

"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.

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.'

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR OVERALL ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR THE SCHOOL:

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.

Recent statistics show that:

- For pupils with an attendance rate of **less than 50%** - **ONLY 3%** manage to achieve 5 A* to C's including English and Maths
- For pupils with an attendance rate of **between 90 and 70%** - **ONLY 35%** manage to achieve 5 A* to C's including English and Maths.

- But for pupils with an attendance rate of **over 95%** - **OVER 73%** manage to achieve 5 A* to C's including English and Maths.

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 this table with your own child's attendance in 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.	

ATTENDANCE REGISTERS:

School attendance registers are 'legal documents' and as such must be kept in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations. At Holy Name, the headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the attendance register is accurate and up to date (it is an offence in law not to do so).

Attendance registers can and are viewed by school staff, parents/carers (for their own child/ren), governors, local authority officers, OFSTED and the Magistrates Court.

All pupils must be registered twice every day, once at the beginning of school in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Every half-day registration mark must show if the pupil was present or absent.

All absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED** in accordance with DfE Guidelines.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE:

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

- a) provided the headteacher (in advance) with a reason for that absence,
- b) 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,
- c) 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.

If the reason you have provided can allow the headteacher to authorise the absence then no further action can or will be taken.

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.

Note:

*Late arrival in the classroom for registration, both in the morning and afternoon, can be recorded as **late** and/or **unauthorised absence** for that half day session (see Registration and Registers below).*

If no reason for an absence has been provided and/or the reason provided is not or cannot be accepted for the purposes of authorisation then further action can or will be taken.

REGISTRATION and REGISTERS:

Registration:

Registration takes place in the classroom.

N.B. That a child has arrived on school premises, is on their way to the classroom, or has a sibling who has been marked present at registration cannot be accepted for the registration 'on time' of a child.

Mornings:

Registration for all children opens at **8.45am** and closes at **9.00am** in the morning.

All children should be in class by **8.55am**.

Lessons start at **9.00am** in the morning.

Afternoons:

Registration for all children opens at **1.05pm** and closes at **1.10pm** in the afternoon.

Lessons start at **1.10pm** in the afternoon.

Lateness:

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.

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**.

Registers close 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 **9.00am** or **1.05pm** must enter via the main doors by the school office and **must be signed in by the adult bringing them to school in the LATE book**.

Failure by a parent to 'hand over' their child at the school office and sign their child 'in' 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.

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).

REGISTERS:

All marks in the register are made by the headteacher or by someone delegated by the headteacher to do so, but, the headteacher remains responsible for all marks made.

It is the headteacher's legal responsibility to ensure that registers are kept up to date and accurate and in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

It is an offence not to do so.

It is the class teacher's responsibility to take registration at a time identified by the headteacher and to put a mark (present /, \, or 'N' for an absence, where the reason is not yet known) against all those on the register who are **IN THE CLASSROOM** before registration closes.

The school 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 or 'M' for medical appointment.

Class teachers must ensure that they complete registration accurately and in accordance with the headteacher's instruction.

Class teachers **MUST** close registration at **9.15am** and **1.10pm**.

ATTENDANCE and ILLNESS:

Unfortunately, and from time to time children do suffer from illness. When this happens, as parents/carers, a judgement has to be made as to whether that illness means the child is prevented from or is unable to attend school.

It is very well known that many children can be 'a little under the weather' first thing in the morning and parents/carers may decide to keep them at home only for them to recover almost immediately or a little later in the day. If your child has been unwell in the morning and shows signs of recovery we encourage parents/carers to return their child to school later in the morning or after lunch.

Parents/carers are the best people to make this judgement and to decide if their child should stay at home **but you must advise school BEFORE 9.15am** of the circumstances and explain the reason for the absence to avoid that absence being recorded as **UNAUTHORISED**.

We encourage parents to make their own decisions knowing that if you bring your child to school and advise us that they may be a little unwell we are happy to monitor their condition and agree with you that should they deteriorate we will call you to let you know and ask you to collect them where necessary.

The absence for that half day session will be AUTHORISED by the headteacher and no further action will be taken.

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**.

SAFEGUARDING:

In some cases of absence and/or lack of contact with parents/carers, we may need to make contact with other agencies:

i.e. **Social Care**, the **Police**, etc. to meet our 'Safeguarding Children' responsibilities.

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 medicines, with written consent, which may result in there being no reason or necessity for any absence.

ABSENCE AS A RESULT OF ILLNESS:

The Headteacher will **consider AUTHORISING** a child's absence as a result of illness when a parent/carer has contacted school on the first day of absence **before 9.15am** and has provided an acceptable reason for that absence.

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.

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.

The Role of the Education Welfare Officer:

Our Education Welfare Officer is employed to provide support to families and parents through meetings in school or at home and to conduct random/planned home visits if absence occurs.

Home visits may take place if:

- Your child is absent from school (this may be a random 'spot-check' regardless of your child's current attendance)
- You have not contacted school to inform us of the reason for absence
- Your child's attendance is below the expected 96%
- Patterns of absence emerge

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 will be scheduled if your child'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 you 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.

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.

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

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.

Parents/carers should ensure that they provide the headteacher with **ALL THE DETAIL AND INFORMATION** they would want the headteacher to know in deciding if a Leave of Absence can be authorised.

The headteacher can only authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information provided by a parent/carer in the application can be considered as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

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.

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.

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

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

Leave of Absence Request Form:

Parents will be advised in writing of the outcome of a Leave of Absence application **within 10 working days** of receipt of the application. All applications must be made using the Leave of Absence Request Form which is available from the school office on request. It must also **be returned by hand** to the school office.

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

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.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING:

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.

After absence on more than **THREE** occasions without a parent/carer contacting the school **BEFORE 9.15am**, the school will attempt to contact a parent/carer for an explanation. If this is unsuccessful, then the school **MAY MAKE A HOME VISIT** to establish the reason for absence and the welfare of the child and family.

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 will be taken:

	Pupil Attendance BELOW 96% (Expected Minimum Attendance):	Pupil Attendance BELOW 90% (Persistent Absence):
School action:	<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 family support worker 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%.

Appendix A - Register Codes

/ Present (am)

\ Present (pm)

B Educated off site

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G family holiday (not agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness

J Interview

L Late (before register closes)

M Medical/Dental

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised Absence

P Approved Sporting Activity

R Religious Observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work Experience

Planned whole school closure

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

X Non-Compulsory school age absence

Z Pupil not on roll

- All should attend/No mark recorded.