



# HOLYPORT COLLEGE

<b>Title</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE POLICY</b>
<b>Person responsible for policy formulation, implementation, maintenance and evaluation</b>	Founding Head Master
<b>Persons consulted</b>	Assistant Head Teacher Curriculum Support General Welfare Committee
<b>Adopted by Governors on</b>	18/06/2015
<b>Reviewed by Governors and adopted on</b>	07/03/2024
<b>Date of future review</b>	Spring 2025

## **POLICY DOCUMENT ANNUAL REVIEW**

This Policy document is subject to a periodic review by Holyport College that is formally documented to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Areas subject to review include, but are not limited to, follow-up action from previous reviews, policy conformity, review of complaints, status of corrective and preventive actions, and improvements for the forthcoming year. Holyport College reserves the right to amend this Policy by notice following such review in circumstances in which it considers such change to be necessary or appropriate.

# INTRODUCTION

Holyport College is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending the College regularly and punctually will young people be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. High attainment is inextricably linked to good attendance.

The whole community at the College – students, parents and carers, staff and governors – has a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and each has an important role to play. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's part in this in order to raise the attendance of all students in the College, in line with the 96% and above attendance target set by the Governing Board.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to students, their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, with examples including newsletters and end of term reports. We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-College links whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents, carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. Some children and young people find it more difficult to attend school than others and the College seeks to build a culture where all students can, and want to, be in school. We work collaboratively with families to ensure this happens. Each year the College will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. The College will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory requirements, in particular the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise'*

It further takes into account the latest guidance (September 2022) from the DfE on school attendance which can be found here:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

There are legal obligations on:

- parents and carers to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, and to send them to the College regularly once they are on the register;
- the Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance; and
- the College to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.

The Local Authority has the power under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) 444(1A) to take legal action to enforce attendance at the College. This duty is exercised through RBWM's Attendance Support Team. The Local Authority also has the following legal powers to enforce school attendance:

- Prosecution for irregular school attendance
- Penalty Notices and Parenting Orders (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) for irregular attendance and unauthorised leave of absence
- School Attendance Orders or Education Supervision Orders.

This policy links to the following policies:

Accessibility plan

Medicines and Medical Conditions at School Policy

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

At Holyport College, Walter Boyle, the Founding Head Master and Designated Senior Leader for Safeguarding, is responsible for school attendance. He can be contacted by email – [w.boyle@holyporthcollege.org.uk](mailto:w.boyle@holyporthcollege.org.uk)

In the first instance, however, parents and carers should speak to their child's form tutor if there are concerns about attendance.

## **MORNING REGISTRATION**

The College's aims are as follows:

- The attendance register must be taken at the start of the morning session. From Monday to Friday, this means the register must be taken by the Form Tutor between 8.40am and 9.00am.
- Registration will be done electronically.

- Students who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded with a late code 'L' if they arrive before 9.00am. A student must sign in at reception if the tutor is unable to amend the register.
- If a student arrives after 9.00am, they will be recorded with the late code 'U', unauthorised absence for the morning session, unless a legitimate reason has been provided.
- All students who arrive late will be given a sign in slip from reception. Late arrivals should not be accepted into class without the signing in slip.
- Students who are present should be recorded with the code /. Absent students should be recorded with code N, no reason yet provided/unauthorised absence.
- First day of absence follow-up will start as soon as possible after 9.00am. It is therefore essential that registers are marked punctually and accurately. Only the Head Master or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **AFTERNOON REGISTRATION**

In afternoon registration:

- College students should be registered by their form tutor between 2.00pm and 2.15pm.
- Students who arrive late after 2:15pm should be recorded with code U.

If a student needs to leave the College early, owing to sudden ill health, they should sign out at Reception. Students must not phone parents/carers to come to collect them – this is a decision for a member of staff.

## **BOARDING ATTENDANCE**

Boarding staff ensure boarders' safety by knowing of their whereabouts at all times and by taking timely registers in line with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Where a boarder cannot be located, the Missing Boarder Protocol is activated. Boarding staff will also ensure that they have had eyes on all boarders regularly throughout boarding time, without being intrusive on the boarders' privacy.

