

The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

Halton Community Combined School

Attendance Policy



Together, our **community** inspires a love of learning and enables children to find their voice.

Adopted by Full Governing Body

September 2025

Date of Next Review

September 2026

Positivity

Respect

Honesty

Perseverance

Loyalty

Courage

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Halton Community Combined School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Halton Community Combined School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, SEND, Anti-bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

This policy also refers to the DFE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Attendance Register

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should telephone or email the school by 8.30am on the first day of absence to inform us of the reason and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up by the parent/carer on the child's return to school. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness: In most cases a telephone call, email or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

In line with [NHS guidance](#), children with **diarrhoea** or **vomiting** should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

The school must be notified of any infectious diseases and will advise on the necessary exclusion period. We cannot look after children who are sent to school unwell and parents will be asked to collect them. If your child is taken ill at school, you will be contacted and asked to make arrangements for their collection.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school and will need to hand completed absence request form to the office staff.

Other Authorised Circumstances: Parents can apply for authorised absence under exceptional circumstances. These applications will be considered on an individualised basis by the Headteacher and governors. Exceptional circumstances are likely to be the result of largely unpredictable events, such as bereavement or family crisis.

Service families may apply for leave under this category if a deployment has prevented them from taking holiday. Authorised absence could also include religious observance and we would

encourage parents to discuss this with the Headteacher in advance of this proposed time away from school.

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or Alternate Provision settings. These are not classified as absences however must be approved by the school prior to the child's first session.

Excluded (no alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Late Arrival: Registration begins at 8.40am (Years 2, 4, 6), 8.45am (Years 1, 3, 5) and 8.50am (Reception). Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but having arrived late. The register will close 10 minutes after their class start time. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as absent. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment (Code M).

The absence will be recorded as **Late** if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late (Code L).

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday or other such treat
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness or injury where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Appointment made for a sibling

Leave of Absence and Extended Leave: Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are strongly advised not to do so. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time must send a written request to the head teacher before arrangements are made. Documentary evidence of leave and return dates will be required in order to process your request. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Purpose of the leave
- Circumstances of the request
- Length of the proposed leave and the likely impact of this on the child's education
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs or other statutory assessments
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made
- The timing of the absence e.g. at the beginning of a term absences will not be authorised.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance: Halton Community Combined School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance (Code R).

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. Traveller absence (Code T) is acceptable only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Halton Community Combined School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at Halton Community Combined School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Halton Community Combined School can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Halton Community Combined School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- the child is on roll and attending another visited school
- the child is undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- the child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

4. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local

Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil

- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

Halton Community Combined School will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Halton Community Combined School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

The school will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation (see appendix 1)
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

The school will request that parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for doctor, dentist, etc outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, eg bedtime, homework, preparing schoolbag and

uniform the evening before

- Ensure that every day their child arrives at school on time and fully prepared for the day
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where there are exceptional circumstances, send a written request for leave to the Headteacher in advance of booking the holiday

6. Using Attendance Data

All pupils' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Class Teachers will monitor attendance each week and discuss concerns to their Year Leader (percentage attendance and pattern of absence). Every three weeks, the Headteacher is provided with attendance data for those pupils falling below 95%. Attendance concerns are discussed at the weekly Senior Leadership meetings.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 2).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Halton Community Combined School will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. Support Systems

Halton Community Combined School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, eg bereavement, divorce/ separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Halton Community Combined School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, Emotional Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Work with Family Support Coordinator and SENDCO
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems

- Nurture groups
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

8.1 Analysing attendance:

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

9. Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Halton Community Combined School will notify the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team of the irregular attendance.

The County Attendance Team or school, may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence ie for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

Penalty notices:

The headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (**10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Appendix 1:

Intervention Flow Chart

The school monitors the attendance and punctuality of pupils and groups of pupils. Reports are produced every four weeks. Children for whom the attendance rate or pattern of attendance is of concern are identified. Each case is reviewed to determine if there is an improving trend or need of further action.

School will notify parent of the attendance concern in writing and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend
- Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.
- Ensure your child attends school regularly.

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and may issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.

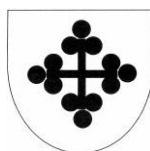
A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between you and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £80 per parent/carer, per child this must be paid in full within 21 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £160 per parent/carer, per child. If you fail to pay the Penalty by the 28th day, the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.

If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Appendix 2:



[The John Colet Liaison Group](#) Local Schools working in Partnership for mutual benefit.

Please complete form and return in envelope marked for the attention of Mrs Caroline Allen Or email to callen@haltoncc.school Thank you

Halton Community Combined School REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

(This must be submitted at least four school weeks before the proposed absence)

I request permission from the School's Governing Body for my child:

Name:	Class:
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to be granted Leave of Absence for the dates below:

From:	To:
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Exceptional Circumstances

Please give details as to why the absence is an exceptional circumstance, and why it can only be taken at this time. (Affordability for a family holiday will not be accepted as a reason.)

I can confirm that the information that I have given above is correct and has no factual omissions. I understand that any authorised absence may be unauthorised at a later date if it is found that I provided inaccurate information; this may jeopardise any future Leave of Absence requests.

Signature of parent/carer:	Date:
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LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST – RESPONSE FORM

- ☐ **This absence request has been accepted and recognised as exceptional circumstances**
- Or**
- ☐ **This absence request has been refused because:**
 - ☐ Your child has already had authorised absence this school year
 - ☐ The request is at the beginning of a school term
 - ☐ The request covers all/part of an assessment period
 - ☐ Insufficient notice has been given (four school weeks)
 - ☐ Attendance is less than 90%
 - ☐ There are lateness issues
 - ☐ The reason is not exceptional/rare/significant/unavoidable/short
 - ☐ The absence request is due to affordability of a family holiday
 - ☐ Insufficient reasons provided for the absence request
 - ☐ The absence is not due to unavoidable work/ military commitments

Signed:	Date:
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Positivity

Respect

Honesty

Perseverance

Loyalty

Courage

Photocopied & copy returned to parents:		SIMs Code:	
Diary Note		Email Sent:	

NB: * Please refer to notes overleaf ... thank you.

***Holiday Requests**

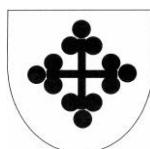
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on **1st September 2013**

Term-time holiday

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) previously allowed head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Appendix 3:



[The John Colet Liaison Group](#) Local Schools working in Partnership for mutual benefit.

Please complete form and return in envelope marked for the attention of the School Office or email to office@haltoncc.school - Thank you

Halton Community Combined School REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DUE TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

Name:	Class:
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Where at all possible we request that parents/carers make medical appointments for children outside of school hours; we do appreciate that this is not always possible. On the occasions where an appointment needs to be made during school time, we request, where possible, the child is able to attend registration in the morning and after lunch ie 9.00 am and 1.20 pm as this will help to minimise unnecessary absences. Thank you for your co-operation.

Date of appointment: _____ Time of appointment: _____

Nature of appointment: _____

Reason for appointment:

Please give a brief explanation as to why this appointment needs to take place during school time.
Please attach a copy of the appointment letter to the Absence Application for filing.

I can confirm that the information that I have given above is correct and has no factual omissions

Signature of parent/carers:	Date:
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For completion by School Office:

Positivity Respect Honesty Perseverance Loyalty Courage

Signed:	Date:
Diary Note	SIMs Code:
Email Sent:	