

# HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY

### Attendance and Punctuality Policy

#### Our Mission Statement

With Christ at the centre, we live, love and learn together,  
reaching out to all.

**Together, with Jesus, we can do it!**



#### **Vision:**

‘Only the best is good enough’

**Revised:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022

**Date of next review:** Dec 2024

**Signed:** Mr P Bradley

**Role:** Chair of Committee

**Adopted by the Governing Body:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

## 1. Aims and Objectives:

At Holy Family Catholic Primary School, we believe that poor school attendance, and/or regular late arrival, break the continuity of a child's learning and consequently limits their academic and social progress in school.

We aim to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Therefore our target for all pupils is to achieve at least **97%** attendance over the course of a school year, with no unauthorised absences.

Persistent or long-term absence has a negative impact in all areas of school life, not just on academic achievement but also on the development of key skills and friendships.

Interrupted attendance makes teaching and learning difficult and undermines the educational process leading to educational disadvantage:

We aim to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

### We aim to:

- Promote outstanding attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that children and parents realise the importance of outstanding attendance and punctuality.
- Work with parents towards good levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Take positive action to address any poor attendance or punctuality, using agreed systems.
- To establish a system of rewards and incentives.
- To work together with the School Attendance Service and other services or agencies.

## 2. The Statutory Framework

Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school they are registered at. Section 444 places responsibilities on local authorities in terms of enforcing pupil attendance.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. **A Parent App or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.** Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the app/message will the absence be authorised. In cases of on-going absences, medical evidence may be requested. All attendance codes are recorded in line with DfE guidelines.

## 3. The School Day

The school doors are open from 8:45am to enable children to be on time for morning registration.

Morning registration takes place at 8.55am.

Afternoon registration is at 1:15pm.

Any pupil arriving after the register has been returned to the office, will be marked as late. Registers close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time is treated as being late after registration which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.

Pupil's arriving later than 8:55am **must** enter school via the main office and parents must sign the late register.

We expect that all our pupils attend school regularly unless absence is genuinely unavoidable. We also expect them to arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.

#### **4. Authorised Absence**

**A child's absence from school will be authorised when:**

- A child cannot attend school due to sickness. Medical evidence may be required if a child is absent long term or if the child is a persistent absentee. To be a persistent absentee, this means that your child's attendance is at 90% or below.
- A child attends a medical/dental appointment, which has been made unavoidably during school hours. Medical evidence will be required. Examples of this would be an appointment card/text message or appointment letter.
- A child has suffered a traumatic event, i.e. a death in the family.
- A day has been set apart for religious observance by the religious body.

#### **5. Unauthorised Absence**

**A child's absence from school will be unauthorised when:**

- An absence is unexplained by the child's parents or when the explanation is inadequate. This will be discussed with the parent/s so that they are aware of the concerns relating to the absence.
- A family holiday is taken. A Penalty Notice may be issued if a parent requests a leave of absence which is unauthorised. School would send the parent an education warning letter advising that a penalty notice may be issued if 10 sessions (5 days) absence is accrued.
- Sporadic absence may also result in a penalty notice being requested. If your child has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence over a 10 week period, school would send an education warning letter after 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised absence warning parents that a penalty notice may be issued if the child achieves 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence.
- A child arrives after 9.30am when registration is closed. This is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code)

#### **6. The Role of the School**

Responsibility for promoting school attendance is shared by everyone in school. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each child attends school regularly and on time. The school will:

- Regularly and accurately monitor and record attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.

#### **7. The Role of the Parent**

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly, arriving on time.
- To follow the procedures for absences by informing the school as described in this policy.
- To arrange family holidays during school holidays.
- To contact school if there is a problem which will affect regular attendance or punctuality.

## **8. In order to promote good attendance and punctuality**

Holy Family Catholic Primary School considers outstanding attendance and punctuality to be very important. We aim to make attendance and punctuality high profile within school and take the following measures to encourage good attendance and punctuality e.g weekly rewards – class and individual and 100% attendance rewards.

## **9. Procedures for Informing School of Absences**

- Parents must update school via the app by 8:55am to inform us of an absence and on a daily basis until your child returns to school.
- The school may make contact via a 'welfare check in system' with the family to see how the child is doing. The school may ask the attendance service to do this on behalf of the school.
- Attendance registers are to be checked each day by the Office staff and Learning Mentor. The Headteacher is then updated.
- Failure to update school of the reason for the absence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents are asked to ensure that the school office has up to date contact details for parents and carers so that absences may be followed up.
- If a child has an unexplained absence or contradictory, the Office staff/Learning Mentor will then contact the child's parents by phone as a 'First Morning Response' call and will ask for an estimated time of absence. Follow up contact may be necessary if this is exceeded.

## **10. Absence Due To Medical Appointments**

If a child has an unavoidable medical appointment during school time, a letter explaining the nature of the appointment also including the date and time of the appointment, must be brought into school prior to the appointment or sent via the app. The appointment letter or card should be shown to school prior to the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised

## **11. When Attendance/Punctuality Gives Cause For Concern**

When a child's attendance falls below **90%**, or their punctuality becomes a persistent and recognised problem, this gives school cause for concern as it has a detrimental impact upon the progress of the children. School will work appropriately with the child and the family to encourage improvement where possible. The following stages will apply.

### **Level 1 School Monitoring**

Attendance is monitored on a half-termly basis. When attendance falls below 94% or punctuality becomes a persistent and recognised problem the Learning Mentor will contact the parents of the child, explaining that the punctuality/attendance is poorer than expected and offer support for them to bring about an improvement. This will be closely monitored over the next half term.

If there is not a significant improvement in the child's punctuality/attendance during the next half term, the Local Authority Attendance Officer will be contacted and will contact the parents to follow this up.

Once again the child's attendance will be closely monitored for this half term. If improvement is not seen straight away the parents may be asked to come into school for a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team, Learning Mentor and Local Authority Attendance Officer (Attendance Panel) to discuss the issue and agree a way forward. Early Help will be offered as a support mechanism for the families concerned.

### **Level 2 School Attendance Service Case Work**

If during the previous half term the attendance still requires improvement after the Level 1 support, the child is referred as part of the School Attendance Service Case Work. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will be notified of any occasion when the child is absent so that this can be followed up immediately.

### **Level 3 Statutory Action**

Should there be no improvement at Level 2, the case may progress to Level 3 statutory action by the School Attendance Service.

## **12. Holidays**

Parents are asked not to take any holidays at all during term time. No day's holiday can be authorised. Parents who choose to contravene this request and continue to take term time holiday must complete a request for extraordinary unauthorised leave of absence. A form is available on the Parent App. Once the completed form is received, parents will be given an appointment to meet with the school to discuss the reasons behind the request.

## **13. Educated Off Site**

Children are sometimes educated off site. In this case the child will not be marked as absent. Children are educated off site when they are attending an approved, educational activity that takes place at an alternative establishment. Making the decision of whether a child is being educated off site or is absent is at the discretion of the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team.