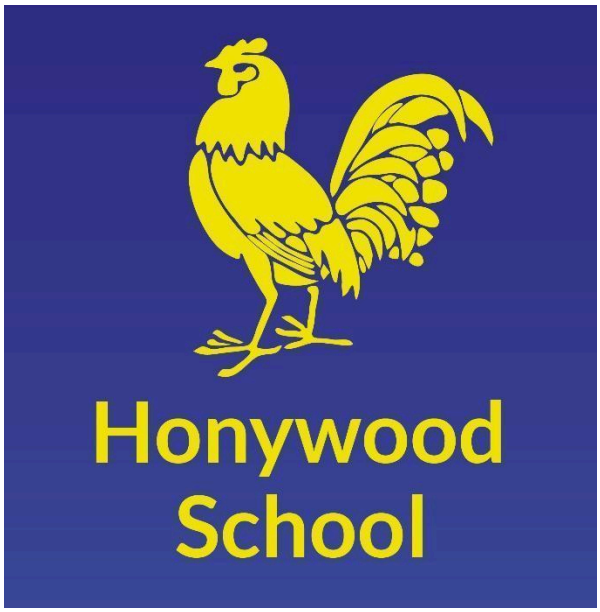


ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by the Governing Body: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

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1. Expectations and routines

Honywood School is committed to providing a positive learning environment which values, challenges and supports every learner through providing opportunities for them to achieve as individuals. Staff at Honywood School recognise that regular and punctual school attendance is essential for all students if they are to succeed both academically and socially. This Attendance Policy represents Honywood School's commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achieved by many learners in our school. The school regards attendance and punctuality of learners as a priority. This policy document sets out the principles, procedures and practice our school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and the benefits of, good attendance.

This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The *DfE guidance school attendance (2020)*, states schools should promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every child has access to full-time education and act early to address patterns of absence.

It is the responsibility of all staff to promote good attendance, firstly by regularly attending themselves. Positive action should be taken to encourage learner's good attendance by ensuring lessons are challenging, stimulating, and rewarding, thereby leading to learners wishing to attend. The environment of the school should be welcoming, and attention paid by staff to the relationships between themselves and learners, and between learners.

As a school we will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all learners. Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set targets. The school will regularly review its system for improving attendance and punctuality and take account of changes in the Education Law.

Attendance at 90% or below means that a learner has fallen into what is called the Persistent Absentee (PA) Category, a criterion set by the Government. Staff at Honywood School will endeavour to reduce the number of learners with persistent absence, (10% or above), as required by the Department for Education (DfE). The school will actively work with parents/carers and learners, along with outside agencies and professionals to achieve the school targets in this regard and all PA learners and their parents/carers will be subject to a school-based meeting where a plan will be written to support an improvement. The Attendance & Welfare Officer will also monitor the attendance of all students on the registers, identify patterns in absence and intervene appropriately to address concerns.

Learners who are regularly late or absent fall behind and develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all learners, and we will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and learners the importance of regular and punctual attendance. If there are problems which affect a learner's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers to resolve those problems as efficiently as possible. Honywood School works in partnership with Attendance Compliance to address issues relating to attendance.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

1.1. Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement. It is a parent's /carer's legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly supports intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- These principles are represented in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

1.2. Aims of the policy

- To ensure that all learners attend school regularly and punctually, on every day that the school is open, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its learners to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for the learner's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To ensure consistency when monitoring attendance and recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of the learners attending Honywood School and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.

