

# HOLYHEAD ATTENDANCE NEWSLETTER

## Summer Term



Regular school attendance is critical for academic success, social development, and future employability, with a direct link between high attendance (over 95%) and better grades. Missing school, even for minor reasons, creates learning gaps, reduces exam performance, limits social skill development, and negatively impacts mental health and well-being.

At Holyhead school we believe that every student deserves the best possible start in life and that good attendance is crucial for academic progress, well-being and improving future life chances of our students. - Attendance manager Mrs A Ulhaq

### Key Reasons for Regular Attendance:

- **Academic Achievement:** Students who attend regularly have better academic results. Data shows that 84% of pupils with 100% attendance achieved expected standards, compared to only 40% of those who were persistently absent.
- **Reduced Gaps in Learning:** Consistent attendance ensures students can follow the sequential flow of education  
Social & Emotional Growth: Regular attendance allows children to develop crucial social skills, build friendships, and improve self-confidence.
- **Long-term Success:** Attending school regularly instills routines and discipline, such as reliability, which are critical for future employment.
- **Wellbeing:** Being in school allows access to support systems, pastoral care, and opportunities for extracurricular activities, promoting better overall health.

### Impact of Poor Attendance:

- **The "90% Rule":** While 90% may seem like a high percentage, it actually equates to missing roughly 2 weeks of school per year.
- **Wider Gaps:** Missing even 10 extra days is associated with significantly lower chances of achieving passing grades in key subjects (e.g. GCSEs).

### Supporting Good Attendance:

- **Routine:** Establish routines early so children are accustomed to getting enough sleep and arriving on time.
- **Communication:** Work with schools to identify barriers and develop solutions for attendance issues, particularly for children with special educational needs or mental health issues.
- **Routine Health Checks:** Avoid keeping children out of school for minor, mild ailments.

### Legal Requirement:

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child receives a full-time education, which usually means ensuring they attend school every day it is open, unless they are too ill.

### Days and hours lost of learning:

**90% Attendance** sounds okay, but your child will lose 19 days of missed learning over the school year. This is 95 hours of lessons your child will have missed.

**85% Attendance** equals 29 days of school missed, the equivalent of 6 weeks of missed school. That is 145 hours of lessons your child will have missed.

**80% Attendance** equals 38 days of school missed, roughly 1 day every week. This is over half a term of lost learning. Which means your child will have missed 190 hours of learning.

**75% Attendance** is nearly 10 weeks of school or 48 days missed, this is 240 lessons missed over the period of a year.

**50% Attendance** is 95 days or 19 weeks of school missed, a staggering 475 lessons missed.

- Mr D Beale Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



### The impact of missing school on your child's future life chances:

Poor school attendance severely damages future life chances by reducing academic attainment, limiting career opportunities, and lowering lifetime earnings. Consistently missing school increases the risk of poverty, long-term unemployment, and mental health issues. Notably, each extra day missed in secondary school can cost roughly £750 in future earnings.

#### **Impact on Future Life Chances**

- **Reduced Earnings & Career Limitations:** Persistently absent students may earn ~£10,000 less annually by age 28 compared to peers with good attendance. Poor attendance is linked to a 0.8% decrease in yearly income for every extra day missed.

- **Lower Academic Achievement:** Poor attendance causes gaps in knowledge, making it difficult to achieve required qualifications, which limits access to higher education and training.
- **Reduced Employment Opportunities:** Employers often view attendance as a proxy for reliability, punctuality, and work ethic. Poor records hinder employability.
- **Social & Emotional Disconnection:** Missed school leads to lower self-esteem, poorer mental health, and fewer friendships, which can hinder social development.
- **Risk of Social Exclusion:** Poor attendance is strongly associated with a higher likelihood of falling into poverty, being involved in crime, or developing substance misuse issues.
- **Lower Annual Salary:** Students who are severely absent (missing 50% or more of school) may earn up to **£20,000 less** annually 10 years after leaving school compared to their peers.
- **Welfare Dependency:** Poor attendance is linked to a significantly higher likelihood of claiming benefits for sustained periods and not being in stable employment by age 28.

