

Houghton Primary School: Attendance

We are required by law to keep an accurate record of every child's attendance and absences. All absences are recorded in our school registers. Each day is made up of two sessions (morning and afternoon). If a child is absent we must put an absence code in for each session that they are away. Our registers and attendance records are checked termly by the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO monitors children and families whose attendance raises questions.

Regular attendance is vital to every child's education as well as their social and emotional wellbeing. Frequent absences can be upsetting for children who may find it difficult to catch up with school work and friendships. As a school we are proactive and follow up all absences. We also contact and work with families if attendance is a concern. We will write to parents if a child's attendance drops below 95% to ensure that communication is formalised.

Illness

We ask that parents/carers contact the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence and keep in regular contact with us if their child's absence is more than one day. We will ask parents to confirm their child's absence in writing (either by email or letter) and may request proof of appointments at doctors, other medical services or hospital.

If your child is poorly you will need to keep them at home. The NHS provide a helpful guide for parents to support your decision making about different types of illness and whether your child might be too ill to attend school <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> We follow this NHS guidance and request that children who have been sick or have had a tummy upset do not come to school for 2 days after their symptoms have disappeared in order to reduce the risk of passing the illness to others.

If your child has any symptoms relating to COVID-19 you must keep them off school and arrange for them to be tested. More information can be found on this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Medication

We will administer medicines in school for children who have an agreed health plan (for example, a child who has severe allergic reactions, children who are on long term medication, etc). For all other medication parents must seek the permission of the Headteacher (forms available from the school office). We will not usually administer any medication which is not prescribed by a doctor.

Dental/Medical Appointments

All dental and medical appointments should be booked outside of school hours unless emergency treatment is required. We may request proof of appointments during school hours. Absence due to non-emergency treatment will not be authorised.

Leave of Absence including 'holiday'

Attendance at school is statutory. All 'leaves of absence' must be applied for in advance.

A child may need to take a 'leave of absence' from school for a number of reasons e.g. to attend a funeral, for observance of a religious festival, to attend a 'taster' day at a secondary school, etc. Whatever the circumstances of the 'leave' parents must complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form available from the school office and on the school website (electronic copies of the form can be emailed to parents on request).

The request will be considered by the headteacher in accordance with guidance from the Local Authority and parents will be informed if leave is granted or not. If leave is not granted and the child does not attend school their absence will be 'unauthorised'.

Houghton Primary School: Attendance

Leave for absence for 'holiday' during term time will only be granted in **exceptional and/or unavoidable circumstances**. The fact that a family holiday is cheaper in term time will not be considered to be an 'exceptional circumstance', nor will parents' working circumstances. No absences will be granted during SATs or exam periods.

All leaves of absence must be applied for **in advance** by filling in a 'Leave of Absence Request' form available from the school office. If leave of absence is taken without permission, 'unauthorised' absence is recorded on the child's attendance record and parents may be subject to a fixed penalty fine which is issued by the Local Authority and not the school.

The vast majority of our families support the school by not taking their children on holiday during term time. Please do not hesitate to contact the headteacher if you need to discuss a request for leave of absence.

Lateness

We are also required by law to record whether a child is late for school at the beginning of each registration session. Children arriving after the gate closes for their class will need to go to the school office to be signed in and may be late for registration.

Late marks are also reported as part of a child's attendance record. If a child arrives late, after the register has closed, and the reason for lateness has not been agreed and/or does not fulfil 'exceptional circumstances' the Department of Education tell schools to code this as **unauthorised absence**.

We contact and seek to work with families if their children are often late.

Attendance Counts

The government set the 'persistent absence' threshold at 90% in September 2015. If your child's attendance drops below this threshold they will be automatically recorded as a 'persistent absentee' whatever the reason for their absence.

We monitor attendance and will contact parents when attendance drops below 95% and/or if we have any concerns relating to attendance, including lateness. We aim to work with the family before the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer.

We ask parents to contact us as soon as possible if they have any concerns relating to their child's attendance.

With every lesson counting towards children's learning and progress, absence can soon build up:

Attendance during one school year	Number of sessions (half days)	Number of days absent	Weeks absent	Number of lessons missed (equivalent of 5 per day)
95%	18	9	2	45
90%	38	19	4	95
85%	58	29	6	145
80%	76	38	8	190
75%	96	48	10	240
70%	114	57	11.5	285
60%	134	67	13.5	335

Cambridgeshire Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:

As the Government changed the PA (Persistent Absence) threshold to 90% (in effect from Sept. 2015), the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is less than 90% over a given period. To allow time and opportunity for early intervention work with the family, attendance is monitored by school and Local Authority before enforcement actions are considered. Such a Fine is intended to offer a rapid intervention, which may be used to address non-school attendance before it becomes entrenched.

The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice will be whether it is considered likely to be effective in helping the child to whom it relates to return to regular attendance.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence, due consideration will be given to other strategies which may help return the child concerned to regular school attendance. Such strategies might include:

- a) writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities;
- b) meeting with the child's parents;
- c) ensuring a first-day response to any absence;
- d) setting targets for improvement;
- e) referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- f) involvement of other services/agencies.

UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE(includes Holiday):

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. **Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.**