



Scholes (Holmfirth) Junior and Infant School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by:	Date Approved:	Due for review no later than:
Headteacher	December 2021	December 2022

Aims:

- To ensure that no pupil is held back because of their background or educational needs
- To enable pupils to have a sound grounding so that they will be able to develop their full potential

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence e.g. medical reasons)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence e.g. holidays)

Parental Responsibility:

- Ensure that pupils attend school regularly
- Inform school on the first day of absence before 9:00am
- Ensure that pupils arrive at school on time (8:45am-8.55am)
- Provide an explanation for the absence / lateness (phone call or letter)

School's Responsibility:

- Mark the register at the beginning of each session, 8:55am and 1:00pm and close the register at 9:00am and 1:05pm
- Record authorised and unauthorised absences using the correct codes
- Monitor attendance regularly
- Inform parents when attendance falls below 96% or there are patterns of lateness
- Refer causes for concerns to Attendance & Pupil Support Officer (APSO)
- To have procedures in place for improving attendance
- To ensure that no pupil is discriminated against because of background, culture, religion (including religious holidays) or educational needs

N.B Following advice regarding safeguarding, all pre-compulsory age school children will be monitored daily in the same way as the rest of the school.

Leave of Absence during term time

- Leave of absence during term time will not be authorised.
- If parent/carers still decide to take their children away on leave of absence during term time they must avoid examination periods e.g. SATs in May and Phonics Check in June
- They will receive a letter not authorising the leave of absence.
- The school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct should unauthorised leaves of absence take place
- The relevant code(s) will be entered for unauthorised leaves of absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which we, and you, must seek to avoid.

Leave of Absence (other than holidays) - An absence record of 90% represents 10% of missed teaching and learning time

Leave of absence for pupils will not be authorised by the Headteacher unless there are exceptional circumstances. The 'Leave of Absence' form (see Appendix 1) should be completed to make a request. It is at the Headteacher's discretion to determine what is considered to be "exceptional" and advice may be taken from the local authority. Your child's previous overall attendance will be taken into account when making a decision.

If you need to take your child out of school during term time, for any reason other than medical and/or a religious leave of absence (a maximum of 3 days within a 12-month period where a religion other than Christianity is practiced and the day falls on a usual school day), you **MUST** make a request in writing, well in advance of the absence.

You also need to be aware that if your child fails to return to school following 20 days of absence, he/she is at **risk of losing** their school place

Penalty Notices may be issued:

- Where parents have not sought permission from the Headteacher before taking their child out school for a leave of absence in term-time
- If the Headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway
- If a pupil has not returned by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation AND
- Where the individual leave of absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 10 consecutive school sessions (this can be split over weekends or school holidays) before triggering a penalty notice request.

A penalty notice is issued by the local authority to each parent of each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. This penalty is by the local authority and does not become part of school funds.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record

Repeated offences of leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' Court.

Consequences of unauthorised absence

- The possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued (to each parent for each child)
- The possibility of losing the school place, and the risk not being re-admitted to the school
- The possibility of prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised leave of absence

First Day Calling Procedures and Truancy

Scholes School understands that poor attendance can be an indicator of concern for pupils with welfare and safeguarding concerns, and thus ensures that information is shared between the Deputy DSL (Attendance Monitoring) and the DSLs. Likewise, Scholes School understands that a parent failing to inform the school that a child has an authorised absence could be a cause for concern and thus, we will follow Kirklees Council's guidance 'First Day Calling' procedures.

Pupils who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are vulnerable and at potential risk of abuse or neglect. Our staff members will follow the Kirklees Council's guidance for schools where pupils absent themselves during the school day and school's procedures for dealing with children who are absent/ go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future. If we have further concerns about your child's truancy, we will follow the West Yorkshire Police Truancy Policy, available on Kirklees Business Solutions.

