

"With Jesus as our guide; we live, love and learn together."

OVERVIEW:

At Holy Name Catholic Primary School we strongly believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to ensure our children benefit fully from the educational opportunities available to them, to equip them for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as citizens, employees and employers.

We believe that:

- Repeated and consistent **lateness** is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
- Prolonged and consistent **absence**, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.
- Unnecessary, parentally condoned and **unauthorised absence** should be challenged and both school and parents/carers held responsible for the impact this may have on any pupil's full attendance.

We are required to monitor and manage all attendance and absence in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations, to follow the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines in relation to attendance and absence and expect all parents / carers to work with us to ensure all pupils maintain an attendance figure of at least 96% throughout the academic year.

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APPENDICES

1) AIMS

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled (see appendix 2)
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Good attendance at school **makes a difference** to a child's education. If children get into bad habits at primary school then they will continue them at secondary school.

A school's attendance information has a significant bearing on the overall OFSTED judgment of a school with inspectors looking in detail at what a school is doing to improve its overall figures and how it tackles issues around non-attendance with parents.

The national average for attendance is approximately **96%**. For your child to be above the national average figure their attendance needs to be above **96%**. Our expectation is **100%** for all of our children at Holy Name.

Compare your own child's attendance with the table below:

No absence	10 days Absence	10 or more days Absence	19 days Absence	28 days Absence	38 days Absence	47 days Absence
190 school days in each year	180 days of education	2 weeks+ of absence during term time	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education	143 days of education
100% attendance	95% attendance	Below 95% attendance	Below 90% attendance	Below 85% attendance	Below 80% attendance	Below 75% attendance
EXCELLENT	AVERAGE	WORRYING	SERIOUS CONCERN			
Best chance of success. This is our expectation.	Should be able to catch up on missed learning but may feel unsure especially if absence is a block of time off.	Much less chance of success. Makes it harder for child to make progress. Your child will fall behind and may feel they are unsure about learning because of gaps in their knowledge. They may start next year already well behind their peers.	Below 90% your child will fall into the category called 'Persistent Absence' and other agency involvement is likely.		Absence will affect your child's progress and learning will be limited causing your child to fall behind their peers. Action will be taken by the school, local authority or possibly legal action via the courts.	

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR OVERALL ATTENDANCE FIGURES:

The Government has identified that when any child's attendance falls **below 90%** they are classed as a **'Persistent Absentee'**.

As a school the effect of poor attendance is primarily seen with children not making expected progress throughout a year and not reaching their full potential. This is a major concern.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

In July 2011, the DfE produced a document '*Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier*'. This document states that:

'The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. These children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge.'

2) LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the [DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out govern school attendance:ies that

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

3) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Conducts / organises home visits to take place

3.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4) RECORDING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Attendance Register

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.55am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be open from **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.00am**.

The register for the second session will be taken at **1.05pm** and will be kept open until **1.10pm**.

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present (/)
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity (V)
- Absent (N)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (C)

The Office Staff will update the 'N' code by **9.30am** with an 'L' for late, 'U' for a pupil who has arrived after the register has closed or an '**O for an absence which has not been authorised**', 'I' for illness (including coronavirus) or an '**M**' for a medical appointment.

5) LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

The school gates open at **8:45am** each morning. They close at **8:55am**. If a child arrives after **8:55am** they need to be signed in at the school office.

If a child is not IN THE CLASSROOM before **9.00am** or **1.05pm** then they will be LATE for registration AND the start of lessons.

A pupil who arrives late:

If they arrive IN THE CLASSROOM after **9.00am** but before **9.15am** in the morning or after **1.05pm** but before **1.10pm** in the afternoon they will be marked 'L' **AUTHORISED LATE**.

After the register has closed at **9.15am** and **1.10pm** and if a child arrives after this they will be marked 'U' **UNAUTHORISED LATE**.

*The 'U' mark counts the same as an 'O' mark and is **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** on your child's registration/attendance record for that half day session.*

Pupils arriving at school after **8:55am** or **1.05pm** must be taken to the school office entrance and be 'handed over' to a member of school staff.

