



Monday 13th March 2023

Attendance Matters

Dear Parents/Carers,

We all know that being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results. However, attendance remains one of our biggest challenges as a school with us currently sitting significantly below the Government's target of 96% average attendance.

Our average attendance at the moment is around 92% meaning that on average pupils at Holland Park miss 15 days (or 30 sessions) of school per year. This is equivalent to 3 school weeks and I'm sure you all appreciate the amount of learning that takes place over this period of time. I know that not every pupils' individual attendance is at 92% and we have many pupils who are at or above the targeted level of 96% but I thought it was important that we were all aware of the current situation at Holland Park.

There are two main factors that impact attendance and they are sickness and term-time holidays.

Sickness - In January we sent out a newsletter sharing updated guidance on pupil sickness and highlighted the NHS message that it is *ok to allow a child or young person to go to school with some common or minor illnesses. Common colds, minor coughs, sore throats or headaches alone do not mean they are too unwell to attend school.* We reinforced that we would not be able to authorise all sickness and that we may also ask for medical evidence.

Term-time holidays - Our school attendance policy, available via our school website, clearly sets out the process that parents should follow if they wish to apply for leave during term time. Please note that applications should only be made, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances which mean that the leave cannot be taken during the school holidays. **We would ask all parents to note that, where families choose to go on holiday during term time and the absences are coded as unauthorised, Essex County Council may not issue penalty notices and may instead proceed to prosecution and place the case directly before the Magistrates for their consideration in court.** If found guilty by the Magistrates, parents could face a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

I would also like to highlight the impact that lateness has on a pupil. School is open from 8.30am every morning and learning activities will begin in class at this time. These activities tend to be interventions, practice, booster and/or pre-teach activities that are vital for pupils. This time also gives teachers and other adults the chance to work with pupils on misconceptions and mistakes that they may have made in previous learning. The social impact of pupils being late is also important as this is an opportunity for pupils to share information or important news with their class teacher as well as building relationships with peers and adults alike. Our registers officially close at 9.10am and pupils arriving after this time will have an impact on attendance percentages. Persistent lateness could also result in a penalty notice. A child who is **10 minutes** late every day will end up missing just over **5 days'** worth of learning over the course of an academic year.

We are continuing to work with an external partner, Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions), to help improve the rates of attendance for some pupils. Aquinas is a member of The National Association for Support Workers in Education (NASWE) and is accredited by Essex Police under The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). They work very



Holland Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 6NG

Telephone: 01255 422942 Facsimile: 01255 421187

E-Mail: admin@hollandpark.school Web Address: www.hollandparkprimary.org.uk

Headteacher: Mr Moseley



closely with our own internal attendance officer, pastoral teams, SENDCO and leadership team as well as Local Authority's Attendance Compliance Team.

We are also working with other local Primary and Secondary schools as part of the South Tendring Primary Partnership (STPP). This work will see a co-ordinated and consistent approach to dealing with attendance across all of the schools in the partnership. Over the coming weeks you will be receiving a letter signed by all of the Head Teachers outlining the plan and giving some key information around attendance. This is an area that all school's feel very passionately about and we all know the importance of having the pupils in school for as much time as possible. Part of this new project will be for us to be able to see how Holland Park is performing compared to our neighbouring schools and I am sure, like me, you will want to see us near to the top of the table!

We do also recognise that in some cases attendance is impacted by other factors, beyond anybody's control. Where this is the case, we urge parents/carers to work closely with our amazing Pastoral and Admin teams in order to allow us to support pupils (and families) as best we can.

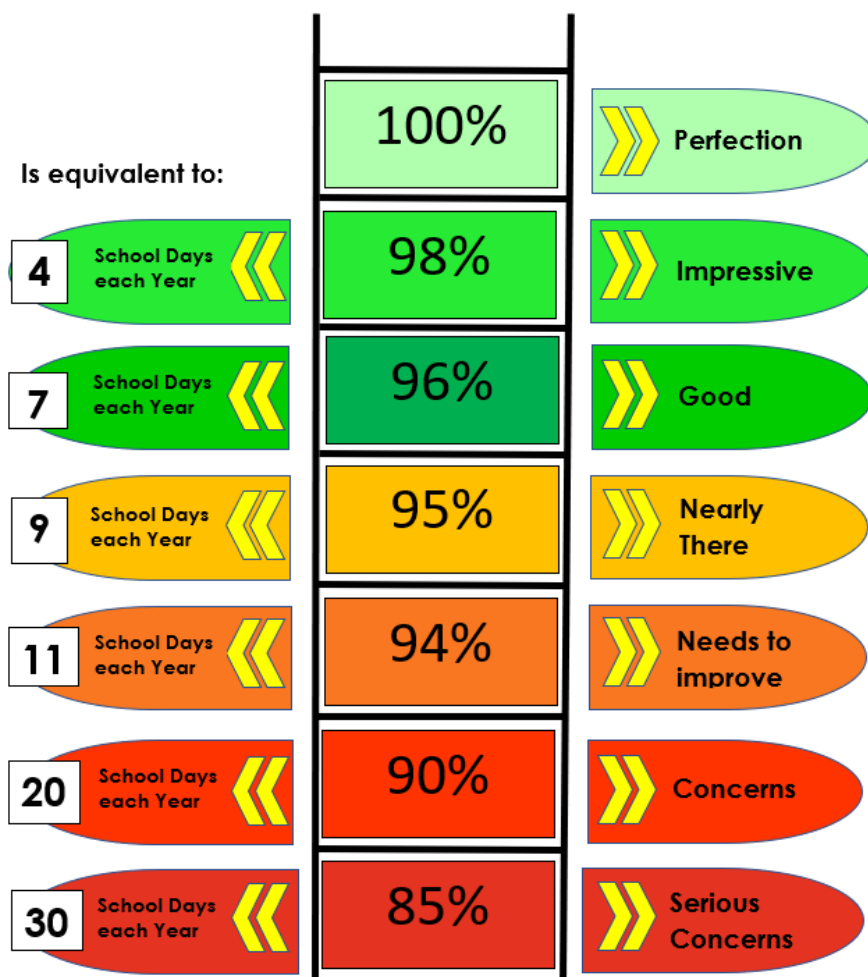
Thank you for your ongoing trust and support.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Moseley

Mr M Moseley
Headteacher

Attendance Ladder



When attendance drops to 94% and below pupils will be referred to our Attendance Team for support