### Long-Term Implications

- **"Double Disadvantage":** Poor attendance often compounds existing disadvantages, leading to a significant attainment gap, with only 36% of persistently absent pupils reaching expected grades in English and Maths compared to 78% of peers.
- **Long-Term NEET Risk:** Students with poor attendance are nearly four times more likely to become Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).
- **Safeguarding Risks:** Absenteeism leaves young people vulnerable to external dangers, including child criminal or sexual exploitation
- **Mental Health Struggles:** Severe absence is associated with mental health issues that are twice as poor as those who attend regularly. This often creates a "vicious cycle" where poor mental health leads to further absence.



The damage caused by low attendance is cumulative, with even moderate absences, such as a two-week holiday, equating to missing a full year of education by age 16. - Mrs D Reddy Deputy Principal

### Academic and Educational Outcomes

The cumulative effect of absence creates significant gaps in knowledge that are difficult to close:

- **GCSE Performance:** Missing just 10 days in Year 11 halves the odds of achieving a grade 5 in English and maths.
- **Attainment Gap:** Persistently absent students are much less likely to achieve

**“It is important that school knows where your child is during the school day. Therefore, if your child is ill it is important that you report any absences to the attendance team each morning”.**

- Mr Evans Attendance Team at Holyhead school



expected standards; for example, only 36% of persistently absent pupils achieved expected grades in English and maths compared to 78% of those rarely absent.

- **Loss of Learning Time:** Attending 90% of the time may seem high, but it equates to missing 19 days a year—over **one full year** of schooling by the time a child reaches 16.



### What can parents do to support good attendance

Parents play a vital role in making school attendance a priority. Beyond legal duties to ensure full-time education for children aged 5–16, parents can use several practical strategies to break barriers and foster a positive attitude toward school.

- Ms H Ulhaq Student Engagement Officer

### Establish Strong Home Routine

Consistent schedules reduce morning friction and help children feel prepared:

- **Morning & Bedtime:** Create a regular timetable for waking up, dressing, and eating. Ensuring adequate sleep makes mornings less of a struggle.
- **Night-Before Prep:** Help your child pack their bag, lay out clothes, and check their timetable the evening before to avoid a rushed start.
- **Healthy Punctuality:** Aim to arrive on time; rushing can be unsettling and negatively impact the start of their day.

### Communicate and Collaborate with the School

Early and honest dialogue is the most effective way to resolve attendance issues:

- **Open a Dialogue:** Talk to the school as soon as you have concerns. Contact the **class teacher, form tutor, or SENCo** directly to discuss barriers.
- **Be Honest About Reasons:** Avoid masking "school refusal" or anxiety as physical illness. Schools can only provide tailored support, such as **later start times** or **personalised learning plans**, if they understand the true cause.
- **Engage with Support:** Be proactive in attending meetings or signing "attendance agreements". This often prevents more formal legal interventions like fines.

### Support Emotional Wellbeing and Belonging

Attendance often improves when a child feels they belong and are understood:

- **Identify Barriers:** Listen with empathy to uncover underlying issues like bullying, sensory overwhelm, or undiagnosed neurodiversity.
- **Foster Positive Associations:** Speak positively about school staff and find common interests between your child and their teachers.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Notice and praise small successes, such as getting out of bed on time or handing in a piece of work, to build confidence.
- **Use Tools for Anxiety:** For children with school-based anxiety, try creating a "self-soothe box" or a calming morning music playlist.

### Manage Health and Absences Wisely

- **Follow NHS Guidance:** Use resources like the [NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guide](#) to decide if an absence is truly necessary. Children with mild coughs or colds should generally still attend.
- **Schedule Appointments:** Whenever possible, book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours or during holidays.
- **Avoid Term-Time Holidays:** Taking holidays during school time is a major driver of unauthorised absence and can lead to penalty notice fines.

**At Holyhead school we are here to help and support you with ensuring your child attends school. We have a dedicated team of professionals who can answer any questions you may have around attending school. Your child has a head of year as well as access to a student engagement officer and an attendance team.**

**If you have any worries then please contact Holyhead school attendance team on 0121 523 1960 and select (1) to report a child's absence.**