Failure by a parent to 'hand over' their child at the school office is **likely to result in UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** and potentially presents a safeguarding issue around their child's supervision.

If your child arrives **LATE more than 5 times** in any school year, then the 'privilege' of school marking this LATE will be 'withdrawn' and if your child is not **IN THE CLASSROOM** before **9.00am** in the morning or **1.10pm** in the afternoon this will be marked as 'U' Unauthorised Late.

If your child arrives **LATE more than 5 times** in any school year, then the 'privilege' of school marking this LATE will be 'withdrawn' and if your child is not **IN THE CLASSROOM** before **9.00am** in the morning or **1.10pm** in the afternoon this will be marked as 'U' Unauthorised Late.

You may be called to **attend a meeting with our Education Welfare Officer** so that we may discuss the reasons for lateness and create a plan to prevent it from happening in the future. The progress will then be reviewed at a later meeting.

Unauthorised lateness 'U' and/or unauthorised absence 'O' can lead to parents/carers being referred to the Attendance & Prosecution Service and parents/carers being liable to penalty notices (a fine of up to £120) and/or magistrates court proceedings against them (a fine of up to £2,500 plus costs and/or 3 months imprisonment).

6) AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

AUTHORISED ABSENCE:

Any half day absence from school for which the parent / carer of a child has:

- provided the headteacher (in advance) with a reason for that absence,
- provided the headteacher (in advance) with a reason for that absence **that can be accepted and / or is allowed for the purposes of authorisation** and,
- that the headteacher agrees the pupil should not be in school for that half day session.

Note:

Absences may be authorised for a medical appointment in school time, BUT, school will require parents / carers to ensure their child attends registration, is collected from school, and then returned after the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised. The timing of and venue of the appointment may need to be evidenced and discussed with school to agree arrangements.

In the case of emergency, parents / carers should negotiate with the headteacher on an individual basis. Parents will be advised on the amount of absence that the headteacher can agree to authorise in each instance. Any extension to the original agreement may not be authorised.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:

Any absence from school for which the parent / carer of the child has;

- a) not provided the headteacher (**in advance**) with a reason for that absence,
- b) provided a reason **but that reason is not, or cannot be accepted** for the purpose of authorisation and,
- c) the headteacher is unable to agree that the pupil should not be in school for that session.

7) UNFORESEEN ABSENCE e.g. illness

7.1. Informing school of unforeseen absence:

The pupil's parent / carer must notify the school on the first day of an unforeseen absence by **9.15am** or as soon as practically possible so that the Headteacher may consider authorising the absence.

Reasons provided for any absence and **the frequency of** previous absence / illness can / will determine if that absence is recorded as **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

If your child is absent and you do not call the school before **9.15am** the absence will be recorded as **UNAUTHORISED**.

If your child is absent and you have not contacted school **before 9.15am** a member of school staff will attempt to contact you (via the contact details you are required to provide and to keep up to date). If you do not respond to this contact or if the contact details are out of date the absence will be recorded as **UNAUTHORISED**.

You may also be asked to provide the Headteacher with some further information, detail or evidence (sometimes in writing) that supports your view as a parent / carer that your child was 'unfit' to attend school.

Note:

*We want parent / carers to be both clear in understanding and to appreciate that, if asked for some further information, detail or evidence, it does not mean that we do not believe you when they say your child is unwell, but, it does provide school with the necessary information and detail which supports the headteacher's decision to continue to **AUTHORISE** some absence should governors, the LA and/or OFSTED review or question school's registration procedures and/or attendance figures.*

The information provided can then be reviewed to **consider** if it would allow the Headteacher to **AUTHORISE** the absence.

Any information or detail and any documentation provided by a parent/carer in support of their view that their child was 'unfit' to attend school may be recorded or filed in school to support the Headteacher's agreement, or otherwise, to continue to **AUTHORISE** any further absence.