The College works with the Virtual School to improve the attendance of looked after children and children with a social worker.

# **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

## **First Day Absence**

Parents/carers must give a written or verbal explanation, by ringing the College office. If no explanation is received by 9.00am staff will contact the parent.

## **Third Day Absence**

If no explanation has been received a standard letter will be sent home and parents are expected to ring school that day with an explanation. We notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student who has a child protection plan.

## **Medical Appointments**

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation. As a boarding school with an extended school day, we acknowledge that scheduling appointments can be difficult; nevertheless, we aim to ensure students are present for both morning and afternoon registration, so these times should be avoided wherever possible.

## **Frequent Absence**

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the College will try to resolve any concerns with parents or carers. College staff will liaise with the College's allocated Education Welfare Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through routine monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this poor attendance continues, the College will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

## **Persistent and Severe Absence**

Persistent absence is when a student's attendance falls below 90%. In cases of severe absence, attendance has fallen below 50%. The College will work with the School Attendance Support Team to prevent persistent and severe absence from occurring in the first place, and will work with families whose children are either persistently or severely absent to identify strategies to improve attendance at school, and refer to Early Help or other partner agencies to support families in raising their child's attendance at school.

## **Legal intervention**

The College and the School Attendance Support Team will work constructively with families to remove barriers to poor school attendance. In some cases, helping parents and carers to access services on their own and/or a voluntary whole family support plan to tackle barriers to attendance may be appropriate. A formal parenting contract agreed by parents/carers, the College and the School Attendance Support Team, progressing to a

legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court if there is non-engagement and it is deemed necessary may be required. Fixed penalty notices and prosecution in the Magistrates Court may also be pursued. At all times, the College will work with the School Attendance Support Team to identify Early Help or other partner agencies which may be able to support.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE, PENALTY NOTICES & THE LAW**

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a student; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.*

Leave of Absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the School Attendance Support Team. This may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice will be issued to each parent for each child.

**The penalty is per parent, per child, and will be £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 & 28 days.**

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000, plus prosecution costs.

Applications for term-time Leave of Absence must be made in writing to their child's House Master, in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Leave of Absence will only be granted where the Head Master, or his nominated representatives such as the House Masters, consider it is due to '**exceptional circumstances.**' Parents will be informed, usually in writing, of the Head Master's decision.

## **PASTORAL CARE OF STUDENTS**

Form Tutors are the first point of contact for their students in the morning and build up a close working relationship with them. If a Form Tutor is concerned about a student's attendance, it is good practice for them to speak to the student about this. The Form

Tutor may then need to speak to their House Master or a member of the SLT about the student's attendance.

Where students are off on long term absence, the Form Tutor should phone home to inquire about their general well-being. The sending of a card, signed by other members of the tutor group, is often much appreciated.

- The College does not routinely provide work for students who are absent through illness, and does not provide work at all during the first five days of absence in order to facilitate rest and recuperation
- Where it becomes clear that the student will be absent from school for a period of more than 15 days, whether cumulative or one-off, the College will, in consultation with parents/carers, commence discussions with the Local Authority which has a statutory duty to provide a suitable, full-time education for such students
- The College will collaborate with the Local Authority or other agencies such as hospital schools or other alternative education providers to ensure some level of continuity in order to subsequently facilitate the student's re-integration to the College whilst holding the Local Authority to account in the fulfilment of its duties to source and provide a suitable, full-time education
- Children and young people of statutory school age are entitled to a full-time education. The College cannot therefore usually or easily agree to the provision of a part-time or reduced timetable as this may be unlawful. In certain limited cases, with the full agreement of the Local Authority, a reduced timetable may be agreed. This will always be of a limited duration and usually no longer than six weeks. It will always aim to build up to full-time provision by the end of the six week period so that the student is ready to re-integrate to full-time College life at the end of the reduced provision. Where this does not happen, a review will be held with the Local Authority to determine best ways forward, including holding the Local Authority to its obligations to source and provide suitable, full-time education
- Where a student in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan is no longer able to attend school because of medical needs, the College will arrange an emergency review of the plan

In the case of boarders needing to travel to international destinations at the beginning and end of term, flights should be booked so that students are not missing lessons. Early departures and late arrivals will be classed as unauthorised absence, unless there is an educational reason for this occurring. In the event of travel arrangements not being regular, for example when scheduled flights to the destination are restricted, the boarder should make use of their UK guardians, rather than being absent from the College.

