



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Revised July 2018

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. **Leave for pupils during term time is will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.**

Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- 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 lead 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.

FastTrack to Attendance Programme

In an effort to address continuing persistent absences Holy Family Catholic School adopted the FastTrack 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.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorization, it will be recorded as unauthorized absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

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 Aims

- ❑ 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.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance

- ❑ 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. Each class receives an extra break, on the following Monday. This is also recorded in weekly newsletter.
 - ❑ Excellent attendance - 97% and above Attendance Certificates each term
 - ❑ Outstanding attendance: 100% Attendance Certificates for each term together with an attendance prize to celebrate.
 - ❑ 100% Attendance Certificate for the complete school year together with an additional prize to celebrate excellent attendance.

- ❑ Parent/teacher consultation afternoons: This provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set.
- ❑ School Attendance Board includes attendance information and information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality.
- ❑ Breakfast Club is free for Pupil Premium children every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.05 am, ensuring that they are on time for school.
- ❑ Children need to be in school to be able to achieve their daily star in their school planners.

Monitoring

First Day Absence

- ❑ If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer by 9.00 the following system will be followed:
 - ❑ A text will be sent requesting the parent /carer to contact school
 - ❑ Following on, a first call will be made to parent/carer
 - ❑ Later in the morning a second call will be made to parent/carer
 - ❑ Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent /carer
 - ❑ In cases where no contact has been made the concern will be raised on MyConcern and senior staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures. This will usually include a home visit to check the whereabouts of the child

The parent /carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first day absence sheet which is filed in the absence folder.

Family Support

- ❑ 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 our Family Support Worker or outside agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, School Nurse/Officer.

School Attendance Letters

- ❑ 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 late will not achieve their daily star in their school planners.
- ❑ We write to parents in the Autumn term to notify them that we are operating the 'Fast Track' programme.

- 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.
 - Ongoing letters for children with poor punctuality together with a data sheet showing the number of lessons missed through lateness. (see appendix B)
 - Ongoing 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)

- **Case Monitoring Meetings**

Attendance is a focus in our regular case monitoring review meetings attended by DSLs, Family Support Worker and Office Staff. Children whose attendance is a concern are discussed along with any patterns that may be evident for groups of children. Systems and structures are then followed to improve attendance for those individuals or groups. Parents of children whose attendance is a concern are invited into school to work in partnership to improve attendance.

Guidelines - Parental expectations

- ❑ Parents will ensure that their child attends school **on time and every day**.
- ❑ Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.
- ❑ In cases of absence parents must telephone the school before 9.00 am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day to inform the school of the reason for absence.
- ❑ All children should be in class by 8:45 am
- ❑ If we do not receive a telephone call by 09.30 a.m., the school office will begin First Day Absence procedures by making contact with parents. If we are unable to speak to parents, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- ❑ The school gate will shut promptly at 8:45. Children arriving after this time will need to be signed in on the electronic system in the office.
- ❑ If your child arrives between 8.45 am and 9.00 am, they will be marked late.
- ❑ If your child arrives after 9.15 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 Family Support Worker. See Appendix B highlighting the impact of arriving late to school.

Not to arrange medical appointments during the school day wherever possible.

- ❑ Unauthorised absences will be referred to the Local Authority.

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

Adopted by the Holy Family Catholic School Governing Body on

To be reviewed on at least a three yearly basis.

Revised and Approved by Governors

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