

School Attendance Policy & Procedure

Vision Statement

At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy, inspired by and rooted in Christian values and teaching, we nurture each other to become aspirational, courageous, compassionate, and joyful people.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.
- 1.2 We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- 1.3 The expectation is that all pupils will attend school and the Pupil Attendance Policy will be implemented.
- 1.4 The Trustees, Governors and Head teacher do not support parents taking their children out of school for holidays.
- 1.5 If parents or students have concerns about attendance during the pandemic, they should speak to the school office in the first instance. The school's risk assessment refers to attendance and the steps that the school will take to promote attendance at the current time.
- 1.6 Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 1.7 Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.8

2 Promoting Regular Attendance

- 2.1 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, and all members of school staff.
- 2.2 To help us all to focus on this we will:
 - Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
 - Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- 2.3 Whilst any child may occasionally have time out of school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the Local Authority or a Child and Family Support Worker.

3 Understanding Types of Absence

- 3.1 Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- 3.2 Each half-day is known as a 'session'
- 3.3 **Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.
- 3.4 **Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings which may include issuing **each** parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If you are found guilty in court, you will receive a criminal conviction.

- 3.5 If parents do take their children on holiday where the absence is unauthorised, the school will follow Wiltshire Council's Guidance for Schools on leave of absence during term time and inform the Education Welfare Service who will, on behalf of the Local Authority, issue a fixed penalty notice.
- 3.6 Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
 - absences which have never been properly explained children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however is recorded as an absence for the session.
 - Shopping trips looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments their own or family birthdays holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher- may result in school: applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
 - Day trips other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

4 School Attendance and the Law

- 4.1 Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school and head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave of absence outside term time at any point in the school year, or the terminal illness or bereavement of a parent or sibling if the absence is concurrent. A letter from an employer may be required to support restricted work annual leave.
- 4.2 By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.
- 4.3 There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".
- 4.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended in September 2013, specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".
- 4.5 It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested in accordance with the Wiltshire Council Penalty Notice - [Code of Conduct](#).
- 4.6 A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.
- 4.7 At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:
- ... being of unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.
- 4.8 We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence, or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

4.9 If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

4.10 If parents do wish to request leave of absence, they should complete the Leave of absence request form which is available from the school office. Retrospective requests for leave of absence will not be granted.

4.11 Requests for leave of absence will be looked at on a case-by-case basis and it is up to the discretion of the Head teacher to decide about whether a request may be considered an exceptional circumstance or not. The Head teacher will inform the parent in writing as to the decision made regarding the request.

5 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

5.1 A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 95% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

5.2 We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given. If a child is approaching the PA level or has reached the PA mark, we will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include allocation of additional support either through the school or with partner agencies such as education welfare or social care.

6 Absence Procedures

6.1 If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 08:30 *am*. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call or call into school personally and speak to the office staff.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 08:30 *am*
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence if requested to support the absence.

6.2 When a pupil returns to school following a period of absence, they will be supported by their teachers in how best to catch up any work missed without making the reintegration process too stressful. This will be arranged on a one-to-one basis depending on circumstances.

7 If your child is absent, we will:

- If we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%. (Unless a child has a significant health issue which is supported by clear evidence from health professionals, this level of absence will always trigger a School Attendance Meeting (SAM)).
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

8 First day calling:

- 8.1 The school operates a first day response to absence: we will call you if we have not heard from you in the first instance. If we are unable to contact parents/carers by telephone; we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding. A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parent/carers by the 10th day of absence, at which point your child will be considered Missing from Education.

9 Local Authority attendance support services

- 9.1 Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.
- 9.2 Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically with schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

10 Lateness

- 10.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

11 How we manage lateness:

- 11.1 The school day starts at *8.40 am* when children can begin to come into school. Registers are taken at *8.50 am* and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time. Children arriving after *8.50 am* are required to come in to school via the school office if accompanied by a parent or carer, the parent/carer will sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded. The school may send home 'late notes' to keep parents and carers informed. From time to time the, Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.
- 11.2 At *9.15am* the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site 'U', but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of being issued with a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the school Education Welfare Officer and/or Child and Family Support Worker, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

12 Deletion from Roll

- 12.1 For any pupil leaving Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from *school*' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all our pupils.
- 12.2 It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.
- 12.3 Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by the academy.

13 Links to Legislation and Guidance referred to in this policy

- [school attendance guidance](#)
- DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#)
- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- DfE's guidance on the [school census](#)