

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 **90%** 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 3 emergency contact numbers for their child

Monitoring and evaluating attendance

Monitoring & Evaluation

Long term:

1. At the end of every month, the data manager provides the Headteacher 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 90% unless the reason is already known, e.g., an established medical concern, then the school 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 Headteacher over concerns about attendance and give a whole school update at the end of every month.
- Request medical evidence for absences.
- Record patterns of early collection

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.

If the school cannot make contact with a family regarding absences, a welfare check may be undertaken at the home address.

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
- early collections for weekends away

Illness

It is recognised that children can become ill and may occasionally need to have time off school. If the school feel that the pupil may need further support with maintaining good health or there are concerns around the number of times the pupil is ill, school will request parents to provide medical evidence to support the family and school in implementing effective support and to consider whether an absence can be authorised. Absences due to parents/carers health or medical procedures will not be authorised as standard. If your child is unwell and you are unsure of whether to send them in to school a useful site to check is <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> School may also suggest a referral to the school nurse.

Disability and SEN

It is recognised that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional barriers. School and appropriate agencies will work with families to support good attendance.

School work for pupils that are absent will only be provided during exclusions or long-term medical absences and not during unauthorised absences.

Unauthorised Absence: Fixed Penalty Notices and Improvement Notices

Unauthorised absence

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.

Reasons for a penalty notice include: (as directed by the Local Authority)

- Unauthorised absences
- Parentally condoned absence- When a parent is capable of ensuring their child’s attendance but is not doing so, for example, not engaging with support measures or failing to address attendance issues.
- Persistent lateness (after the register has closed)
- Failure to provide explanations
- Patterns of poor attendance

Before referring to the Local Authority to issue 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 there are exceptional circumstances
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Failure to make a written request for Leave of Absence to the Headteacher in advance of a planned absence
- Whether a Penalty Notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Notice to Improve

In some cases, a Notice to Improve may be issued. A “Notice to Improve” is usually issued when a student has missed a certain number of unauthorized school sessions (often 10 or more) and the school has already provided support to address the attendance issue, but attendance hasn’t improved. The notice provides a deadline to improve attendance, after which a penalty notice or other legal action may be considered.

This is a formal written warning that, unless attendance significantly improves, you will be issued with a penalty notice. This is to give you another chance to work with the school to improve your child’s attendance.

A ‘notice to improve’ will not be given if you take a holiday in term time without permission.

Education Welfare officer meeting

In some cases, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with our Education Welfare Officer and an attendance contract may be put in place. The primary goal of this is to encourage consistent attendance and provide support to the student and their family. It can also be a step before more formal interventions, such as a fixed penalty notice.

Warning Letter

In many cases, (not including absences linked to holidays) parents will receive a warning letter before a penalty notice is issued, allowing them to address the attendance issues.

Holidays in term time

Parents/carers are urged **NOT** to take holidays during the school term. The school and Governors expect parents/carers to think carefully before making decisions about holiday dates. Remember that any savings that may be made by taking a holiday in school time are

offset by the cost to a young person's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Absences due to holiday are recorded as unauthorised other than in very exceptional cases. Parents/carers are informed of this fact through the school newsletter, on the school website, on entry to the school and if a request for holiday is made. All applications for leave must be made in advance and are at the discretion of the Headteacher (Absence Request- appendix 1). Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice following a referral to the Local Authority. Parents/carers are notified of this on application for a holiday during term time.

The Local Authority code of conduct also states:

- Unauthorised sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
- If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

Penalty Notice

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.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or **prosecution will be considered**.

If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

If the penalty notice is not paid, legal proceedings may be initiated. Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

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.

There is no statutory right of appeal against a penalty notice.

[Click here](#) for information from London borough of Sutton regarding attendance

[Click here](#) for DfE information

Holy Trinity CE Junior School Absence request form - Sept 2025

This form should be used to request a pupil's absence during term time

For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, well-being and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

Holiday requests during term time will be regarded as unauthorised (unless exceptional circumstance agreed by the headteacher.)

Please note: If national threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met, you will be referred to the Local Authority. (Please see our attendance policy on the website)

Name of child _____ Class _____

I would like to request leave from school for my child for the following reason:

Please ensure proof of appointments or events are attached

The dates are from _____ to _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Print name _____

.....

Dear

I have received your request for absence leave during term time.

Name of child _____ Class _____

The following dates are authorised: From _____ to _____

The following dates are unauthorised: From _____ to _____

Signed _____ Date _____