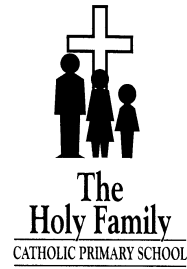


# ATTENDANCE POLICY



In keeping with our Mission Statement at Holy Family Catholic Primary School, we are committed to encouraging and promoting regular school attendance. This policy follows the guidelines from the Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DFE).

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We will encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

## **Mission Statement:**

Our catholic school sets out to provide an education that is God centred. It is a community where everyone is valued, loved and respected by each other.

Our children are encouraged to give of their best in all they do, to understand their beliefs and to work and play happily together. They are further encouraged to express their God given talents and to show qualities of honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, caring and patience.

We value our place in the parish and aim to maintain our strong partnerships with parents, governors and the wider community.

We aim to work as a team in a partnership that is truly supportive and understanding of everyone's needs.

We seek to follow God's guidance of loving and caring for each other in the way he taught us and to uphold our school name, living each day as one happy and Holy Family.

## **Our Aims:**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils with the help of their parents/carers in the establishment to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day

### **We expect that all parents/carers/persons that have day to day responsibility for our pupils will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school by 9.30am at the latest each day whenever the child/children is unable to attend school (with a clear reason for the absence). A note or email should also be sent on their return to school to explain the absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- not request leave of absence from school during term time unless in exceptional circumstances

### **We expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor each pupil's attendance through liaison with the person responsible for attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- encourage and celebrate good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere, a safe learning environment for children and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

## **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the classroom is accessible from 8.40am. Registration takes place at 8.50am and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

Registers close at 9.10am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration is taken at 12.55pm for EYFS/KS1 and KS2 classes.

Persistent lateness by a pupil may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

## **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.

Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.

Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.

Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

## **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

### **Requests for leave of absence during term time**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if absence is granted.**

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an **Application for**

**‘Exceptional Circumstances’ Absence** must, wherever possible, be made at least two weeks prior to the leave date **and must be completed by a parent or legal guardian only**. Individual school procedures define the method for this application. The headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

**Family holidays** - The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school’s website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. Family holidays are not under most circumstances deemed exceptional circumstances.

## **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school without school authorisation. The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a penalty notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child’s unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute the parent/carers for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

## **Truancy Patrol**

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carers, for each child.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

£60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Education Welfare can also investigate legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an ESO to secure regular attendance.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Attendance

Examples:

<b>Authorised absences:</b>	<b>Unauthorised absences:</b>
Genuine illness of the pupil	Shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park
Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil	A birthday treat
Major religious observances	Oversleeping due to a late night
Visits to prospective new schools	Looking after other children / other family member
External exams , educational assessments, or participation in a county/national sports event	Appointments for other family members
Compassionate leave	Annual holiday

## Encouraging Attendance

Holy Family Catholic Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. Pupils who arrive late complete the late book by the school office. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without an explanation, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill
- by sharing and reviewing attendance statistics with the Governing Body
- by celebrating and rewarding good attendance through monthly, termly and yearly attendance awards

- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Officer if the irregular attendance continues.

## **Exclusions**

The subject of pupil exclusion will be dealt with in line with DfE and LA guidelines. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

## **Responding To Non-Attendance**

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Education Welfare Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

## **Changing schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next school
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare and Tracking Officer.

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers are encouraged to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Reviewed: September 2023

Approved by Governors: November 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sindall', written in a cursive style.

Signed: (Headteacher)

## **Appendix**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

### **Term-time holiday The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)**

Regulations 2006 once allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days. Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.