



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

At Holy Family we grow, learn and succeed in the footsteps of Jesus.

Introduction

We expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy. Regular school attendance is of vital importance. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities that are available to them. It is essential that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life, therefore we aim to embed this good practice from an early age. We expect a partnership of Holy Family Catholic Primary School and their parents to work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Aims

- To maximise the academic and social attainment through good attendance of all pupils.
- To provide a positive and welcoming environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parent and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To work closely with and make full use of support from the wider community including Trafford Attendance and Behaviour team.

The School will:

- Make the curriculum as exciting as possible.
- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority by recognising and rewarding good attendance and punctuality termly.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using Thursday Thoughts, Class Newsletters, parents' evenings and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Carry out first day calling within the appropriate time scales.
- Approach individual parents where there is concern about their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Issue a termly letter to parents whose child's attendance falls below the school's target or whose punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies.
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Work in partnership with Trafford who have a statutory duty to enforce the law in relation to absence from school. This could include penalty notices or parental prosecution.
- Make this policy available on the school's website and provide paper copies on request.

We expect the parent to:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school **on time every day**.
- Provide up-to-date contact numbers and change of address.
- Notify the school before 9.30am when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of absence and keep the school updated on when the child is likely to return to school.
- Provide a note when the child returns from an absence. This should be on the child's first day of the child's return to school.
- Make dentist, doctor or optician appointments out of school times unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Where appointments take place in school time, complete a leave of absence form and show the original appointment letter/card to office staff.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made or if an emergency has arisen.

Leave of absence during term time

- Absence during term time is actively discouraged and parents are advised that holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods.
- The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document, 'Advice on School Attendance February 2013.'
From September 1st 2013 the law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.
- When a request is made, the Headteacher will consider the request based on:
 - ❖ The age of the child
 - ❖ The child's educational progress
 - ❖ The overall attendance of the child. No absences will be authorised for any child whose attendance is below 96%.
 - ❖ Whether it coincides with SATs examinations
- The Headteacher will not authorise holiday leave taken for the following reasons:
 - ❖ Availability of cheap holidays
 - ❖ Availability of a desired location
 - ❖ Poor weather during school holidays
 - ❖ If the child is likely to miss the SATs tests.

This is in line with Trafford's 'Family Holidays in Term Time' leaflet, which is available in the school office.

- Applications during term time must be made in writing, stating the reason for the absence being taken during term time, the first date of absence and the date of return. A 'Leave of Absence Request form' is available from the school office.
- If a child is taken on holiday without prior authorisation, or without any authorisation, the school can request a penalty notice or a parental prosecution.

Absence for special circumstances

Absence of a pupil on days that are exclusively set aside for religious observance in their particular faith will be coded as a religious absence. Absence for a birthday or shopping trip will not be authorised.

Term time absence for specific purposes (e.g. external examinations, elite sports, performing arts)

For authorisation of a single absence to be considered, a special absence request form must be completed in advance.

Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, parents have a duty to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice issued by the Education Welfare service.

Illness

- Parents are asked to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and the approximate day a child is likely to return to school. Parents should provide a written explanation on their child's return to school.
- Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will attempt to contact parents by text the first day of absence. This will be followed up by a telephone call if there hasn't been a response to the text message.

Medical and Dental Appointments

- Parents are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. However, we would ask that appointments be made outside of school hours. Parents are requested to complete a leave of absence form and present to the office five working days in advance, with the original appointment card or letter.

Punctuality

- The school day starts at 8.55am. After this time the classroom doors will be closed and child will be required to enter through the front door and the parent sign the Late Book.
- Children who arrive after 9am be marked as late. The registers will close at 9.30am. Children who arrive after 9.30am will be marked in the register as absent (unauthorised) for the whole of the morning session.
- No child should arrive at school before 8.40am unless they are supervised by an adult. A bell will ring at 8.45am where children can enter the classrooms where they will be supervised.
- Punctuality also applies to parents collecting children at the end of the day. The end of the school day is **3.15pm**. If a child is not collected by 3.25pm, a member of staff will take the child to the school office and parents will be contacted.
- On collection parents must sign the late book.
- If a child has their parent's permission to walk home alone, (Key Stage 2 children only), please inform the school in writing. In addition, the school expects parents to collect their children promptly from after-school clubs.
- A record of punctuality will be kept by the school.

Reporting to Parents

As mentioned above, all children's attendance is monitored every half term and letters will be sent to parents of any pupils falling below the school's target or who's attendance/punctuality is a cause of concern. All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to the parents at the end of the academic year as part of their child's annual report. Class teachers will report any concerns about a child's attendance to the child's parents at Parents' Evenings, which take place twice a year.

Strategies used to promote Good Attendance and Punctuality

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that all pupils feel that they can succeed.
- Good attendance will be rewarded weekly by praising the class with the highest attendance and punctuality.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data will be collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:

- Patterns of absence (e.g. same day absences)
- Lateness
- Periods of extended absence
- Periods of unauthorised absence
- All children whose attendance falls below the school's target, (which is currently set at 96%), and in particular those with attendance below 85%. A child whose attendance is below 85% is categorised as a 'persistent absentee' according to Department for Education guidelines.

This data will be discussed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher with the Education Welfare Officer as part of their regular meetings. They discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors. The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and review this annually.

Summary

1. Registered pupils of compulsory age are required by law to be in school.
2. Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
3. Lateness should be actively discouraged.
4. Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly.
5. Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
6. Parents should not expect, or be led to expect that as of right, schools will agree to family holidays during term time.
7. Even where absence is authorised, schools should be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
8. In promoting regular attendance, schools should work closely with Education Welfare Officers.
9. Attendance targets will be set annually.
10. Penalty notices may be issued where a parent is capable but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance or punctuality.

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