

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



We live, love and learn together in the light of God by...
praying together
learning together
playing together
and
respecting each other.

Approved by:

Linda Mockler

Date: 20th March 2025

Next review due by:

March 2026



This policy follows and promotes the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice working in collaboration with local educational establishments. (see appendix A)

Holy Family Catholic School also participates in the Local Authority 'Fast Track to Attendance' and 'Leave in Term Time' programmes to promote individual and whole school attendance.

Leave in Term Time - Legal Guidance for Parents/Carers

Children need to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that children can reach their full potential. To achieve this, children need to attend school every day. We are sure you would not jeopardise your children's academic progress by taking them away during term time.

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed, and Headteachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This aligns with Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations. **Leave for pupils during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.**

Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life-threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the child's best interest nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships, and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The school routine can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from School. The Head Teacher will then decide whether the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teachers' authorisation, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to issuing a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have an unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless we know that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can find each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether that person lives with the child) or who cares for them.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

FastTrack to Attendance Programme

To address persistent absences, Holy Family Catholic School adopted the FastTrack programme. Admin staff received training; parents were informed and launched the programme in Autumn 2012.

Parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, or alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) **are not** acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after registration.

The Head Teacher can only authorise absence within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to issuing a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has an unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120, depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - the court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - the court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment

of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

We will continue to promote 100% attendance and punctuality for all our pupils through our weekly Friday assembly and termly 'Attendance' assemblies. We will improve attendance by clarifying that unauthorised absence is not acceptable within the school and the local community. Parents will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of Schools to monitor attendance, and it is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority to prosecute cases in court relating to attendance.

There is a legal requirement for your child to receive full-time education; this means five days per week, 190 days per year.

The process of education requires gradual building. Ideally, this should be a continual and uninterrupted progression. The school aims to encourage and support good attendance. **The policy at Holy Family Catholic School is to positively promote 100% attendance and punctuality for every pupil.**

Good attendance facilitates a better chance for each child to progress. Our school procedures aim to promote and encourage good attendance to enable each pupil to achieve their full potential.

Guidelines - School Aims

- ❑ The school aims to provide a happy, secure environment to facilitate effective learning.
- ❑ The school aims to provide a well ordered, well-maintained environment to encourage good attendance.
- ❑ The school aims to provide interesting, well prepared and delivered lessons that encourage the pupils to attend regularly and take pride in the work they produce.
- ❑ The school aims to provide progression and continuity in its curriculum delivery to encourage a sense of achievement in the pupils and, consequently, a desire to learn.
- ❑ The teacher is a role model and shows the importance of lessons by being punctual and well prepared.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance

- ❑ Pupil's efforts are acknowledged and rewarded to improve the effectiveness of the school as a learning place. Motivational rewards are awarded in our Celebration Assemblies for:-
 - ❑ Individual pupils whose attendance/punctuality has improved.
 - ❑ 'Class of the Week', receive a trophy cup for the class with the highest attendance percentage for the previous week. Each class gets an extra break on the following Monday. This is also recorded in the weekly newsletter.
 - ❑ Excellent attendance - 97% and above Attendance Certificates each term
 - ❑ Outstanding attendance: 100% Attendance Certificates for each term and an attendance prize to celebrate.
 - ❑ 100% Attendance Certificate for the entire school year and an additional prize to celebrate excellent attendance.

- ❑ Parent/teacher consultation afternoons: This provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance. Where necessary, a target for improving attendance is set.
- ❑ Breakfast Club is free for Pupil Premium children every day. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.05 am, ensuring they are on time for school.
- ❑ Children need to be in school to achieve their daily star in their school planners.

Monitoring

First Day Absence

- ❑ If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer by 9.00 the following system will be followed:
 - ❑ A text will be sent requesting the parent /carer to contact the school
 - ❑ Following on, a first call will be made to the parent/carer
 - ❑ Later in the morning, a second call will be made to the parent/carer
 - ❑ Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent /carer
 - ❑ In cases where no contact has been made, the concern will be raised on My Concern, and senior staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures. This will usually include a home visit to check the whereabouts of the child

The parent /carer is asked to explain why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first-day absence sheet and filed in the absence folder.

Family Support

- ❑ We will monitor patterns of illness and take action to support the child and family when appropriate, offering an appointment with the school nurse for an informal chat, or a referral can be made to the school nurse/school medical officer. In some circumstances, we will use the option of **not authorising** any illness unless medical evidence is provided.
- ❑ Where absence and lateness are a concern, the school may refer families to our Family Support Worker or outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, School Nurse/Officer.