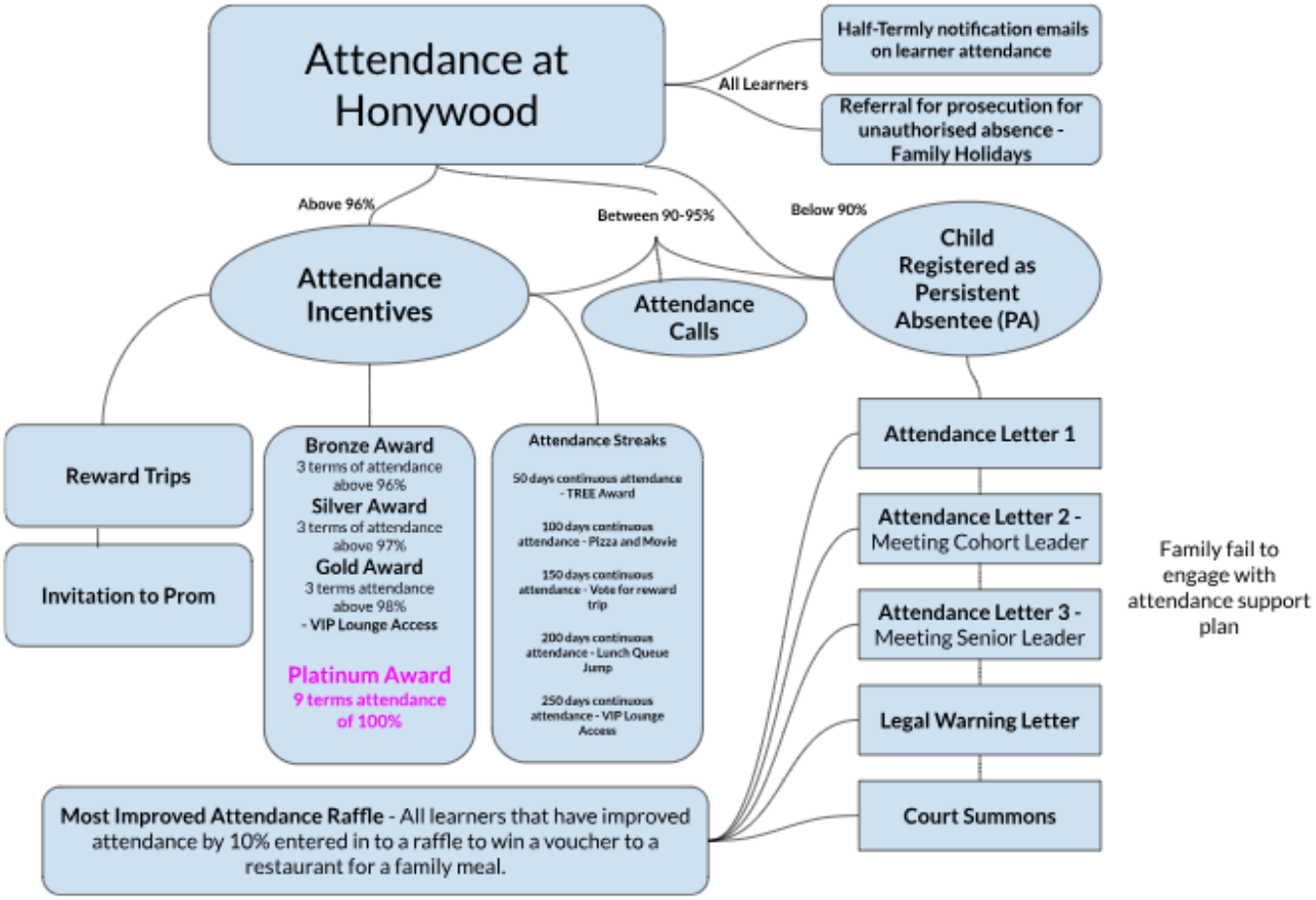
1.3 Policy objectives

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of learners.
- To reduce persistent absence.
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence.
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement.
- To maximise the potential of every individual learner.
- To ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school.

For our learners to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that learners must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

2. Promoting regular attendance

At Honywood School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our learners from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.



The name and contact details of the school staff member learners and parents/carers should contact if they need to discuss more detailed issues regarding attendance:

Cohort	Cohort Leader	Email
7	Mr D Briggs	dbriggs@honywoodschool.com
8	Ms T Ward	tward@honywoodschool.com
9	Ms A Martin	amartin@honywoodschool.com
10	Mrs L Borella	lborella@honywoodschool.com
11	Mrs E Reece	ereece@honywoodschool.com

How Honywood School will be recognising attendance:

98-100%	• **This demonstrates excellent attendance to school, and will be recognised through termly silver (above 98%) and gold (100%) certificates.** • **100% attendance across a whole school year will be recognised with the Headteacher award**
95-98%	• **This demonstrates good attendance to school** • **Attendance above 96% will be recognised through termly bronze certificates.**
92-95%	• **Learners with attendance below 95% are at risk of being classed as 'Persistently Absent' (PA).** • **Families will receive a letter following the half term that attendance falls below 95% to make them aware of the risk of PA.** • **We understand this can be due to genuine absence due to a number of reasons, and good attendance following this should take the attendance back into an acceptable margin.**
90-92%	• **Learners with attendance below 92% are now at significant risk of PA.** • **Families will receive a letter inviting them for a meeting to discuss attendance.**
Under 90%	• **Attendance under 90% is classed as PA.** • **At this point the school is obliged to refer the absence to the Attendance Compliance Unit at Essex County Council.** *Individual cases where there is a genuine health reason for the absence, and where evidence has been provided at an earlier stage, may be considered mitigation.*

