



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Revised November 2013

To include Leave in Term Time - Legal Guidance to
Parents/Carers

Holy Family Catholic School participates in the Local Authority 'Spotlight' and 'Leave in Term Time' programmes to promote individual and whole school attendance.

Leave in Term Time - Legal Guidance for Parents/Carers

It is essential for children to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that children can reach their full potential. To achieve this, children need to attend school every day. We are sure you would not jeopardise your children's academic progress by taking them away during term time.

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed and Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

For example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child; nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from School. The Head Teacher will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teachers authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

'Spotlight' Programme

In an effort to address continuing persistent absences Holy Family Catholic School adopted the LA 'Spotlight' programme. Admin staff received training and parents were informed and the programme launched in the Autumn 2012.

Parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) **are not** acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

We will continue to promote 100% attendance and punctuality for all our pupils through our weekly Friday assembly and termly 'Attendance' assemblies. We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. Parents will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of Schools to monitor attendance and it is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority to prosecute cases in court relating to attendance.

There is a legal requirement for your child to receive full time education; this means five days per week, 190 days per year.

The process of education is one that requires gradual building. Ideally this should be a continual and uninterrupted progression. The school aims to encourage and support good attendance. **It is the policy at Holy Family Catholic School to positively promote 100% attendance and punctuality for every pupil.**

Good attendance facilitates a better chance for each individual child to progress. Our school procedures aim to promote and encourage good attendance to enable each pupil to achieve their full potential.

Guidelines - School

- ❑ The school aims to provide a happy secure environment to facilitate effective learning.
- ❑ The school aims to provide a well ordered, well maintained environment to encourage good attendance.
- ❑ The school aims to provide interesting, well prepared and delivered lessons which encourage in the pupils a wish to attend regularly, and take pride in the work they produce.
- ❑ The school aims to provide progression and continuity in its curriculum delivery to encourage a sense of achievement in the pupils, and consequently a desire to learn.
- ❑ The teacher is a role model and shows the importance of lessons by being punctual and well prepared.
- ❑ Pupil's efforts are acknowledged and rewarded to improve the effectiveness of the school as a learning place. Motivational rewards are awarded in our Celebration Assemblies for:-
 - ❑ Individual pupils whose attendance/punctuality has improved.
 - ❑ 'Class of the Week', receive a trophy cup, for the class with the highest percentage attendance for the previous week. This is also recorded in weekly newsletter.
 - ❑ 97% and above Attendance Certificates each term
 - ❑ 100% Attendance Certificates for each term
 - ❑ 100% Attendance Certificate for the complete school year together with a gift token awarded at the end of the school year.
- ❑ Unexplained absences will be followed up by a first day absence telephone call by the office staff.

- ❑ We will monitor patterns of illness and take action to support the child and family when appropriate, offering an appointment with the school nurse for an informal chat, or a referral can be made to the school nurse/school medical officer. In some circumstances we will use the option of **not authorising** any illness unless medical evidence is provided.
- ❑ Where absence and/or lateness is a concern, the school may refer families to outside agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, School Nurse/Officer.
- ❑ We issue 'Punctuality Notices' to parents whose children arrive late (arriving after the main school gate is closed at 8.50 am). Children who arrive into school after 09.00 a.m. will have missed teaching time and will be required to attend our Friday Lunchtime 'Catch Up Club' to complete the work they have missed that week through arriving late.
- ❑ We write to parents in the Autumn term to notify them that we are operating the 'Spotlight' programme.
- ❑ We write to parents in the Autumn term to notify them that we are operating the 'Leave in Term Time' programme (November 2013).
- ❑ We aim to keep parents informed of their child's attendance by:-
 - ❑ Regular Coloured Coded printouts (see appendix A)
 - ❑ Teachers are also supplied with colour coded attendance printouts and punctuality information for discussion at parent's evenings.
 - ❑ Termly letters for children with poor punctuality together with a data sheet showing the number of lessons missed through lateness. (see appendix B)
 - ❑ Termly letters where attendance is less than 90% and therefore a concern, which highlight the effect on progress at school and request parents attend a meeting with the Headteacher, together with the above data sheet. (see appendix B)
 - ❑ Termly letters where attendance is less than 85% and therefore a significant concern, which highlights possible referral to the Local Authority together with a data sheet showing the number of weeks the child has been absent and how many lessons they have missed. (see appendix B)
 - ❑ Any attendance that is below 80% is a serious concern and will mean that parents receive a letter informing them that the situation is being reported to the Local Authority.

Guidelines - Parents

- ❑ Parents will ensure that their child attends school **on time and every day**.
- ❑ In cases of absence parents must telephone the school before 9.15 am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day to inform the school of the reason for absence.
- ❑ If we do not receive a telephone call by 09.30 a.m., the school office will phone parents to find out why a child is not in school. If we are unable to speak to parents, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- ❑ If your child arrives between 8.45 am and 9.00 am, they will be marked late.
- ❑ If your child arrives after 9.00 am they will be recorded as arriving after the register has closed, an unauthorised absence.
- ❑ If your child's punctuality is a concern, we may involve the Local Authority. See Appendix B highlighting the impact of arriving late to school.
- ❑ If Medical appointments are scheduled during the school day parents must bring the appointment letter/card to the school office. If we do not receive evidence of the appointment the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- ❑ Unauthorised absences will be referred to the Local Authority.

Holy Family Catholic School follows the Local Authority Guidance on Attendance and participates in the 'Spotlight' programme and the new 'Leave in Term Time' programme.

Adopted by the Holy Family Catholic School Governing Body on

6 July 2011

To be reviewed on at least a three yearly basis.

Revised and Approved by Governors

28th November 2013

Appendix A

Attendance Colour Coding

97% and above
95% to 97%
90% to 95%
85% to 90%
Less than 85%

Appendix B

Absence from School

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year.
We aim for 100% Attendance and Punctuality for every child.
The L.A. target for attendance in primary schools is at least 95%
Holy Family Catholic School's Whole School Target is 97%

Attendance during the school year	Equals days absent	Which is approximately weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons is missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

How does your child's attendance compare with this target?
Please remember that children who miss a lot of school achieve less.

Late Arrival at School

When your child arrives late at school he/she misses the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson.

Your child may also feel embarrassed entering the classroom late.

Minutes late per day during the school year	-equals days worth of teaching lost in a year INFANTS KS1	-equals days worth of teaching lost in a year JUNIORS KS2
5 Mins	3.7 days	3.4 days
10 Mins	7.4 days	6.9 days
15 Mins	10.0 days	10.3 days
20 Mins	14.7 days	13.8 days
30 Mins	22.0 days	20.0 days

Frequent lateness adds up to a considerable amount of learning lost, and can seriously disadvantage your child.

Gates open at 8.35 am
School begins at 8:45am.

Please help your child to be punctual