If, when asked for, a parent / carer does not or cannot provide further information, detail or evidence that absence will remain **UNAUTHORISED**.

School and parents / carers can work with the School Health Service and invite parents / carers / children to meet and discuss any unresolved issues.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents / carers will be notified of this in advance.

School may be unable to authorise more than 7 days (14 half day sessions) in any academic year without evidence; therefore, school is unable to authorise further absences without further information or evidence.

Home visits take place randomly, therefore the Education Welfare Officer may check-in (regardless of your child's current attendance)

7.2. Medication:

We want parent / carers to know that in the case of a child being prescribed medicines that this does not automatically mean that the child should be absent from school or that this absence will be authorised. The school's medical policy allows us to administer prescribed medicines, with written consent, which may result in there being no reason or necessity for any absence.

7.3. Long term sickness absence:

If a child needs to be hospitalised for **three days or more** then we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that, if it is medically appropriate/approved and possible they can work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would be recorded as being educated off site and would be equivalent to an attendance at school.

8) PLANNED ABSENCE e.g. medical appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment may be counted as **authorised** as long as the pupil's parent / carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we do encourage parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments **out of school hours** where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent / carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see **section 9** (below) for further detail with regard to leave of absence requests.

9) LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Since September 2013, headteachers are no longer allowed to authorise any 'Leave of Absence' (sometimes previously known as 'term time holiday') unless a parent/carer makes an application, **IN ADVANCE**, detailing the 'exceptional circumstances' they would want the headteacher to consider.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made **IN ADVANCE** to the proprietor (headteacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- (b) The proprietor (headteacher), or a person authorised by the proprietor, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

9.1. Request for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be **'exceptional circumstances'**.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. We believe the fundamental principles for defining **'exceptional circumstances'** are that they are **'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'**.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical / dental appointments (see **section 8**).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Headteachers are now only legally allowed to consider authorising any 'Leave of Absence' if a parent / carer makes **an application IN ADVANCE**, detailing the 'exceptional circumstances' they would want the headteacher to consider by completing a **'Leave of Absence Form'**:

1. Complete a **'Leave of Absence Form'** (available from the school office upon request).
2. Fill in all details and provide the Headteacher with **ALL of the information** required to support the application.

*N.B. If a **late** or **incomplete** application is received it will not be considered and the absence will be recorded as **UNAUTHORISED**.*

3. Hand the application in to the school office (this will be passed on to the Headteacher).
4. Within 10 working days, the Headteacher will respond. **If the application is approved**, a letter will be sent acknowledging this to the parent.

*N.B. Parents / carers should ensure that they know if their Leave of Absence application has been authorised by the headteacher **BEFORE PLANNING, BOOKING OR PAYING** for anything in relation to that Leave of Absence application.*

If the application is not approved, your child should attend school as normal. Failure to do so will result in unauthorised attendance and may lead to a **PENALTY NOTICE**.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made **IN ADVANCE** to the proprietor (headteacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- (b) The proprietor (headteacher), or a person authorised by the proprietor, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

It is at the headteacher's discretion to decide if the detail and information provided by a parent / carer can be considered as an '**exceptional circumstance**' and agree if any Leave of Absence can be authorised.

On receipt of the Leave of Absence Request Form, you may receive a call from our Education Welfare Officer who will invite you into school to for a **meeting, which you are expected to attend**.

Disagreements between parents / carers and schools in relation to what is and is not an 'exceptional circumstance' cannot be considered by the Attendance & Prosecution Service.

The school can request that a **Penalty Notice** be issued to parents / carers should any **UNAUTHORISED** Leave of Absence be taken.

For further information on Sandwell Local Authority Attendance procedures, [click here](#)

PENALTY NOTICES:

Parents / carers can be issued with Penalty Notices should their child take any Leave of Absence if they have not requested this, in writing to the headteacher, by completing a Leave of Absence Request Form detailing the 'exceptional circumstances' that they would want the headteacher to take into consideration in deciding if any leave of absence can be agreed and authorised.

