

Holy Trinity CE Junior School



Policy for:	Attendance
Written by:	SLT
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Principles

At Holy Trinity C of E Junior School, we believe that all students are only able to achieve their potential if they attend school punctually and avoid missing lessons. We thus expect students to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality. Individual student records prove that this is achievable.

Good attendance contributes to:

- personal and social development
- continuity of learning making retention and progress easier
- success in progress and attainment of fulfilment of age related expectations
- enjoyment of all the opportunities and activities that school offers

In the future:

- good references for further education or employment
- a reputation for reliability

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

Parents to:

- perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- ensure that all pupils are punctual to their lessons.

What constitutes good attendance?

Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good. We grade attendance as follows:-

- 100% = excellent attendance
- 98% = very good attendance
- 96% = good attendance. This is what children should attain.

Each year, a number of students in every year group achieve 100% attendance records, showing that this is an achievable target. In addition, a number of children have achieved this level of attendance in successive years.

Attendance figures below **95%** are of real concern and considered as the term *persistent absenteeism*. Consider the following examples:-

- 90% is the equivalent to missing **one day per fortnight** which equates to missing half a year's education during the course of Years 3-6
- 80% is the equivalent to missing **one day per week**; one fifth of the year's education

Punctuality

- Being late for school has a negative impact on a child's learning. Being late for class often means important instructions are missed and the class is interrupted. A child may feel uncomfortable and left out with peers. Children need to arrive on time ready to settle into their school work.

If a child misses	That Equals	Which is
<i>10 minutes a day</i>	50 minutes a week	1.5 weeks per year
<i>20 minutes a day</i>	1 hour 40 minutes a week	2.5 weeks per year
<i>30 minutes a day</i>	½ a day a week	4 weeks per year
<i>1 hour a day</i>	1 day a week	8 weeks per year

Aims

Holy Trinity C of E Junior School aims to:

- encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- monitor attendance and work quickly with parents and other agencies to solve any identified problems.

What does the school do to encourage good attendance?

- Regular attendance information is available through SIMs portal
- Termly reports to governors
- A member of the office staff dedicated to the administration of attendance
- Support for students and parents/carers where attendance difficulties are emerging
- Letters to families where attendance is below 95% alerting them to this and offering support
- Liaise with other agencies where this could support to improve attendance e.g. children's services, health, young carers

Parents/carers make a vital contribution to their child's attendance by:

- supporting their child in achieving 100% attendance
- avoiding dental/medical appointments during school time
- ensuring their child arrives punctually at school
- informing the school in the morning if their child will be absent and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- taking vacations during school holidays and NOT in term time
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Monitoring and evaluating attendance

Monitoring & Evaluation

Long term:

1. At the end of every month, the data manager provides the head teacher with a summary of attendance for the whole school. This includes pupil groups and the attendance of those under 95%, with those under 90% being looked at much more carefully. The leadership team acts on this information, (depending on who knows the family best) contacting parents or carers to seek to improve attendance.
2. If a child reaches the level of persistent absenteeism, i.e. below 95% unless the reason is already known, e.g. an established medical concern, then the school ~~will~~ **may** liaise with the borough school attendance service. Each case will be dealt with individually within the ethos of the policy.
3. The school will report termly on issues relating to attendance to the Pupils' & Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body.
4. The school will meet with the School Borough Attendance Officer to monitor attendance, meet with parents and implement policy.

Short term:

Registration

- Staff will take the registers at 8:50am
- Staff will record whether pupils are present or absent.
- After the register is taken, and closed in class at 8.55am, pupils will be marked in late for registration (L)
- If a child arrives more than 30 minutes after registration, then a late after registration mark (U) will be used, unless they have a valid reason e.g. a medical appointment. This is an unauthorised absence mark.

The school will complete registers in line with DfE Guidelines

Office staff

- Record attendance codes correctly for both am and pm sessions (In line with DfE Guidance).
- Record information from absence request forms and letters/phone calls from parents.
- Keep separate record of those pupils whose attendance is causing a concern.
- Keep a record of all absences and the reasons why a pupil is absent, in accordance with the DfE Attendance Codes. All records should be retained for at least a year.
- Liaise as necessary with the Head Teacher over concerns about attendance and give a whole school update at the end of every month.
- Request medical evidence for absences.

Procedures for following up absences daily.

- Contact parents via text on the first day, if a child's absence has not been notified.
- If there is no response from the immediate parent or carer on the first day of absence all of the emergency contacts will be contacted on the second day. If there is no response on the third day of absence, then CFCS (Children's First Contact Service) may be contacted.

If the school has a concern about a child's attendance, then the School can request parents to provide medical evidence to support any future absences. Where this evidence is not supplied, then subsequent absences can be unauthorised and the matter can be referred to the Borough School Attendance officer who will take the appropriate action.

NB Where a child is on a Child Protection Plan and is absent from school:

On the first day of absence the office staff will phone all of the emergency contacts that the school has in order to ascertain the reason for absence and will inform the allocated social worker on the first day of absence and any subsequent days.

If a child is on a Child in Need Plan:

The school will inform the social worker on the first day of absence and seek advice from their social worker as to the need to keep them informed of the child's absence.

Authorising Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances include:

- student absence through "leave" given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interviews and other similar special circumstances)
- student illness
- religious observance where applicable
- exceptional circumstances

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Examples of absence which have not been authorised in the past include:

- "looking after" brother/sister, elderly relative etc.
- arrival after the close of the register (30 minutes after registration) with no valid reason for the late arrival
- day trips
- holidays taken during term time

Unauthorised Absence Fixed Penalty Notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a Penalty Notice.

If the school issues a Penalty Notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any Penalty Notice issued.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence - equivalent to 5 days - in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a Penalty Notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a Penalty Notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first Penalty Notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These Penalty Notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

[Click here](#) for information London borough of Sutton Penalty notice advice

<https://www.cognus.org.uk/services/attendance-support-team/for-families/parents-and-carers/penalty-notice-advice-for-parents/>