## **CATEGORISING ABSENCE**

The College will use the codes provided by the DFE. Absence will be authorised in accordance with the College's Leave of Absence policy. (See Annex 1). The decision whether or not to authorise an absence always rests with the College.

Code N cannot remain on a register for a period exceeding one week. If a valid reason has not been provided by parents/carers by the end of this time period, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Code O). Tutors will only use the /, N, or L codes and administration staff will categorise the absences accordingly, once evidence is produced.

## **COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The Founding Head Master analyses attendance data on a three - weekly basis and will provide such information to Form Tutors as required. However, it is essential that Form Tutors inform House Masters of concerns about attendance so that early intervention can take place.

Students whose attendance falls below 96% in a given monitoring period (usually each half-term), will receive a first warning letter from the Founding Head Master.

Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be classified as persistent absentees. Persistent absentees may be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer from RBWM and an agreed plan of action will be drawn up between the EWO, the family and the College.

The EWO may ultimately pursue cases of poor attendance through the Magistrates' Court. It is therefore imperative that our registration data is accurate.

## **REPORTING ON ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

The College automatically provides data on attendance and punctuality to parents/carers on progress reviews and annual reports. Increasingly, reference forms from employers or other educational establishments will ask for information on a student's attendance and punctuality. The College will provide this information when requested to do so.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

The College seeks to support those students who are excelling in activities which may require periods of absence from the College. Leave of Absence is granted in these circumstances after discussion with the Founding Head Master. It is the student's



responsibility to ask for work to be provided and to ensure that they catch up on all work missed during the period of approved absence.

## **ABSENCES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The policy of the College is to operate as normally as possible throughout periods of inclement weather; although inevitably it may not always be possible to offer the full curriculum and other services as usual. Where the parents of day students (and boarders returning from exeat or other absence) consider it unsafe to attempt to make the journey to the College, their absence may be considered as though the College were closed due to the weather.

However, any student leaving the College early due to the weather, will be considered as being absent without authorisation, unless the Head Master has decided that the College should close in full or in part (for example, being closed to day students or to certain year groups).

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parents/carers should:**

- ensure that their children attend the College regularly;
- ensure that their children arrive punctually – students should be with their Form Tutor for registration by 8.40am. Students who arrive after this will be recorded as being late;
- notify the College by telephone on the first day of absence, preferably before the start of the College day, using the designated telephone number for the reporting of absence, or by using Edulink;
- send a letter to the College confirming the period of absence and the reason upon the student's return to lessons;
- in the case of recurring illness, provide medical certification when requested;
- respect the College's Leave of Absence policy and not request permission to take their child out of school without very good reason;
- apply for Leave of Absence to the House Master at least seven days in advance;
- contact the Form Tutor to discuss any concerns affecting their child's attendance at school;

- meet any social and emotional needs which affect access to education; these needs can be met either by the parent/carers or in partnership with other people/agencies;
- ensure a good attitude to learning – this could be achieved by ensuring punctuality, appropriate dress and by fulfilling expectations of schools e.g. prep; and
- work in partnership with school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing school about significant changes or influences in the child's life which may impact on learning.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Students should aim to achieve very high levels of attendance.
- They should speak to their Form Tutor if there is anything that is affecting their attendance at College.
- Students should attend all their lessons punctually.
- Students should bring in a note from their parents or carers confirming the reason and duration of their absence.
- Students should follow the correct signing in procedures when they are late and the correct signing out procedures if they are leaving school early.
- Students should e-mail teachers whose lessons they would like to miss in order to attend sporting events, music lessons, or similar.

## **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

Teachers (or those lawfully fulfilling the duties of teachers) have a legal and contractual obligation to record the attendance of students accurately and in full. The College cannot ensure the safety of students unless this obligation is properly discharged.

