

The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School
Attendance Policy

2024-2025



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Together in the spirit of love and forgiveness, our family learns to grow with hope and joy

Rational

This Policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of pupil attendance at The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School.

The policy is a result of consultation with the wider school community and an analysis of existing attendance data to establish current absence trends.

It aims to ensure the enjoyment and achievement for all pupils at The Holy Spirit Primary School.

Principles

The Governors, Head Teachers and staff wish to ensure every child has the opportunity to:

- Fully participate in school life
- Enjoy and achieve
- Feel a valued member of the school community

Aims

- To ensure that persistent absence is no more than national average (Persistently absent pupils are those with 10% or more absence either authorised or unauthorised).
- To achieve 96%+ attendance by making attendance a whole school priority
- To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance
- To identify groups of pupils and individuals whose absence causes concern
- To identify pupils persistently absent from school (10% or more absence)
- To track pupils' attendance and monitor and evaluate progress
- To identify main causes of absence and take action to address them by developing strong relationships with parents so that barriers to attendance can be removed and families are supported By school providing a positive and supportive culture, where attendance is celebrated and expected

Legal Responsibilities Relating to School

Attendance Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Parents must:

- contact school on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance
- update the school if the absence is expected to continue
- request leave in advance for holidays/extended absences in term time. However, holidays will not be authorised unless for certain circumstances.
- work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

The Headteacher, Ms Dineley and Mrs Jones are the school attendance leaders. As the attendance leader of the school they will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance, teaching and learning to encourage all pupils to attend and achieve.

- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils.
- Due to safeguarding if we have not heard from a parent/carer and a child is absent we will conduct a welfare visit (home visit) on the day of absence if needed or after 3 days of continuous absence. Staff will visit wherever the child is residing where it is expected that they should be able to see the child.
- Due to safeguarding if a child is absent for 5 days or longer and has not been seen by a member of staff then we shall conduct a welfare visit regardless of whether contact has been made by parents/carers. There is an expectation that staff should be able to see the child if such a visit is made.

Registration

- Parents should ensure pupils are in school for 8.45 am for morning registration. School gates open at 8.40.
- A pupil arriving after 8.55am will be marked late. Marked as L (late)
- A pupil arriving after 9.30am will be marked as late after the register closes. This is regarded as an unauthorised absence for the session. Marked as U (unauthorised)
- A pupil arriving in school after 8.55am should follow school procedures for late arrivals. Report to the office and explain reasons for lateness and children can be escorted to their class.
- Parents whose child(ren) are persistently arriving after 9.00am on 10 or more occasions will be invited into school to discuss the lateness and seek a resolution. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement, the matter will be discussed with Education Welfare Service and consideration given to issuing a Penalty Notice.

Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The parent must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

School will usually authorise absences where a pupil is:

- Unable to attend school due to illness.
- Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays.
- Absent due to other exceptional circumstances.

School will not authorise absence for:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Days out
- Looking after brothers/sisters

School may request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.

School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance

School will:

- Contact parents on first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 9.30am to ensure the safety of the pupil.
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern.
- Contact parents by letter when pupils' attendance falls below 96% to highlight concerns.
- Invite parents into school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is below 96%

- Invite parents to an Attendance Meeting with Head Teacher, Education Welfare Officer, Class Teacher, where attendance falls below 90%
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance.
- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties.
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school (EWO)
- In partnership with LA use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance.
- provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence.
- Complete a Common Assessment where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified (EWO)
- Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance.
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parent's evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements.
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils, including use Ten:Ten resources to promote emotional well-being.
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment.

Leave of absence:

The Law:

From 1 September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2006 Regulations and makes clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Head Teacher or person designated by the Head Teacher will determine what exceptional circumstances are; the following may be examples of exceptional circumstances:

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons.
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate.
- Leave of absence for children of serving members of the Armed Forces.

Additional Information

The Holy Spirit Primary School will ensure that all parents/carers receive a copy of the school attendance policy.

- Parents/carers will be required to complete a leave of absence request form available from the school office and return it to school.

- Parents/carers may be required to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher or person designated by the Head Teacher to discuss their request for a leave of absence.
- Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a leave of absence within 10 school days of the date of the application.

If the leave of absence is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G' this will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorised.

EWO and school will work together to support families, however, where a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent, per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days, the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court. In exceptional circumstances, The Holy Spirit School will consider a request for leave of absence for one period of absence during the academic year.

In the case of absences lasting for longer periods of time that are not unauthorised holidays, school will endeavour to make contact with the child after 3 days of absence. This may be by the class teacher or Attendance Lead. This will be a phone call to the child to speak to them directly. In cases where children are absent for longer periods of time, a home visit may be conducted after 5 days, where the child must be seen.

Persons responsible for attendance at The Holy Spirit Primary School

- Head Teacher
- Office Manager – Attendance Leader (Ms Dineley)
- First Day Contact Ms Dineley (followed up by Mrs Jones)
- EWO

Review of Policy

- This policy will be formally reviewed every 3 years.
- This policy will be less formally reviewed on an annual basis (with the SLA).
- The policy is given in full to all parents of children who are starting at The Holy Spirit Primary School.
- The principles of this policy will be raised in the school newsletter regularly throughout the year.
- Any complaints arising from the implementation of this policy should be addressed to Ms Dineley in the first instance.

Review

Review Date – January 2024

To be reviewed - September 2027