

# PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Updated: October 2023  
Agreed by Governors: \_\_\_\_\_ 2023  
Review date: October 2024

## 1.0 Introduction

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a positive environment for children to learn with high expectations of all. To ensure that all children achieve their potential, it is essential that they attend school regularly.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within Holy Family Catholic Primary School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

Holy Family Catholic Primary School believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of the school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

## 2.0 Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at Holy Family Catholic Primary School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

## 2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at Holy Family Catholic Primary School:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.  
To help us all focus on this, Holy Family Catholic Primary School will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve attendance & punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of good attendance & punctuality.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes Holy Family Catholic Primary School and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and their attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

### **3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures**

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

#### **3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school by 8.55 am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence, it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the school office if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes, especially to mobile telephone numbers. **As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided.**
- Requests for 'exceptional circumstances leave of absence' must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons, such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event, would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Absence forms can be requested from the school reception.

#### **3.2 If a pupil is absent we will**

- Telephone and text/email the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 8.55 am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason, the parent/carer will be invited to meet the attendance officer and attendance lead.
- If absences persist, the attendance officer will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

### **4.0 Understanding types of Absence**

Holy Family Catholic Primary School has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

#### **4.1 Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence: this is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

#### **4.2 Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence: this is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 Holy Family Catholic Primary School can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

#### **4.3 Persistent Absence**

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the school office in the first instance.

#### **5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:**

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning.

Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

#### **6.0 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

- The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carers and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family, but if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the EWO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

#### **7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time**

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

#### **8.0 Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence. It is just as important that pupils are collected on time at the end of the day:

**11.45am** for morning Nursery

**3.10pm** for Reception to Year 2

**3:15pm** for Year 3 to Year 6

**4:15pm** if your child is attending an after school club.

Please phone the school immediately if you think you are going to be late.

If a different person than yourself is picking up your child, then you must contact the school in advance as your child will not be handed over until we have received parental notification.

### **8.1 How we manage lateness**

Breakfast Club opens at 8am – this is free for all pupils – and entry is via Rhyl Street.

The school gates open at 8.30am for all children to enter their classrooms.

The school day starts and registers are taken at 8.55am by the class teacher and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time. The doors are open to children at 8.30am to ensure they have plenty of time to arrive in class and prepare themselves for the day ahead.

- If a pupil arrives late to school, parents/carers are expected to use the signing-in system to register them at the main entrance.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.

If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time, they should contact the school office who will offer support to resolve the problem.

### **9.0 People Responsible for Attendance Matters at Holy Family Catholic Primary School**

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success. The attendance officer (Miss K Cameron) and attendance lead (Mrs J Young) oversee attendance and punctuality and the Education Welfare Officer (Mrs C Burleigh) supports the school with attendance matters.

### **10.0 Removal from Roll**

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

**As a school we are now required to:**

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

**If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:**

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

**Appendices**  
**Whole School Systems**

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8am breakfast club available to all</li> <li>• Classroom doors open from 8.30am</li> <li>• Be in class on time for registration at 8.55am</li> </ul>
	Class Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers are completed using OMR sheets each day on time</li> <li>• Ensure attendance has a high profile in class e.g. Mr Potato Head</li> <li>• Discuss absence with pupils returning to school (relay information to office)</li> <li>• Discreet check-in with long-term absentees returning to class</li> <li>• Registers returned to office by 9am</li> </ul>
	Admin team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers on ARBOR</li> <li>• Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the electronic register via ARBOR</li> <li>• Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (before 9.30am)</li> <li>• Log on ARBOR : parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences</li> <li>• Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to ARBOR</li> <li>• Parent Apps messages sent to parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also pupils who arrive late.</li> <li>• First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned.</li> <li>• SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required</li> <li>• Logging attendance of all pupils going out for /returning from medical, dental appointments etc.</li> <li>• Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems.</li> </ul>
	EWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding home visits as required.</li> <li>• Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families.</li> <li>• Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers</li> <li>• Home visits</li> <li>• Instigation of legal proceedings</li> <li>• Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.</li> </ul>
	Attendance officer and Attendance Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements.</li> <li>• Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Senior Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils</li> <li>• Daily Attendance/ PA conversation with senior leader with responsibility for attendance.</li> <li>• If necessary, a home visit to take place</li> </ul>

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all members of the class know the school target (97%) and their current attendance</li> <li>• Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by making contact with parent/carers where appropriate.</li> <li>• Update Mr Potato Head</li> <li>• Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parent/carers</li> </ul>
	Admin team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing SLT and EWO of pupil patterns of absence.</li> <li>• Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for class teachers and pupil rewards</li> <li>• Pupils rewards</li> <li>• Provide weekly attendance &amp; Punctuality data for class teacher and pupil rewards</li> <li>• Update information on attendance boards</li> </ul>
	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements.</li> <li>• Liaison with EWO, teachers and admin team regarding support work with identified pupils</li> </ul>

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	Class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement</li> <li>• Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents evenings</li> <li>• Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy</li> </ul>
	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use attendance data to identify and take action to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils</li> <li>• Monitor and track attendance/PA Action Plans</li> <li>• Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other pupils causing concern</li> <li>• Letters sent home with attendance RAG rating for individual pupils</li> </ul>

TERMLY	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off site provision</li> <li>• School Attendance Review alongside the EWO</li> <li>• Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to HT, for plans to raise attendance</li> <li>• Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively.</li> <li>• Report to HT on attendance matters</li> <li>• Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and school newsletters promote attendance</li> </ul>
	Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors</li> </ul>

**Table of Escalation of Interventions**

<b>Attendance %</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
100% Attendance is excellent		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rewards and praise</li></ul>	Class teacher Admin team Attendance Officer SLT
99-97% Attendance is good		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rewards and encouragement</li></ul>	Class teacher Admin team Attendance Officer SLT
96-93% Attendance is a concern		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk to pupils and contact parents/carers</li><li>• Meetings with parents to discuss concerns</li><li>• Home visits</li><li>• Early intervention with EWO</li></ul>	Class teacher Attendance Officer SLT EWO
91-92.9%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persistent absence warning letters (yellow)</li></ul>	SLT Attendance Officer EWO
≥90.9%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular action planning meetings</li><li>• Weekly attendance letters</li><li>• Safeguarding meetings/home visits<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Action plans</li><li>○ Legal intervention</li></ul></li></ul>	SLT Attendance Officer EWO Governing Body