Where a member of staff persistently fails to adequately register students, formal professional advice will be given by the Founding Head Master. If further non-compliance occurs, the matter will be referred for action under the Governors' Staff Disciplinary Policy.

The College is responsible for:

- promoting both good attendance and the welfare of the child;
- celebrating and recognising high levels of attendance to encourage and motivate good attendance at school – this could take the form of postcards home, for example.
- supporting the attendance of our students and for dealing with problems that may lead to absence;
- providing a welcoming and safe environment which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children;
- contributing sensitively to the child's social, emotional and moral development;

- stating clearly our expectations of parents/carers and children and making it explicit as to what they can reasonably expect from school, including help available within school and elsewhere;
- establishing good working practice with the School Attendance Support Team, the key LA agency in supporting attendance;
- working collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties e.g. Safeguarding;
- keeping accurate and up to date records on children's attendance and punctuality as required by legislation; and
- notifying the LA, in accordance with legislation, of irregular attendance or of any continuous absence of more than two weeks not covered by medical certificate.

The Local Authority's School Attendance Support Team is responsible for:

- ensuring that parents across the Borough are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- providing education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs;
- identifying, developing and establishing good practice in respect to child welfare and access to education throughout the authority;
- upholding and enforcing the law in respect of attendance, employment of young persons, involvement in entertainment and safeguarding;
- identifying, developing and establishing good practice in respect to child welfare and access to education throughout the Authority;
- enabling all LA Services with responsibility for children to work together effectively in the best interests of the child;
- developing collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector so that the interests of children are met;
- ensuring that the work of the Education Welfare Service is targeted to support children, parents/carers and schools in relation to improving attendance; and
- monitoring attendance across the Borough, based on information provided by schools.

## **GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITY**

The named governor for attendance is Rev'd Mark Jones.

The Founding Head Master will report current attendance levels at General Welfare Committee and Governors' termly meetings.

# **Annex 1 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

## **Introduction**

The Governing Body is committed to providing the best possible education for students. In order to benefit from this education and the wider experiences available at the College, the Governors believe that students should attend the College regularly and promptly, whenever the College is in session.

The absence of students causes disruption to the education of other students, as well as the student who is absent, in addition to creating additional work for class teachers. Parents and carers are asked to ensure that students are not absent from the College without good reason. In particular, they are asked to ensure that they use the College's long vacations to avoid the need to request leave of absence for family holidays.

## **Statutory Guidance**

From September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 [Statutory instruments, 2013, No: 756] *'prohibits the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a student except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.'*

This means that:

- Any absence requested by a parent should be referred to as "leave of absence";
- Only applications made in advance can be considered; and
- The Head Master is prohibited from granting leave of absence except in "exceptional circumstances."

Parents should be aware that the Local Authority will use their powers under the Penalty Notices and

Parenting Orders (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty notices will be issued to each parent, for each child, for each day of absence.

## **Authorised Leave of Absence**

1. Absence may be authorised where the absence is requested in advance:
  - To attend medical, dental or optometric consultations that could not take place out of College hours (M);
  - For purposes of compulsory religious observance (R);

- To participate in significant family events, for example the marriage of a close relative, the golden wedding anniversary of grandparents or the funeral or memorial service of a close family member (C);
  - For representative or elite sporting commitments (P);
  - To participate in a musical or dramatic activity approved by the College<sup>[1]</sup>(V);
  - To act as a representative of the College, the Local Authority or another public body (V);
  - To experience the workplace under the College Experience of Work policy (W); and
  - To attend an interview or open day at a University, College of Higher Education or any other educational establishment (J).
2. Leave of Absence for family holidays will not be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances, where a family holiday could not have been taken during the College vacation. This may be because of a serious illness of a close relative, or the deployment of a parent/carer who is a member of HM Armed Forces.
  3. All other absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and will be reported as such to the Local Authority and Department for Education.

## **Procedure for Requesting Leave of Absence**

4. Parents/Carers should contact the College at least 7 days in advance of the proposed leave of absence. They should email their child's House Master, outlining the reason for the proposed leave of absence. The decision to authorise an absence is at the absolute discretion of the Head Master.

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[1] Students performing in professional film or television productions may require a licence from the Local Authority