3. Understanding types of absence

Parents/carers should be clear of the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence. Learners are expected to be in school, on time, every day the school is open or that the student is timetabled to be present, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any learner's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes and the school has received notification from parents/carers. For example, if a learner has been unwell and the parent telephones the school on the morning of the

absence to explain the reason. Only the school has the power to make an absence authorised. Parents/Carers do not have this authority.

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised and it is anticipated that parents/carers will confirm their child's expected return day to school:

- Illness (specific details of the illness should be given)
- Medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time; you may be asked to provide medical evidence before it can be authorised
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g., bereavement
- If permission for the absence has been granted in advance by the Headteacher e.g., authorised participation in a national sporting event
- Transport arranged by the Local Authority (LA) has failed to arrive where the student lives beyond statutory walking distance
- A traveller family that are travelling for occupational purposes.

Unauthorised absences are when the school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which an unauthorised mark is given. These include keeping their child off school unnecessarily, absences which have never been explained. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes the following, though this is by no means an exhaustive list:

- parents/carers/ keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- absences which have never been properly explained
- where the level of the students' absence is a concern and medical evidence has not been provided for ill health
- shopping trips
- having no uniform available
- oversleeping
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents/carers to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- day trips
- missing transport
- not enjoying a certain subject
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

Learners are not excluded from rewards for 100% attendance where their absence results from a medical condition or allergy.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A learner defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any student's education and we need the full support and

cooperation of parents/carers to resolve this. **It is important to recognise that learners will be deemed as persistently absent by taking just 3 days off in the first six weeks of the school year.**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with members of staff, including the Cohort Leaders and the Attendance and Welfare Officer in resolving any issues together. There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. For example: a 5-day holiday would meet the national threshold. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years. The matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) to each parent/carer for each child. Failure to submit a leave of absence request will result in the absence being unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority who may again issue a Penalty Notice as above.

Please note: If you have previously received a Penalty Notice for a previous offence the second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per child, per parent. The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

5. Recording attendance

The register is a legal document, Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and must be marked accurately, recording attendance/absence and whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register may be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a learner.

The Learner Reception team is responsible for updating attendance information to the computerised system.

The Learning Group Leader is responsible for:

- Taking the register daily, once for the am session and once for the pm session.
- Ensuring all mistakes are amended on their own register.
- Using the electronic SIMS register, however if a breakdown occurs, taking a manual register.

6. Absence procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- If the learner is too unwell to attend school, a parent/carer must inform the school on a daily basis by 8:30am. This will allow the register to be marked with an authorised absence. The school can be notified by a telephone call to the attendance line 01376 561231, Option 1, or by sending an e-mail to attendance@honywoodschool.com If a reason for absence is not received, a text or a call home will take place during the school day.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *8.30 am.* **Parents/carers are required to contact the school on every morning their child is going to be absent.**
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and once they are well enough to do so, and that you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.

If a learner is late to school:
Learners are expected to be in school on time every day.
Learners who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all students at Honywood School are:
School building open to learners: 8.30am
Registration: 8.45am
End of the school day: 3.20pm

If a learner is late arriving at school they will need to buzz the intercom and ask for Learner Reception to allow them to enter. Depending on the reason for lateness, it is usual that learners will receive a strike on their conduct card.

Occasionally, outside influences may mean that a learner is late for school for example, the bus service. In this instance they must report immediately to Learner Reception where they can sign in. This is essential for health and safety reasons, for example if there were a fire, we must know that they are on the school premises. Learners will not receive a conduct strike in these circumstances.

How we manage lateness:
- The school building opens at ***8.30am*** when children can begin to come into school.
- Registers are taken by ***8.45am*** and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time.
- Children arriving after ***8.55am*** are required to come into school via Learner Reception and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be contacted by their Cohort Leader, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

7. Leaving school for appointments
Learners may need to leave the school during the day for a medical or dental appointment for example. If the learner has an appointment, medical or otherwise, the school must be notified by the parent/carer either in writing to the attendance email, by handing in a note from the parent or by telephoning the attendance line before the appointment date. It is the responsibility of the learner to notify the teacher of any learning session that they will miss in order to catch up with any work.