Poor School Attendance

When attendance starts to decline, it will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team. Parents will be informed of this through letters home using a graded system. In further cases, a school attendance improvement contract will be offered. Failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered.

If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal intervention Panel, the matter is heard in the Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

Suspended/Excluded Pupils

If a pupil has been suspended or excluded, that pupil may not be in a public place during the period of suspension/exclusion without just cause (such as attending a medical appointment). If that pupil is seen in a public place, a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing

to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record

Lateness

- Registers close at 9:00am and 1:10pm and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at these times. Any child arriving later than 8.55am should enter via the main entrance reporting to the school office.
- Pupils who are consistently late (when there are two or more lates in 1 week) will have a letter issued to parent/carers who will be asked to give reasons for the lateness.
- If pupils arrive at school later than 9:20am it will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the morning session using the 'U' Code

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child, it may be something simple
- Talk to the class teacher or Key Stage Leader
- Talk with our Community Liaison Officer or Learning Mentor

School Actions

Daily

- Teaching Assistants and Teachers will meet and greet pupils on entry into school and classroom
- Pupils will be reminded about the importance of good school attendance
- The teacher has a statutory duty to mark the register daily by 9:00am and 1:10pm
- Registers will be checked and first day contact calls will be made by phone or home visit if necessary
- Late arrivals and reason will be recorded and monitored

Weekly

- School will make contact with parents where there are two or more lates per week
- Classes will be informed about their attendance during an assembly and successes will be celebrated

Fortnightly

- All children's attendance that is highlighted as a concern will be reviewed, including children in Reception and Nursery under the statutory school age
- In some cases, class teachers will invite parents in to school to talk about their child's attendance and help will be offered. If attendance continues to be a concern, then parent/carers will be phoned by the appropriate Key Stage Leaders.
- Individual cases will be reviewed on their own merits and letters will be sent to parent/carers as and when required
- Attendance and punctuality issues are addressed with APSO, Senior Leaders, Learning Mentor and Community Liaison Officer.
- Undertake home visits or school meeting with Senior Leaders and parent/carers, where appropriate, identified through the reviewed or continued absence
- When action is required, legal process will be followed
- Medical absences will be monitored, and medical evidence will be requested if necessary

Other School Strategies

- Termly attendance letters (coloured coded –Red, Amber & Green) will be issued to inform parent/carers about their child's attendance
- Staff members will go and pick child(ren) up from their home address as a one-off support or in an emergency
- 100% termly attendance certificates will be issued in an assembly
- The website will state clearly the importance of attendance and half termly attendance data will be shared
- Senior Leaders will meet with parents to draw up a 'Parent Contract'
- Failures to follow 'Parent Contract' will result in legal proceeding and/or a fine

- Pupils may be referred to a school nurse should absences due to ill health become lengthy or frequent
- 'Leave in Term Time' forms will be discussed, and an authorised or unauthorised absence will be determined
- School will reply within 5 working days to all requests received, informing parent/carers of whether the request has been authorised or not
- Paperwork for all unauthorised leave taken will be completed and submitted, so that fines/warnings can be issued by the authority

APPENDIX 1 – Absence Request Form

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This form has been designed to clarify the process of absence requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education) and LA (Local Authority). Further information can be obtained from www.dfe.gov.uk.

Extended absences may have a negative effect on your child’s education and progress.

Pupil Name		Class	
Pupil Name		Class	
Pupil Name		Class	
Please give details of any school age siblings			
Name of Sibling		School Attended	
Name of Sibling		School Attended	
Absent from school date		Back at school date	
Total amount of days absent from school			
Please state your reason for the absence request, demonstrate how this leave meets the ‘exceptional circumstances’ and include any supporting documentation:			
<p>The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child’s attendance history 2. The time of year (Statutory Assessment Tests, or September) 3. The family circumstances and the parents’ reasons for wanting to take their annual family holiday during term time. 4. Employers letter <p>Penalty Notice: Where the Headteacher decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct.</p>			
Signed by Parent/Carer		Date	
Parent/Carer Print Name			

