



HOLY TRINITY
Church of England Academy
Brockley Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0TS

Children Missing from Education Policy

One of the main priorities at Holy Trinity Church of England Academy is to raise the level of attendance of our pupils. Not only is it a school priority but it is also a Government priority. Legal requirements state that schools should offer educational provision for all school age children, keeping a register twice daily. Our policy takes note of the reasons that a child could be missing from education and the need to be aware of these such as: Child Sexual Exploitation, Radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

We aim to improve overall attendance and keep our children safe by: -

- careful monitoring
- providing support and guidance to parents and pupils
- working closely with the EWO
- rewarding the children for good attendance

Following advice from the Local Authority we have updated our policy to include reference to the procedures we will follow for absent nursery pupils.

Although attendance at nursery is not statutory, absence or sporadic attendance is often an early indicator of issues needing support or advice.

Following several national serious case reviews where the absence of children from school/nursery was not followed up as quickly or as rigorously as it might have been, sometimes with fatal consequences, the Children's Centres maintained nursery units have a policy of "eyes on the child" once three consecutive nursery sessions have been missed without this being expected (for example for holiday, serious known illness). We expect parents to ring in any absences. After three sessions, school will chase up the child's absence which could be via a home visit where it would be expected to see the child in person.

Roles and Responsibilities

Child Wellbeing Officer

Will liaise with EWO, staff, pupils and parents, keep records and analyse data. She will also inform SYP of any missing or transferring children by following South Tyneside Starters and Leavers process for schools Feb 2014

Teaching staff

Teachers will complete the registers twice daily and refer any concerns to the Child Wellbeing Officer.

Educational Welfare Officer

The EWO will meet with Child Wellbeing Officer two weeks and follow up any concerns, make home visits and generally offer advice and support to school.

Head teacher

The Head teacher will liaise closely with Child Wellbeing Officer, EWO, parents and governors, to ensure attendance remains high on the schools agenda.

Absence and sickness

Holy Trinity Church of England Academy understands that children maybe absent from school through illness.

- Parents/carers are expected to contact school before 9.20 am on the first day of any absence.
- Parents receive a telephone call or a text message from our Child Wellbeing Officer.
- If there is no reply from parents telephone number then second and third contact will be called. If no reply or contact made for 3 days, schools EWO will be contacted and sked to make a home visit.
- For children on CP plans, the relevant Social worker and EWO will be informed immediately when a child is absent both if no contact is made or not made, this will also be noted on chronology.
- If school do not hear from parents with a reason for the absence then an unauthorised mark is entered into the register (10 unauthorised marks (5 days) in a school year will result in a referral from school to the EWO. Penalty Notice being issued).
- Parents are encouraged to make medical appointments outside of school hours, however we understand that this is not always possible and request parents provide evidence of medical appointments before any can be authorised.
- Parents who are concerned about the amount of time their child/ren have off school through illness, can contact Mrs Chow or our School Nurse Mrs Wyllie.

Time Keeping

Punctuality at school is extremely important. Poor punctuality has a disruptive effect on other pupils and on the education of the child who is late. Lateness can lead to:

- Disruption to the rest of the class as your child arrives late.
- Children who repeatedly arrive late develop poor timekeeping habits
- Children who are often late can fail to achieve their best as they miss important chunks of their education (We do reading, writing and maths in the morning as this is the time when children learn the most)
- Late children can be embarrassed about arriving late in school, while other children are busy working.

- At the end of the school day parents need to be punctual when picking their children up to avoid any upset for the children or disrupt the teachers' valuable time.
- A child will get an unauthorised absence mark if they arrive in school after the close of the register at 9.30 am.

Frequently asked questions

Why do I have to inform school when my child is absent?

The government takes attendance very seriously. Schools are legally required to report unauthorised absences as they are recorded as truancy, which could result in parents being fined.

Can I take my child to the doctors in school time?

Yes, appointments cards should be shown where possible and a permission card obtained from the office if the appointment is known about in advance.

Is a family allowed a holiday in school time?

No, as from September 2013 family holidays will **not** be authorised during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Any special requests must be made to the Head Teacher for consideration.

What absences cannot be authorised?

Example of absences such as a family holiday, getting a haircut, going out for the day, shopping for shoes or a birthday are not seen as good reasons and an absence will be marked as unauthorised in these circumstances.

What will happen if my child is marked as unauthorised?

These are monitored by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will make a home visit. This could result in a fine and possible prosecution.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILD WELLBEING OFFICER

The Child Wellbeing Officer will be responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality across the school. This will be carried out in the following way: -

DAILY/WEEKLY

- Phone call home or text message on the first day of absence before 9.30
- Contact appropriate agencies for absent children.
- Transfer phone messages to the register
- Keep a record of punctuality and absences daily
- Calculate class total for awards in assembly each week
- Calculate weekly attendance figures for each class

GUIDELINES FOR CLASS TEACHERS

Should a family be under investigation for poor attendance, the school records are vital evidence. Families can be fined and even prosecuted for not sending their children to school, without good reason.

The school register therefore is a legal document that **must** be filled in twice daily.

Daily procedure

- Mark the register and send directly to the office by 9.00 am.
- For nursery pupils starting school mid week class teachers are responsible for ensuring their name is added to the class register
- The Child Wellbeing Officer will monitor the attendance after this time.
- All children must report to the office if they arrive at school after the register has been returned to the office.
- If a child arrives as the register is being taken ie 8 55 am – 9 00 am they are marked as normal.
- A late mark will be given to all children arriving before the register closes at 9.30 (L) ie between 9 00 am and 9 30 am.
- A child arriving after the close of register at 9 30 am will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U)
- Totals should be done each time the register is taken. The Child Wellbeing Officer will complete a sweep of classrooms to confirm latecomers.
- When a child returns, the absence needs to be followed up by the Child Wellbeing Officer.