Learners must sign out at Learner Reception before leaving the school site and on their return so that we are clear who is in the building in the event of an emergency.

8. Leave of absence in term time
We discourage learners from being absent/taking holidays during term time. A leave of absence form must be completed if the parent/carer would like to apply for the learner to take time off. The form can be downloaded from the school website: https://www.honywoodschool.com/_site/data/files/users/3/files/leave%20of%20absence%20term%20time/52B86958BFC2E4A5187FE4D55A3415F8.pdf

A copy can also be collected from Learner Reception. The parent/carer must complete this form and return to Learner Reception, preferably at least **1 month i**n advance.

Parents/Carers are not allowed to take learners out of school during term time unless it is for exceptional circumstances. All holiday leave will be recorded as unauthorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances

If requesting a leave of absence during term time, the request will be considered by the Headteacher and you will be notified of the outcome in writing.

If a child is absent we will:

- Contact the parent/carer on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not notified of the reason for absence. This will be done first by text message or email, and then phone call if no reply is received.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to parents/carers if a child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with our Attendance and Welfare Officer and Student Support leader if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate, based on the individual needs of the family
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

We monitor all absences, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. Following guidance from the Local Authority, we especially scrutinise absences either side of a school holiday and can fine parents if we are given information that their child/ren are on holiday and not absent for the reason given. The onus is on the parent/carer to provide evidence to support their reasons in order for us to withdraw an application to the Local Authority to fine.

9. Missing child protocol

Arrangements for Children Who Go Missing During the School Day

Definition of Missing

The definition of missing used in Essex is 'anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and his or her well-being confirmed'.

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

Introduction

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools/academies and other educational settings, hereafter referred to as educational settings.

Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational settings; when this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with the educational setting's Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

Essex Schools Infolink – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources

Essex Safeguarding Children Board – for the SET Procedures and other resources

A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, a child going missing frequently could be an indicator of underlying exploitation or other forms of child abuse.

Educational settings should consider missing episodes like any other child protection concern and take action as appropriate, for example, by contacting parents/carers, the Children & Families Hub consultation line, and in an emergency, the priority line or the police. It may be appropriate to use the Early Help Procedures (including holding a Team Around the Family meeting) to address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought, and concerns should be escalated if there is no improvement.

Where children missing frequently are open to Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the educational setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a Child Goes Missing
When it is suspected that a child is missing from an educational setting this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, contacting the child by phone, text and social media, and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, then they must be reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm. It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

Staff at the educational setting must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where there is a Social Worker allocated to the child, they should also be informed.

After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the Child is Found
If the child is found by educational setting staff, or if the child returns to the premises of their own accord, the police must be notified immediately by dialling 101 or 999 if the matter is an emergency. It is important that this action is prioritised, as the child will remain classified as a missing person until seen by the police.

Essex Police
On receiving a report of a missing child, Essex Police will classify the child as missing and will respond based on the level of risk involved. Essex Police will conduct a vulnerability interview for all children who have been missing and have returned. It may be that the child refuses to engage or speak with police. On these occasions the parents/carers can assist by reporting to officers their observations on the child's return, e.g., did the child shower, have gifts, appear unwell or under the influence of any substance, etc.

The setting may also be able to contribute to this process and should provide the police with any relevant information or observations.

Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.

Useful contacts:
Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Coordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk
Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

10. Health concerns

If a child has ongoing health needs, we will follow our Local Authority guidance on this (linked here) and support parents/carers with helping their child to access any support they are entitled to as laid down in this guidance. We will talk to parents/carers about an Individual Healthcare Plan if this is needed and discuss any extra support that is needed in school (e.g. support with medication).

We may ask parents/carers for medical evidence as laid down in the DfE School Attendance Guidance. If we do this, please help by providing as much information as you can. We may ask parents/carers for sight of **prescriptions, GP appointments or letter**s from medical professionals if they have them available (but will not insist a parent/carer request a letter from a GP). We may decide not to authorise some absences if we are in doubt about the authenticity of the reported illness.

We will also send parents/carers a letter if we have decided we cannot authorise a child's absence for medical reasons until further notice. If this were to happen we would want to meet with parents/carers to see if any support is needed.