A text message will be sent home when your absence request has been processed by the Headteacher.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Office use only:			
Current attendance %			
Number of late marks			
Number of days requested			
Would granting this request mean attendance would fall below 95%		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>	
I DO NOT give permission for the above named pupil/pupils to be absent from Scholes J & I School as there are no ‘exceptional circumstances’. This will be recorded as days unauthorised absence.			
I GIVE permission for the above named pupil/pupils to be absent from Scholes J & I School for days for the following ‘exceptional circumstances’:			
Signed by Headteacher following discussion with Parent/Carer		Date	

	Recorded on Attendance Register		Text Parent/Carer
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APPENDIX 2 – Green Attendance Letter

Date:

Dear

Please find enclosed an absence analysis report for your child

As of (date), (child's name) has a total attendance of ___% with ___% authorised and ___% unauthorised absences. This is well below the national guidance on attendance of 96%.

May I stress the importance of reducing all absences to a minimum, and of eliminating unauthorised absences altogether. By working in partnership with parents and our children, we want to encourage regular school attendance. As a parent we are sure you recognise the importance of regular attendance at school for (child's name) educational and social development. It has been shown that regular and sustained absence often leads to gaps in learning, lower attainment, and social difficulties.

We would be grateful for your support in ensuring (child's name) attends school on a regular basis.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 3 – Amber Attendance Letter

Date:

Dear

Please find enclosed an absence analysis report for your child

As of (date), (child's name) has a total attendance of ___% with ___% authorised and ___% unauthorised absences. This is well below the national average attendance of%... (Academic Year).

May I stress the importance of reducing all absences to a minimum, and of eliminating unauthorised absences altogether. By working in partnership with parents and our children, we want to encourage regular school attendance. As a parent we are sure you recognise the importance of regular attendance at school for (child's name) educational and social development. It has been shown that regular and sustained absence often leads to gaps in learning, lower attainment, and social difficulties.

We would be grateful for your support in ensuring (child's name) attends school on a regular basis. Please inform school before 9:30 a.m. if your child is sick. We will inform you whether we feel (child's name) could actually attend school or whether they should stay off. To this end we would also ask that from this date, any absence for medical reasons must be accompanied with a doctor's note in order for it to be authorised.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 4 – Red Attendance Letter - Penalty Notice NOT ISSUED

Date:

Dear (Name of Parent/s)

Penalty Notice Warning – Term time leave of absence.

It has come to my attention that has taken days leave from to
This absence was not authorised by the school.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Headteacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school in term time, and that if leave is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

From September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 or within 28 days is £120.

On this occasion I have decided not to issue a Penalty Notice against you. You should consider this letter as a warning that any further holidays taken in term-time without prior permission will lead to such action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 6 – Red Attendance Letter – Penalty Notice ISSUED

Dear (Name of Parent/s)

Penalty Notice Warning Term time leave of absence.

It has come to my attention that has taken days leave from to
This absence was not authorised by the school.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Headteacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school in term time, and that if leave is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

From September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 or within 28 days is £120.

Unfortunately, on this occasion I have decided to issue a Penalty Notice against you and I will be informing the local authority of my decision.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 6 – School and Parent Individual Attendance Plan

School and Parent Individual Care Plan

The aim of this contract is to work together to improve school attendance and to avoid the need for referral to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and possible legal action (penalty notice / prosecution).

Name of Pupil:

Date of Birth:

Date of Meeting:

Meeting attended by:

Overall attendance:

Unauthorised attendance:

Lateness:

Discussions / Issues:

The parent / carer will:

The pupil will:

The school will:

The target for attendance during the next __ weeks is __%

This plan will be reviewed at the school on:

Date: _____

Time: _____

If this agreement is not followed and the target attendance figure is not met the referral will be made to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service.

Signed: (parent / carer)

Signed: (school)