



Parent Handbook

The School Day

Below are the times of the School Day:

The School Day



Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

Period	Start Time	End Time
1	8.45	9.45
2	9.45	10.40
BREAK	10.40	11.00
3	11.00	11.55
4	11.55	12.50
LUNCH	12.50	13.25
5	13.25	14.20
6	14.20	15.15

Wednesday

Period	Start Time	End Time
1	8.45	9.35
2	9.35	10.25
BREAK	10.25	10.45
3	10.45	11.35
4	11.35	12.25
ECCO	12.25	12.50
LUNCH	12.50	13.25
5	13.25	14.20
6	14.20	15.15

Punctuality

The school recognises the importance of being punctual. The school pips go at **8.40am**. Period 1 starts at 8.45am. Parents are encouraged to make sure their children are in school on time. If students arrive after this time, they will be issued with late minutes.

Our Holmesdale Values (known as ECCO Values) are:

Engagement
Community
Character
Ownership

Students are encouraged to remember this on a daily basis as these are values that will serve our students well as they enter adult life.

First Day of Term

Wednesday 2nd September 2026 (Year 7 start)

Students should be in school by 8.40am. All students should enter school through the main entrance and make their way as directed by members of staff.



Pastoral Team

A strong partnership exists between home and the school. Parents are encouraged to make contact with the school over all matters relating to their children. Your first point of contact in school should always be your child's Student Support Manager (SSM) or their Head of Year. If you would like to discuss an academic issue further, you can also contact the Subject Leader or your child's teacher. For anything to do with guidance and pastoral support, please contact your child's Student Support Manager or Principal of their Key Stage.

Subject teachers can be contacted either by letter or by email to ths_office@swale.at. As all staff have teaching or duty commitments, an appointment is necessary to ensure that the appropriate member of staff is available. We aim to ensure that all correspondence is dealt with within 48 hours.

The senior team are always happy to see parents over any confidential or very serious matters. If you would like to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team, appointments can be made through the school office.

Homework



Google Classroom

Homework is set regularly at Holmesdale and is designed to consolidate the learning that has taken place in the classroom, or to provide an opportunity for independent learning.

As students progress through the years, they should expect the levels of homework to increase.

Google Classroom is a platform where teachers will set homework tasks. Students and parents will be provided with a login and will be able to access the homework set by

teachers online. Students should regularly check their Google Classrooms to ensure they do not miss any homework that is due.

Attendance

At The Holmesdale School, we do not underestimate the value of high attendance; we recognise the link between good attendance and overall progress. Therefore, attendance at school is monitored closely and positive attendance is rewarded in school. **Our school target for attendance is 100%!**

We understand there are some occasions where sickness or absence from school cannot be helped. In these cases, parents should contact the Attendance Officer on the first day of absence before 8.30am. An answerphone is in operation before 8.00am, messages can be left or you can send an email to ths_attendance@swale.at and these will be received by the Attendance Officer. The school operates a first day calling system and parents are contacted by text on the day of absence if no message has been received. Parents are to inform the Attendance Officer of each day of illness of their child.

Failing to inform the Attendance Officer of any absence, or without a valid reason, will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may be sanctioned through a fixed penalty notice to parents from South East Attendance Advisory Service (SEASS).

Lateness to school is monitored and will be sanctioned; persistent lateness can be seen as an absence and could also result in fixed penalty fines from SEASS (South-East Attendance Advisory Service).

Medical / Dental Appointments

We urge, whenever possible, that medical and dental appointments are made outside of the school day. When this cannot be arranged, we ask parents to ensure that the appointment is either early morning or late afternoon to allow the pupil to spend the rest of the day in school, minimising disruption to their education. Appointment evidence must be sent to ths_attendance@swale.at at the earliest opportunity.

Please note that if the correct procedure is not followed with sickness during the school day and your child phones home on their personal mobile phone, this will be marked as unauthorised.

Unlike primary school, we do not operate a 48 hour period of absence following sickness. Instead, we welcome the child back the moment they feel fit enough.

Leave of Absence / Holiday

We do not authorise family holidays during term time. We will consider requests for absence individually, but will only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. All applications should be made in writing to the Head of School.

Taking a holiday in term time may result in parents or carers receiving a Penalty Notice.

Uniform Requirements and Equipment

Girls' uniform	Boys' uniform
Black Blazer with school badge	Black Blazer with school badge
Pleated plaid kilt skirt or black trousers – not skinny	Black trousers - straight legged
Plain white shirt with collar	Plain white shirt with collar
School tie	School tie
Black socks below the knee or plain black tights	Black socks
Plain black leather shoes e.g. not plimsolls, canvas shoes, trainers or similar.	Plain black leather shoes e.g. not plimsolls, canvas shoes, trainers or similar
Dark coat	Dark coat
Plain school bag	Plain school bag
Optional: Plain black V-neck jumper	Optional: Plain black V-neck jumper

At Holmesdale, we believe that excellent uniform is part of setting high standards and encourages students' self-confidence; it encourages a sense of belonging to, and pride for, the school. Students will need to adhere **strictly** to the uniform requirements at all times. This means that uniform must be worn correctly both in and out of school (including the journey to and from school).

All uniforms can be purchased through Pages Schoolwear either online (please see the link on our website) or in the shop, located in Maidstone town centre. Uniform pieces such as trousers, shirts etc can also be purchased in supermarkets or other retail stores.