11. Monitoring absence

The Attendance & Welfare Officer will monitor each student's attendance and punctuality very closely. Students with 10% persistent absence (PA) or more will be highlighted and the school will work closely with parents/carers to ensure actions are put in place so that students are taken out of the PA category.

The Attendance & Welfare Officer will hold regular meetings with the Cohort Leaders where information will be shared and attendance letters will be discussed. The Attendance & Welfare Officer and the Cohort Leaders will also agree to invite parents in for a school-based meeting for students in the 'at risk of PA' category, or close to falling into this category, prior to issuing a Legal Action Warning Letter or making a referral to the Local Authority (Attendance Compliance).

12. Long term absence and returning to school

Where appropriate, teachers may arrange for work to be sent home during the absence period and this will be organised by the Cohort Leader. Students who have enforced long periods of absence from school, for whatever reason, need careful handling on their return. A re-integration period may be required, and the Cohort Leader and/or Attendance and Welfare Officer may meet with parents and the learner before they return to discuss any worries they may have about returning to school. A phased return may be agreed but only with the agreement of the Headteacher.

13. Registration

At Honywood School an electronic registration system is used. School staff will complete accurate registers within ten minutes of the beginning of each learning session. Morning registration begins at 8.45am each school day and Learning Session 5 is used as PM registration, starting at 2.50pm; registers close 30 minutes after these times.

If a learner has been marked present earlier in the day but is absent from the lesson and doesn't arrive within the first ten minutes, staff are expected to refresh their register to check whether they have been marked as elsewhere. If this is not the case, staff must alert On Call immediately to investigate where the learner may be. On Call staff will check whether students have signed out or are with key staff, such as Cohort Leaders, in the medical room, or in another authorised location. If a student's location cannot be determined, On Call staff will contact home and request that the subject staff refer to the truancy.

14. Registration codes

The following symbols are used in registers. In most cases, any codes other than 'present AM/PM', Late, or Unauthorised ('O') must be authorised by the Headteacher.

/ Present AM

\ Present PM

B Off-site educational activity (NOT dual registration)

C Authorised absence

D Dual registered at another educational establishment

E Excluded but no alternative provision made

G Unauthorised absence – holiday not agreed by school

H Authorised absence – holiday authorised by school due to exceptional circumstances

I Authorised absence – illness (not medical/dental appointment)

J Educational activity – interview

L Present – late before registers have closed

M Authorised absence – medical/dental appointment

N Unauthorised absence – reason for absence not yet provided

O Unauthorised absence – school have not authorised this absence

P Educational activity – approved sporting activity

Q Present – elsewhere in school with another member of staff (who need to include a comment explaining where they are and who with)

R Authorised religious observance

S Authorised absence – study leave

T Authorised absence – agreed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons

V Educational activity – approved school trip or visit

W Educational activity – work experience

X Not required to be in school – non-compulsory school aged absence or Covid 19 related remote learning

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z Learner not on admission register

 # Planned whole or partial school closure

Approved Education Activity is recorded as present. Staff can only register a learner as /- present, N – absent or L – late. Staff can only overwrite a code if the learner is physically present in their classroom. **Registers are a legal document** and staff need to be aware of their legal responsibility.

15. Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some learners face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include learners who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and students to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate including aspirational attendance goals to allow **all children** access to attendance rewards.

16. Roles and responsibilities

16.1. Honywood School

It is the responsibility of **all staff** to familiarise themselves with the Attendance Policy and take forward duties outlined in the policy document. Staff at Honywood will promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Undertaking registration of learners at 8:45am, the start of learning sessions and 2:50pm, recording information on SIMS.
- Making enquiries in relation to all learners marked as absent.
- Where no reason is evident for absence the attendance team will follow the internal protocol to ensure that the learner has not arrived on-site but has failed to register. Following this, communication will be sent home notifying the first contact on the learner's records as a matter of priority.
- If there is no response, the school will make every effort to reach the contacts held by the school. If no contact is established, the Safeguarding Lead/Leadership Team will be consulted regarding further action.
- Encouraging punctuality and a positive attitude towards attendance.
- Communicating with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

- Including yearly and other reports to parents on achievement, learner's attendance and level of punctuality.
- Closely monitoring absences in order to keep unauthorised absences to a minimum.
- Subject teachers/Learning Group Leaders applying a consequence for internal truancy with support from Subject Leaders/Cohort Leaders. Further guidance or support will be given by the Senior Leadership Team if necessary. Offer an individual reintegration plan following a period of absence to support a learner to return to school.
- Making the Attendance Policy available on the school website, or by other means on request.
- Liaising with the Attendance Compliance Team as necessary.
- Establishing clear procedures for recording absence to comply with the legal requirements in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and associated guidance for the reporting and recording of attendance. (More detailed information on registration can be found at section 3.2.)

