

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

PHILOSOPHY

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Each week attendance is celebrated in assembly. The class who achieve the best attendance for the previous week will receive a trophy and certificate. When a class has collected 3 such certificates, the teacher will negotiate a special reward for the class. If a class achieves 100% attendance in a week they will receive an extra playtime.

Each term we celebrate attendance as a whole school. Children who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a raffle ticket each week. We will have a termly draw to select the attendance winner, who will win a prize.

In July we also award children who have attended 100% of the school year, from September to the week before the end of the academic year, with a certificate and a special award.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance or punctuality.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance or punctuality we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

We expect pupils to attend school every day and arrive on time.

PRINCIPLES

The school will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulation and education law
- Complete electronic registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, save and send electronically to school office
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting school early on the first day of absence
- Display attendance percentages around school and reward good and improved attendance for all pupils
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence
- Consult with all members of the school community and the EWS in developing and maintaining the school attendance policy
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by school staff and governors
- Send newsletters each term to parents and pupils informing them of attendance percentages and related issues
- Send weekly congratulatory letters to classes who achieve 95% or exceed that percentage
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, they will be missed

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the reason of any absence is always required.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays which have not been agreed

PROCEDURES

What happens when a pupil is absent?

Parents Action:

Inform the school on the first day of absence by either calling in to the school office or telephone 0151 652 8454. Please leave a message on the answer machine if there is no one available to answer the telephone.

It is expected that routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours.

Please send a note with the pupil when they return to school.

If your child has on-going health problems the school nurse/SENDco may be able to help

Our Action:

If we have not received a reason for a pupil's absence, we will mark them absent.

We follow up all unexplained absences by contacting parents on the first day of absence as early in the day as possible. If we are unable to contact parents by Friday of the first week a letter is sent (via post) asking for a reason why the pupil has been absent.

The Head teacher has a weekly meeting with our in-house attendance officer to discuss general attendance and specific cases. This can lead to us contacting the family by telephone or a home visit.

On occasions where problems of non-attendance or punctuality cannot be resolved we involve support of outside agencies such as increased involvement of the Education Social Welfare Service.

If a child's attendance becomes a source of concern, school will write to the parents and they may be invited to a meeting or school attendance panel. The meeting will give an opportunity to discuss any concerns and to agree an Action Plan or Parenting Contract to support the family.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they will be defined by the Department of Education as Persistently Absent. At this level their progress and development may be significantly impaired. The case may be referred to the Education Social Worker who will contact the family and offer to visit them at home to address any concerns and offer support.

The Education Act (1996) Section 444 requires parents to ensure that their children receive full-time education which suits their needs. Parents who fail in this duty may be prosecuted via the courts and fined, and in some cases, imprisoned.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (Section) 23 also indicates parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child's absence from school is unauthorised. Fixed Penalty Notices are for £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. The school follows the Local Authority guidance with regard to Fixed Penalty Notices, which can be issued for any kind of unauthorised absence – including holidays taken in term time as well as significant lateness in arriving at school.

Persistent Absence

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they will be defined by the Department of Education as Persistently Absent. At this level their progress and development may be significantly impaired. These cases may be referred to our Attendance Officer who would contact the family and offer to visit them at home to address any concerns and offer support.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Parents are discouraged from withdrawing their children from school in term time for family holidays because this may impact on their progress. Parents wishing to take a family holiday in term time should make an appointment to see the Headteacher. This will enable a proper two-way discussion of the advantages and disadvantages, and also enable the Headteacher to make a considered decision about whether to authorise the holiday or not. Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Parents who remove their children from school in term time for holidays which are not authorised may be issued with a Warning Letter by the Education Social Welfare Service or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

LATENESS

Persistent lateness can be as damaging to the pupil's school career as persistent absence. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of other pupils.

What happens when a pupil is late?

Our Action:

School starts at 8.55 am and pupils line up in classes on the playground. Once all children have been taken into class, for health and safety reasons, the teacher on duty will close and lock the playground entrance door.

All children who are late must enter school via the front entrance, if for any reason there is no member of staff in the office, for health and safety reasons, parents and pupils are asked to wait in the foyer and not enter school to take their child down to class as the school day has begun.

Lateness is monitored and recorded in the late diary.

Your Action:

Please try to ensure that your child arrives in school on time.

Please inform us if your child is going to arrive late in school for any reason.

TRANSITION

Transition is a major change for most pupils

F1 to F2 – Children who attend nursery school their records are sent electronically via S2S to the primary school during the summer term prior to the pupil starting in the September. During the summer term there are meetings between nursery staff, school's F2 teacher and SENCO. Any problems concerning attendance and punctuality will be highlighted at these meetings.

Pupils transferring to other schools – Records sent electronically via S2S and Headteacher/SENCO contact receiving school to discuss any attendance/punctuality problems.

Year 6 – Year 7 – Records send electronically via S2S to secondary schools during summer term prior to the pupil starting in September. During the summer term there are meetings between school's Year 6 teacher, school's SENCO and secondary school Year 7 staff. Any problems concerning attendance and punctuality will be highlighted at these meetings.

These arrangements make the transition as smooth as possible.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance and punctuality. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

The use of targeted intervention and support in areas of specific need can be very effective in improving attendance and lateness, particularly when working partnership with the Education Welfare Service and the Local Authority.

When a pupil has been late or absent, they are positively welcomed into school and class on their return. By offering extended support and ensuring absent/late pupils have work adapted to help them catch up will help minimise problems on their return to school.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance and punctuality as possible.

Policy Date: September 2020