Legislation dictates that a Leave of Absence request / application can only be considered if it is from a parent / carer with whom the pupil normally lives.

Leave of Absence requests / applications from a parent / carer that a pupil does not normally live with or from any other family member cannot be considered under any circumstances.

If an application is declined, the local authority will be notified and 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**.

Notices to Improve:

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

10) ATTENDANCE RELATING TO COVID

10.1 COVID symptoms

Advice should followed from the Department for Education at the time a possible COVID case arises.

10.2 Travel Abroad

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.

Parents / carers should ensure that any Leave of Absence application is made **IN ADVANCE** of any Leave of Absence to be taken.

Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [Red, Amber & Green list](#).

The pupil must follow government guidance concerning testing and quarantine on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

10.2. Remote Learning Provision

If a pupil is not attending school because they are required to self-isolate due to having coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school may provide the pupil with access to remote education provided the child is well enough. Please read our Remote Education Policy for further information.

11) ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The attendance lead at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis for most pupils and in some cases daily.

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent / carer to ascertain the reason, by calling, emailing, texting or visiting the home.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Home visits may take place if:

- A pupil is absent from school (this may be a random 'spot-check' regardless of your child's current attendance)
- Siblings are absent from school on the same day
- School have not been contacted and informed of the reason for absence
- A pupil's attendance is below the expected **96%**
- Patterns of absence emerge e.g. days / reasons
- Obscure reasons are provided which raise questions

If a home visit takes place and you are not in, then you will receive a letter to notify you that the Education Welfare Officer was present.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will not be considered for authorisation by the headteacher until further information is provided to school.

A meeting with the Education Welfare Officer may be scheduled if a pupil's attendance has:

- fallen below **95%** and is continuing to decline
- been historically below **90%** (persistent absentee) or close to this percentage and an ongoing
- pattern of poor attendance is continuing

If an attendance meeting is scheduled, then parents are expected to attend or arrange a mutually convenient time. Failure to attend the meeting may result in legal action. It is likely that further review meetings will need to take place until your child's attendance is no longer a concern.

12) REDUCING PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The Government has identified that when any child's attendance falls **below 90%** they are classed as a **'Persistent Absentee'**.

In July 2011, the DfE produced a document '*Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier*'. This document states that:

'The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. These children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge.'

Therefore, all pupils' attendance is monitored and reviewed on at least a weekly basis, but in some cases there may be a need or a requirement for more frequent monitoring.

Below are some triggers that will require further investigation and communications with parents / carers and referral and involvement with other external services.

If at any time your child's actual attendance **declines** (the absence might be authorised, unauthorised or a combination of both) school will review your child's current attendance, historic attendance and reasons for absence.

The following action may be taken:

Pupil Attendance BELOW 96% (Expected Minimum Attendance):	Pupil Attendance BELOW 90% (Persistent Absence):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily phone calls from school• Home visits• School may send a letter warning parents of their child's attendance level.• School may also request a parent meeting and involve the school's Education Welfare Officer if required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily phone calls from school• Home visits• School will send a letter warning parents of their child's attendance level.• School will also request a parent meeting for example, to complete/review a parent agreement.• Meetings will take place regularly, until their child's attendance has gone above 96%

12.1. Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without

permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

13) STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

In order to support pupils and encourage attendance, we do the following:

- make learning engaging
- offer extra-curricular clubs
- allow the children to take on extra responsibilities in school e.g. monitors etc.
- have a attendance charts up in the classrooms
- award the class with the best attendance each week with certificates
- individual certificates for termly 100% attenders and prizes

14) MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival
B	Off-site educational activity
D	Dual registered
J	Interview
P	Sporting activity
V	Educational trip or visit
W	Work experience

Code	Definition
X	Not required to be in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned school closure

Authorised absence	
Code	Definition
C	Authorised leave of absence
E	Excluded
H	Authorised holiday
I	Illness (including COVID)
M	Medical/dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
Unauthorised absence:	
Code	Definition
G	Unauthorised holiday
N	Reason not provided
O	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrival after registration