines persistent absentees as school-age students missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year.

I am writing to inform you that *name* has been identified as a persistently absent student and his/her attendance in the academic year 2020/2021 is currently 89%.

Name's attendance will be closely monitored, and we are hopeful that significant improvement will be made. However, if there is insufficient improvement you will be required to attend a meeting to ensure we are all able to work together to support *Name* in improving his/her attendance.

I enclose a copy of *name's* attendance record. If there are any concerns arising from this letter or you require further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

For guidance on the legal measures available to secure regular school attendance by the DFE please visit:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-00529-200>

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

Holderness Academy

Student Details					
Name:		DOB:		Tutor Group:	
Address:			Contact Numbers:		
Details of siblings of compulsory school age (or other children living in the household):					
Name:		DOB:		School:	
Name:		DOB:		School:	
Name:		DOB:		School:	

I request permission for my child to be absent from school:	
First Day of Absence:	
Date of Return:	
Total School Days:	

Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher will not be able to consider your request without your supporting documents. *Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents which is attached.*

Declaration			
<i>I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we will receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. Please note the school day is divided into two registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.</i>			
Signed:	(Parent/Carer)	Date:	