Uniform - All students

Uniform aids identification by members of the public and is helpful when school parties visit other locations. Holmesdale students are expected to behave well in public and be proud to be seen as a student from this school. This means:

- Top button fastened at all times
- Shirt tucked in at all times
- Jewellery is not permitted other than wrist watches
- Blazers to be worn at all times unless a teacher allows removal in the classroom
- Make-up is not allowed unless it is discreet
- False nails are not permitted
- Nail polish is not permitted (including French polish, gel and embellishments)
- No extreme hair styles are permitted, including colour, patterns and length
- Large hair accessories such as bows, flowers or slides are not permitted
- Long hair should be tied back for practical activities
- Fake tan is not permitted
- No hoodies
- No trainers or trainer-like shoes (including sports logos), even if they are purchased from a school shoe section in a shop.
- Skirt to be worn at an appropriate length
- No false eyelashes
- Socks to be worn under the knees

Items of uniform do, on occasion, wear out over the course of the academic year; we ask parents to be vigilant to this, replacing items as quickly as possible. The school can help in certain cases where finance is a concern.

Mobile Phones

We understand the importance of carrying a mobile phone to and from school for safety. Mobile phones need to be switched off during the day and stored in their school bag. Parents are able to contact school to ensure urgent messages are given to their children. Please do not contact your child directly on their mobile phone.

If mobile phones are seen during the school day they will be confiscated and held in the school office. These can be collected by parents at a convenient time.

Parents' Evenings

Dates of parents' evenings are published on our Facebook page and emailed to parents. Parents are invited to take an active role in school by attending.

We regularly ask parents to contribute their thoughts through questionnaires at these events, but would actively encourage parents to get in touch with school if they have any concerns.

Essential Equipment

We need the support of parents in encouraging their child to come to the school fully equipped and ready to learn. We have high expectations of our students, and we feel that when students fail to bring the correct equipment to school, vital learning time is lost while teachers provide it. We expect our students to take responsibility for their learning. We also realise that future employers would expect workers to arrive at the workplace with the correct equipment.

There will be consequences for students who regularly fail to come to school with the correct equipment.

Your child should leave home each morning with the following equipment:

A Bag

An appropriate sized, waterproof and sealable school bag should be purchased for the protection of all school items. Bags should be dark in colour and logos should be discreet. A second bag may be needed for PE kit.

PE Kit

Please check with your child when PE is timetabled, so they pack their kit.

Compulsory items

Polo shirt (with school logo)
Black shorts
Black socks

Optional items (must be plain and dark coloured)

Sweatshirt
Rugby shirt
Waterproof top
Tracksuit top
Tracksuit trousers
Skort

Stationery

Students need more than just a blue or black pen. They also need a green pen, pencil, ruler and sharpener. Highlighter pens and a scientific calculator are also useful. The best way to look after this equipment is to keep it in a pencil case.



Behaviour / Rewards

The main emphasis in school is a system of praise and reward. Positive behaviour is rewarded to motivate students and to reinforce the values of good behaviour, application to work and high achievement.

Students are expected to be polite, tell the truth and follow instructions. They are expected to move around the school in a calm and respectful manner. Conduct when travelling to and from school should represent The Holmesdale School appropriately.

We have a detention system in school that may result in students being held back after school. We will notify you if this is going to happen.

Student Voice - our Student Council

This representative group of students meets regularly to discuss a variety of issues. They have made some important decisions regarding the school community and we encourage students to take an active role in this. We often consult with our students when making any changes and look for their ideas and thoughts. If your child would like to join the school council, they should ask their SSM or Learning Leader for more information.



Transport to and from School

Our students travel to school in many different ways. Whether travelling by bus, public transport, walking or being driven by parents, we expect our students to represent Holmesdale with courtesy, good behaviour and outstanding uniform. We are pleased to say that the overwhelming majority of the community see our students behaving in just this way. On the rare occasion when poor behaviour is evident, especially on public transport, this is taken very seriously and sanctions are put in place. Persistent poor behaviour may lead to students being asked to make alternative transport arrangements.

Please use the below website to apply for your Kent County Council travel pass.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport/KCC-travel-saver>

Extra-Curricular Activities

Students are encouraged to broaden their interests by attending different after school activities. It is known that students who take part in a wide range of activities tend to do better academically than those who do not.



There are many clubs to choose from at Holmesdale and these change on a termly basis. If your child would like to take part in any clubs, they should speak to the relevant member of staff.

Leaving the School Premises

Safeguarding our students is extremely important to us. Therefore, no student is allowed to leave the school premises during the morning or afternoon sessions without permission. If given permission, all students must sign out at reception. Please ensure that the school has been informed ahead of time if your child has a medical appointment during the school day.

Equally, no student is allowed to leave the school premises at lunch time unless in the Sixth Form. This ensures that our students are safe at all times.

Catering Facilities

The school has a cashless catering cafeteria. Students entitled to a free school meal are well provided for with the meal deal, which is currently £3.28 (subject to change in September). Packed lunches may be eaten in the dining hall or canteen areas. Holmesdale promotes healthy eating, so we please ask that you do not allow your child to bring in sweets, crisps, chocolate or fizzy drinks as these are not allowed in school. Energy drinks/high sugar content drinks are not permitted and will be confiscated. Please note that we are also a nut-free school and items containing nuts must not be brought to school.





*Dedicated to Community, Committed
to Equality, Striving for Excellence*

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ACADEMIES
TRUST

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