16.2. Learners

- Should attend the school regularly and on time.
- Should attend all learning sessions timetabled.
- Should sign in at the Learner Reception or with the teacher in their lesson if they arrive late or are otherwise engaged in school activities at designated times.
- Can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence as required.
- Will have individual records of attendance/punctuality recorded on SIMS.
- Should sign out at Learner Reception, with written permission of parent/carer if leaving school premises during the school day.

16.3. Parents/Carers

- Are responsible for ensuring the learner regularly and punctually attends Honywood School on every day they are required to do so, properly dressed and equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence before 8.30a.m each day by a telephone call to the attendance line (01376 561231, option1), or attendance email – attendance@honywoodschool.com (Consideration will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with written communication, or where English is not the first language).
- Are responsible for providing up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Are expected to work actively with Honywood staff to address attendance concerns where these develop.
- Do not have a right to take learners on holiday in term time; leave of absence must be granted in advance at the discretion of the Headteacher. Any application will be considered against the learner's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations; (refer to the school website for further information).
- Can expect the school to keep them fully informed of the learner's attendance/punctuality record.
- Should make every effort to ensure that learners who miss school due to occasional illness return as soon as they are well enough to do so, and where possible, to arrange medical appointments out of school hours.

17. Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents/Carers should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any

problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

18. School attendance and the law

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/Carers may be recognised differently under education law, then under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school. Failure to submit a leave of absence request will result in the absence being unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority who may again issue a Penalty Notice as above.

Please note: If you have previously received a Penalty Notice for a previous offence the second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per child, per parent. The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

There is no entitlement in law for students to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

19. Deletion from roll

For any student leaving Honywood School (other than at the end of Cohort 11), parents/carers are required to complete a 'Students moving from school' form which can be obtained from the School Office. This provides the school with the following information: child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all our learners, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents/carers keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Student Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the student being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that student, and in any event no later than the time at which the student's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a student's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

20. Home educated children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the learner's local authority that the learner is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents/carers to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the learner has a poor attendance record. Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents/carers from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. Parents/Carers have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at a school.

21. Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual learners or groups of learners when their attendance needs to improve. We monitor identified groups of learners using historical data and the context of the school population. Persistently absent learners are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment. We also use data to check the impact of strategies we are using and adjust where necessary. When the attendance of learners with other specific needs are identified as a cause for concern, such as SEN, LAC or those with a social worker, key staff in the school who regularly work with them will be involved in the plan to remove barriers to their attendance.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

22. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents/carers and learners as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.

Please see the link to guidance from Essex County Council, 'Let's Talk… We Miss You': https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/social_emotional_mental_health_portal_for_schools/Documents/Lets%20Talk...we%20miss%20you.pdf

APPENDIX A - Attendance at Honywood - Key information for families

Attendance at Honywood: Key information for families

Honywood School is committed to striving for 100% attendance, which is achieved by many learners in our school. The school regards attendance and punctuality of all learners as a priority. Our learners should aim to attend school regularly and punctually, on every day that the school is open, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.



If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- If the learner is too unwell to attend school, a parent/carer must inform the school on a daily basis by 8:30am. This will allow the register to be marked with an authorised absence. The school can be notified by a telephone call to the attendance line 01376 561231, Option 1, or by sending an e-mail to attendance@honywoodschool.com. If a reason for absence is not received, a text or a call home will take place during the school day.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *8.30 am.* **Parents/carers are required to contact the school on every morning their child is going to be absent.**
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and once they are well enough to do so, and that you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.

If a learner is late to school:

Learners are expected to be in school on time every day. If a learner is late arriving at school they will need to buzz the intercom and ask for Learner Reception to allow them to enter.

Depending on the reason for lateness, it is usual that learners will receive a strike on their conduct card.

Occasionally, outside influences may mean that a learner is late for school for example, the bus service. In this instance they must report immediately to Learner Reception where they can sign in. This is essential for health and safety reasons, for example if there were a fire, we must know that they are on the school premises. Learners will not receive a conduct strike in these circumstances.

