HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION POLICY

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

Policy Holder	Assistant Head Pastoral Care and Wellbeing
Date Approved	November 2026
Governor Approval	E&P Committee
Date for next review	September 2027

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing in Education ('CME') Policy
- Missing and Uncollected Child Policy

RATIONALE

Holmewood House is committed to a policy of proactively encouraging pupils to attend school regularly in accordance with the mandatory requirements for schools as set out in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2026. We develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance that underpins these requirements. The School works with parents and pupils to secure this aim.

Attendance at school is vital for pupils' academic development and social wellbeing. At Holmewood House School we believe that regular attendance means 100% unless the absence is unavoidable, or leave is required for exceptional circumstances. Absence during term time interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and fragments learning. We do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils and take the issue of attendance very seriously. Simon Porter, Holmewood House's DSL, is the school's Attendance Champion, tasked with the promotion of good attendance and the benefits to pupils. Jeanette McGee, is responsible as The Attendance Officer for the day-to-day operations and completion of the school's register and following up of an discrepancies.

School attendance is a national priority. Research shows that pupil attendance of less than 90% can impact on pupil attainment by as much as a grade or level. If a child is taken away for a two week holiday every year and has the average number of days off for sickness and appointments, by the time they leave at 16 they will have missed a year of school.

Attendance is closely monitored and parents of any child whose attendance is seen to be of concern will be contacted by the School. The vast majority of our pupils achieve over 90% attendance, and this

is what we expect as a minimum. Parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise. The School maintains an electronic attendance register and has systematic daily records which give detail of any absence including pupils arriving late or leaving school early throughout the day. These are recorded on the signing in app in Reception and subsequently on iSAMS.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Actively promote a positive and welcoming school culture to encourage excellent levels of attendance ensuring all pupils benefit by being in school.
- Highlight the importance of school attendance through effective approaches to wellbeing.
- Raise levels of achievement by ensuring pupils are punctual, attend regularly and show high levels of involvement in the School.
- Make explicit to all relevant parties, including staff, parents, pupils, governors, the expectations of attendance.
- Be proactive and work with parents and other agencies to address early patterns of absence.

LEGISLATION

School leaders and governors at Holmewood House take responsibility for ensuring compliance with Independent Schools Standards Regulations (ISSR) regulations: Standard 15, Section 3, *Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing,* which requires an attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Educational (Pupil Registration) (England) regulations 2006, as well as the statutory guidance set out in *Working Together to Improve school Attendance* DfE, August 2026. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to maintain high standards and promote the commitment to school attendance the following procedures have been put in place. These will be reviewed at least annually and in the light of any subsequent regulatory requirements.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The School has robust daily processes to accurately complete attendance registers. It is a statutory requirement that a pupil who is not ill, or who is not otherwise authorised to be absent, should register on time. There is a 30 minute registration period to ensure all pupils are registered at the same time as per the *Working Together to Improve school Attendance* DfE, August 2026. The times for these are as follows:

- Morning: from 8.25am to 8.55am (Monday – Friday).
- Afternoon from 13.35pm to 2.05pm (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday), 12.55pm – 1.25pm (Wednesday).

It is the practice of this school to register all pupils twice per day. We have robust daily processes to identify and swiftly follow up unplanned absences. The register is updated at the start of the morning and before afternoon sessions.

The register must record, using the appropriate codes, whether the pupil is Present or Absent.

ABSENCE

Pupils are expected to attend school unless there is a legitimate / significant reason for them to be absent. The School and Local Authority identify good attendance as being 90% or above. While there will be occasions of unforeseen absence, planned absences, e.g. medical appointments should be made outside school sessions, wherever possible. Planned absences should be taken outside of term time including, but not limited to, family holidays, reunions, trips and visits.

In line with current statutory requirements, the School may be required to report absences falling into these categories to the Local Authority whereby a penalty may be issued. Penalty notices are issued and managed by KCC not by the School. The school is also duty bound to report if a child is missing in education or if there are safeguarding concerns over attendance.

ABSENCE CATEGORIES

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason, including illness and religious observance. The school will have received notification that has been approved by the relevant member of staff via the portal. The parents will receive notification by a member of SLT.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without permission or where the reason for absence has not been provided and cannot be established. All absences will be recorded with the relevant code, see appendix A.

Attending an Approved Educational or Sporting Activity

- An off-site activity approved by a relevant member of senior staff.
- Supervised and educational in nature, including work experience, exams, tests, visits to senior schools, field trips and educational visits.

Unable to Attend Due to Exceptional Circumstances

- Such as when the school site is closed due to adverse weather conditions.

SCHOOL LEADERS AND GOVERNORS

School leaders and governors at Holmewood House take responsibility for ensuring compliance with 'Working Together to Improve school Attendance Guidelines from DfE 2026'. They ensure that all School staff receive regular training on the statutory requirements and work closely with the local area School Attendance Support Team. Reporting of this data takes place at each pastoral or full board governance meeting – questions are asked about any anomalies.

Responsibilities of The Assistant Head Pastoral Care and Wellbeing, Head of Pre-Prep, DSL and School Attendance Officer

- Acting as dedicated senior leaders with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring that appropriate strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school in line with statutory requirements.
- Ensuring the policy is in line with current safeguarding requirements and staff are trained appropriately.

