



# **Holy Trinity CE (VA) Primary School**

Policy name: **Attendance Policy**

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Governor committee: **Standards**

Approved by: **Headteacher**

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## **Introduction**

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

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.
- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

The legal requirements and duties which govern school attendance are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Holy Trinity aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents, carers, the local community and the education welfare service can work in partnership. The school and Local Authority monitor attendance to ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Holy Trinity, we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. Our school attendance target 2024-25 is 96%.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To achieve a minimum of 96% attendance.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.



- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

### **We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **Procedure**

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence: authorised (where the school approves pupil absence eg illness, medicals, exceptional circumstances), and unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence eg Holidays). It is expected that parents/carers will provide an explanation on the first day absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, email or personally at the office or by appointment.

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.



Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents/carers to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- Maintain appropriate registration processes using Integris.
- Maintain daily attendance and punctuality data.
- Maintain consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence and lateness.
- Make a first day of absence phone call to parent/carers (First Response) between 9:30am and 9:45am. If school is unable to contact parent / carer follow up phone calls will be made and /or a home visit will be conducted (see home visits policy)
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality data on a weekly basis.
- Celebrate weekly attendance, awarding the Class with the highest attendance with a trophy (A non-school uniform day is given to the Class with the highest termly attendance).
- Report attendance data to the Full Governing Body each half term.
- Refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.

### **Completing the Attendance Register**

The children are registered twice daily using the Integris system. This is a legal requirement to register pupils and is integral to our Health and Safety and Safeguarding procedures. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; **they are documents that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.

### **Lateness**

School begins at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. However, school is open from 8:50am when the school gate is opened. The gate is closed at 8:55am. Any child arriving later than 8:55am should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the office staff. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. Lateness will be monitored by the Headteacher and the EWO. Pupils who are constantly late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken and a letter will be forwarded to the parents / carers.

### **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence and make daily contact with the school throughout the child's time of absence (unless the school has been informed about an absence which will result in a longer period of non-attendance eg chickenpox / operation) When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.



All absences are recorded on Integris. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is registered as authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

### **First Day Contact (First Response)**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent/carer, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers before 9.30 a.m. on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent between 9.30 a.m. and 9.45 a.m. If school is unable to contact parent / carer follow up phone calls will be made and /or a home visit will be conducted (see home visits policy)

### **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

### **Family Holidays during Term Time**

The school has a zero tolerance policy to parents/carers taking pupils out of school during term time and parents are made aware that school will not authorise absence for any child whose parent/carer books a family holiday during term time.

Governors have agreed that term time holidays are only authorised under very exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers are required to complete a 'request for absence' form if they intend to take their child out of school for a holiday. School will then send a reply letter to the parents/carers stating that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and of the headteacher and Governors decision to refer / not refer to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Patterns of Absence**

- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%
  - A letter is sent home raising the concern as to the child's attendance dipping.
  - The pupil's attendance will be monitored over a 4 week period.
  
- If a pupils attendance falls below 80%



- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the Headteacher (see Appendix A).
- The Education Welfare will be informed.
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored over a two week period.
- If a pupils attendance continues to be poor
  - Parents/carers will be invited in to school to an Attendance Panel meeting together with Education Welfare Officer and Headteacher.
  - An action plan will be set up.
  - A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and Penalty Notice will be discussed.
  - Outside agencies may be involved.
  - If there is no significant improvement in attendance over a 4 week period a fixed penalty notice will be served.
  - Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided

### **Penalty Notices**

### **Parents**

#### **Parents/Carers are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Keep school informed about their child's non-attendance on a daily basis.(unless school has been informed about an absence which will result in a longer period of non-attendance eg chickenpox / operation).
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time using the Absence Request Form (available from the main office).
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

#### **How parents can help:**

- Talk to your child positively about school.
- Take a positive interest in your child's work including homework.
- Keep in touch with school staff.
- Attend parents evenings and other school events wherever possible.

## APPENDIX A

### Attendance Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Please be aware that attendance for ..... is currently at .....%, from ..... to .....

As you may know all pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are deemed by the Government to be "Persistent Absentees"

Whilst we understand that absence from school is sometimes unavoidable due to illness, medical appointments and other special circumstances, we would appreciate your help and support in ensuring that ..... attends school whenever possible.

Parents/carers are also requested not to take children on holiday in term time. It is important that children attend school regularly in order to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided for them and infrequent or irregular school attendance is known to adversely affect a child's attainment.

I would like to invite you to have a meeting with myself on ..... so that we can discuss ways in which we can support you in improving ..... attendance.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr J Wood**

**Headteacher**

## APPENDIX B

### Punctuality Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

They have arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

> [dates]

The school day begins promptly and registration closes at 8:55.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr J Wood**

**Headteacher**