For further information please refer to the Honywood School Attendance Policy on the school website https://www.honywoodschool.com/school-policies

Leaving School for Appointments

Learners may need to leave the school during the day for a medical or dental appointment for example. If the learner has an appointment, medical or otherwise, the school must be notified by the parent/carer either in writing to the attendance email, by handing in a note from the parent or by telephoning the

attendance line before the appointment date. It is the responsibility of the learner to notify the teacher of any learning session that they will miss in order to catch up with any work.

Learners must sign out at Learner Reception before leaving the school site and on their return so that we are clear who is in the building in the event of an emergency.

Leave of Absence in term time

We discourage learners from being absent/taking holidays during term time. A leave of absence form must be completed if the parent/carer would like to apply for the learner to take time off. The form can be downloaded from the school website
https://www.honywoodschool.com/_site/data/files/users/3/files/leave%20of%20absence%20term%20time/52B86958BFC2E4A5187FE4D55A3415F8.pdf

A copy can also be collected from Learner Reception. The parent/carer must complete this form and return to Learner Reception, preferably at least 5 days in advance.

Parents/carers are not allowed to take learners out of school during term time unless it is for exceptional circumstances. All holiday leave will be recorded as unauthorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances

If requesting a leave of absence during term time, the request will be considered by the Headteacher and you will be notified of the outcome in writing.

The name and contact details of the school staff member students and parents/carers should contact if they need to discuss more detailed issues regarding attendance:

Cohort	Cohort Leader	Email
7	Mr D Briggs	dbriggs@honywoodschool.com
8	Ms T Ward	tward@honywoodschool.com
9	Ms A Martin	amartin@honywoodschool.com
10	Mrs L Borella	lborella@honywoodschool.com
11	Mrs E Reece	ereece@honywoodschool.com

How Honywood School will be recognising your child's attendance:

98-100%	• **This demonstrates excellent attendance to school, and will be recognised through termly silver (above 98%) and gold (100%) certificates.** • **100% attendance across a whole school year will be recognised with the Headteacher award**
95-98%	• **This demonstrates good attendance to school** • **Attendance above 96% will be recognised through termly bronze certificates.**
92-95%	• **Learners with attendance below 95% are at risk of being classed as 'Persistently Absent' (PA).** • **Families will receive a letter following the half term that attendance falls below 95% to make them aware of the risk of PA.** • **We understand this can be due to genuine absence due to a number of reasons, and good attendance following this should take the attendance back into an acceptable margin.**
90-92%	• **Learners with attendance below 92% are now at significant risk of PA.** • **Families will receive a letter inviting them for a meeting to discuss attendance.**
Under 90%	• **Attendance under 90% is classed as PA.** • **At this point the school is obliged to refer the absence to the Attendance Compliance Unit at Essex County Council.** *Individual cases where there is a genuine health reason for the absence, and where evidence has been provided at an earlier stage, may be considered mitigation.*

APPENDIX B - Attendance at Honywood - Key information for staff

Attendance at Honywood: Key information for staff

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What staff should do regarding attendance:

LGLs:

- Look at your learning group attendance weekly
- Highlight learners over time with excellent attendance
- Should report any patterns of absence to the Cohort Leader, and call home to discuss any potential issues
- Should call home for any learners who have more than 3 days absent, to discuss what they have missed and the reason for absence
- Should proactively contact home for families where attendance is (or at risk of) falling below 96%
- Ensure you forward any communication about absence to attendance@honywoodschool.com
- Complete a questionnaire with learners who have had a period of absence

CLs:

- Monitor attendance of the Cohort, and action trigger points with the Attendance & Welfare Officer (Craig Robertson)
- Promote attendance in assemblies
- Contact families where necessary where attendance falls below 95%
- Organise attendance certificates for learners as appropriate each term
- Follow up requests for medical evidence for absence if required
- Ensure you forward any communication about absence to attendance@honywoodschool.com

- Conduct meetings with families about attendance where required, supported by the attendance officer

Attendance & Welfare Officer:

- Track whole school attendance data, and share regular summaries with all staff
- To work with families in order to improve attendance
- To meet weekly with Cohort leaders to discuss attendance issues
- Action trigger point letters as appropriate
- Make referrals where appropriate
- To work on initiatives which raise the awareness of school staff, parents and the community on the importance of school attendance