- Liaising with the local area School Attendance Support Team and, where directed attend termly data analysis and targeted support meetings. Where necessary take an active part in the multi-agency effort to resolve any issues.
- Managing requests for absence in accordance with statutory requirements, including informing parents, in conjunction with the Head of Pre Prep.
- Keeping accurate records of all absence requests.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Notifying parents, as appropriate, that if a pupil fails to attend regularly, his/her parents in breach of government regulations.
- Initiating, with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance of individual pupils. Where barriers are identified, sign-post any appropriate support.
- The Attendance Champion will contact the Attendance Officer for the local councils (Kent and East Sussex if needed to gain advice or help.
- The Attendance Officer completes a daily record of absences and reasons for this. If any patterns or trends are discovered, the Assistant Head Pastoral is notified.
- The Attendance Officer provides the Assistant Head Pastoral with a weekly list of absences, which is checked for patterns or continued periods of absence – This is analysed and acted upon in the weekly safeguarding meeting.
- The Assistant Head Pastoral inspects the termly attendance figures and any families below 90% without a valid reason receives a letter informing them of this and offering support. The Attendance Officer keeps a record of those sent each term as a list and if relevant these are added to the Wellbeing Manager on iSams.

Responsibilities of the School Attendance Officer, Pre-Prep Secretary and Administration Team

- Recording and collating registration and attendance information.
- Ensuring the registers have been completed correctly by the Form Teachers within the given time periods (see above) and if necessary, follow up on any discrepancies.
- Checking with the Assistant Head Pastoral or Head of Pre-Prep for any retrospective authorisation of absence.
- Ensuring that accurate records are kept digitally for the appropriate times as specified in Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2026)
- Identifying those pupils who are absent and contacting their parents as soon as possible if the School is unaware of the reason for their absence. All unexplained absence from School must be followed up and parents contacted. Proof of contact should also be recorded.
- Ensuring pupils who arrive late or go home early record this information via the SignIn App on the ipad in Reception.
- Alerting the Attendance Champion, DSL or an appropriate member of the SLT to any pattern of absence or unexplained unauthorised absence.
- Liaising with the DSL and local area School Attendance Support Team including attending termly data analysis and targeted support meetings.

If, despite reasonable attempts, staff are unable to contact parents, the DSL should be informed who will then decide on the next appropriate course of action in line with the School Safeguarding procedures for children missing education.

Responsibilities of Teaching and Form Teaching Staff

- Staff registering pupils must ensure these are completed accurately using the statutory codes provided in the electronic register in a timely manner so that absences can be swiftly followed up.
- Registers must be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon registration sessions (see above times).
- Staff must inform the School Office, in the first instance of any pupils who are absent apparently for no reason. Should a pupil's whereabouts not be ascertained, the Missing Child procedure must be followed.

CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS /SEND

Staff should be aware of the needs of all pupils. Where there are specific needs e.g. medical, SEND staff need to be sensitive to any alternative provision that may be required and ensure on-going dialogue with parents.

PARENTS

- Are expected to ensure their child attends school every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Parents should use the Holmewood House School Portal to notify the School before 8:20am should their child be unexpectedly absent that day (e.g. sickness) by submitting an Absence Form via the Holmewood House School Portal. In the event that there is no access the Portal, parents should email: admin@holmewoodhouse.co.uk
- Where a pupil is absent due to illness, parents should still submit an Absence Form, rather than an email to Form Teachers. This way the Medical Centre and Office Staff can also access the information, record absences efficiently and follow up any unexplained absences swiftly.
- Parents should only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance by submitting a Future Absence Form via the Holmewood House School Portal.
- Any medical appointments should be booked around the school day or during school holidays, where possible.

REGISTRATION FOR AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Children should be pre-booked into any club or after school activity via SOCS. A register of attendees is accessible on the school SOCS and staff must complete these prior to the start of the activity session.

The admin team check for any discrepancies and follow-up with staff and parents to ensure all children are accounted for.

FAMILY LEAVE AND ISSUING OF FIXED PENALTIES

The Department for Education's (DfE) changes to The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 have removed all reference to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

- From 1 September 2023, headteachers are unable to agree leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied there are exceptional circumstances.
- Should absence be agreed, headteachers can specify the number of days a pupil will be allowed to be absent from school.

- Where leave of absence is not agreed and the pupil is out of school or the pupil is away longer than was agreed or an application has not been made in advance, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- Headteachers cannot give retrospective approval.
- Where leave of absence is taken for a holiday that has not been authorised, a headteacher may request the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child who is absent without the agreement of the headteacher.
- Penalty Notices carry a daily fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 22-28 days.
- There is no right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice because the authorisation of absence is the sole responsibility of the headteacher.
- Where Penalty Notice(s) are unpaid, the local authority may consider taking legal action under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 for failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school.
- If this happens, the case will take place before magistrates who could issue the maximum fine of £1000 per parent per child for this offence.

When a fixed penalty notice may be issued

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps).
- Parentally-condoned absences.
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time.
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed).
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

KCC further guidance https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/school-absences

Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing Education ('CME') Policy
- Missing and Uncollected Child Policy

APPENDIX A SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODES 2025

Below are the codes used for recording absence on our school registration system together with the meaning with regards to authorised/unauthorised absence. It should be made clear that any absence, whether authorised or not authorised, will affect a pupil's percentage of attendance and the overall school percentage.

To clarify: if your child is absent from school for any reason, authorised or unauthorised, it will affect their attendance percentage.

Present Codes

/ \ - present during registration
B - educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K - attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L - arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P - participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V - educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W - attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority

Absent Codes: Authorised Absences

C - absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1 - in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2 - absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D - dual registered
E - suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I - illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1 - job/school/college interview
M - medical or dental appointment
Q - unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R - religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S - study leave
T - parent travelling for occupational purposes
X - non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1 - unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2 - unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3 - unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4 - unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5 - unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6 - unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7 - unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)

Unauthorised Absences

G - holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N - reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O - absent in other or unknown circumstances
U - late after register has closed

Administrative Codes

Z - prospective pupil not yet on register
- planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days

Any queries relating to pupil absence should be sent to the Attendance Champion for the school: sporter@holmewoodhouse.co.uk