School Attendance Letters

- ❑ Children who arrive late will not achieve their daily star in their school planners.
- ❑ We write to parents in the Autumn term to notify them that we operate the 'Fast Track programme.
- ❑ We aim to keep parents informed of their child's attendance by: -
 - ❑ Regular Coloured Coded printouts (see appendix B)
 - ❑ Teachers are also supplied with colour coded attendance printouts and punctuality information for discussion at parent's evenings.
 - ❑ Ongoing letters for children with poor punctuality and a data sheet showing the number of lessons missed through lateness. (See appendix C)

- ❑ Ongoing letters where attendance is less than 90% and therefore a concern, highlighting the effect on school progress and requesting parents attend a meeting with the Headteacher, together with the above datasheet. (see appendix C)
- ❑ Termly letters where attendance is less than 85% and therefore a significant concern, highlighting possible referral to the Local Authority and a data sheet showing the number of weeks the child has been absent and how many lessons they have missed. (See appendix B)

Case Monitoring Meetings

Attendance focuses on our typical case monitoring review meetings attended by DSLs, Family Support Worker and Office Staff. Children whose attendance is a concern are discussed, and any patterns may be evident for groups of children. Systems and structures are then followed to improve attendance for those individuals or groups. Parents of children whose attendance is a concern are invited into school to work in partnership to improve attendance.

Guidelines - Parental expectations

- ❑ Parents will ensure that their child attends school **on time and every day**.
- ❑ Promote an excellent attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.
- ❑ In cases of absence, parents must telephone the school before 9.00 am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day to inform the school of the reason for absence.
- ❑ All children should be in class by 8:45 am
- ❑ If we do not receive a telephone call by 09.00 a.m., the school office will begin First Day Absence procedures by contacting parents. If we cannot speak to parents, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- ❑ The school gate will shut promptly at 8:45. Children arriving after this time will need to be signed in on the electronic system in the office.
- ❑ If your child arrives between 8.45 am and 9.15 am, they will be marked late.
- ❑ If your child arrives after 9.15 am, they will be recorded as arriving after the register has closed, which is classed as an unauthorised absence.
- ❑ If there is a problem with a child arriving at school on time, parents must liaise with the school.
- ❑ If your child's punctuality is a concern, we may involve the Family Support Worker. See Appendix B highlighting the impact of arriving late to school.
- ❑ If a child needs to attend an appointment, parents must provide evidence of this in advance.
- ❑ Not to arrange medical appointments during the school day wherever possible.
- ❑ Unauthorised absences will be referred to the Local Authority.

Adopted by the Holy Family Catholic School Governing Body on

To be reviewed on at least a three-yearly basis.

Revised and Approved by Governors

Appendix A

5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice



Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. An escalated approach ensures the school has a deeply embedded and consistent whole school approach to improving attendance.



Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes

The approach to improving attendance is built on solid policies, systems and processes; this ensures sustainable and continuous improvement drives practice. Succession planning is built around an effective systems leadership model - rather than that of an individual Attendance Leader. The Attendance Policy drives school practice, it is deeply embedded in daily practise and ensures the school sets, and maintains, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.



Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development

The school prioritises developing a fully engaged team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. Through this development the Attendance Leader will raise the status of attendance and ensure improved attendance is both sustained and continuous. CPD will support staff at all levels to fully understand their role in supporting attendance. The development of external partnerships will support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.



**Foundation 4
Implement Targeted
Programmes And Intervention**

Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. A rigorous and effective attendance cycle ensures the Attendance Leader not only captures key information but also further understands the 'deeper roots' that creates barriers regarding attendance to school.



**Foundation 5
Connect Appropriately With
Approaches To
Behaviour Management**

Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance - this is deeply embedded in an evidence-based approach. The school has effective routines in place that are followed by staff. Staff at all levels within the school understand the 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance and this is supported through a systematic approach. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

Appendix B

Attendance Colour Coding

97% and above
95% to 97%
90% to 95%
85% to 90%
Less than 85%

Appendix C

Absence from School

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year.
We aim for 100% Attendance and Punctuality for every child.
The L.A. target for attendance in primary schools is at least 95%
Holy Family Catholic School's Whole School Target is 97%

Attendance during the school year	Equals days absent	Which is approximately weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons is missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

**How does your child's attendance compare with this target?
Please remember that children who miss a lot of school achieve less.**

Late Arrival at School

When your child arrives late at school he/she misses the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson.

Your child may also feel embarrassed entering the classroom late.

Minutes late per day during the school year	-equals days worth of teaching lost in a year INFANTS KS1	-equals days worth of teaching lost in a year JUNIORS KS2
5 Mins	3.7 days	3.4 days
10 Mins	7.4 days	6.9 days
15 Mins	10.0 days	10.3 days
20 Mins	14.7 days	13.8 days
30 Mins	22.0 days	20.0 days

Frequent lateness adds up to a considerable amount of learning lost, and can seriously disadvantage your child.

**Gates open at 8.35 am
School begins at 8:45am.**

Please help your child to be punctual