

Holy Family Catholic High School & 6th Form Centre



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED

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|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| HEAD TEACHER | Mr Symes |
| NOMINATED ATTENDANCE GOVERNOR | Mrs Doolin |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS | Mr Van Cauwelaert |

This Attendance & Punctuality Policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the schools Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

Holy Family Catholic High School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are both in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at this school on the school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility in ensuring their child has good attendance.

The Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop excellent attendance habits.

Aims and Targets

The Governing body of **Holy Family Catholic High School** places a high priority on achieving good educational standards and consider that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential in order to achieve this.

In order for children to achieve their full academic potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and eager to attend school.

Regular, punctual attendance at school is a life skill that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address persistent patterns of absence.

| Attendance during one school year | equals this number of days absent | which is approximately this many weeks absent | which means this number of lessons missed |
|--|--|--|--|
| 97% | 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 |

Procedures

Parents will:

- Provide the school with a minimum of two emergency contact numbers and an email address
- Ensure that their children attend school regularly
- Notify school on the first day of absence before 9.00am by phone/letter/text or respond to the daily parent text
- Request by letter, addressed to the Headteacher, for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
- Ensure when their child returns to school they bring in written confirmation of why they were absent
- Hand in medical evidence for more than 4 consecutive days absence due to illness
- Meet with members of school staff (or local authority staff) to discuss their child's attendance when necessary

Class teachers will:

- Complete registers at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the SLT
- Provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances
- Make parents aware of concerns over poor attendance

Attendance Officer will:

- Input attendance data on SIMS system
- Print off official reports for each calendar month for monitoring purposes
- Complete the absence record
- Monitor alongside the Assistant Headteacher/Progress Leader, patterns of attendance and lateness
- Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence
- Carry out Fast Track procedures with parents of children whose attendance is a concern.

Assistant Head teacher/Progress Leaders will:

- Monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified
- Inform Governors of attendance records
- Inform parents of individual pupils attendance record, each term via school report
- Inform or meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern
- Make referrals to the local authority school attendance panel where pupils are becoming a cause for concern.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.

Education Welfare Officer will:

- Support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns.
- Support families in ensuring their child/ren attend school regularly.
- Prepare and facilitate school attendance review meetings for punctuality
- Contact you by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the school's concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved
- Carry out Fast Track procedures (Panels) with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern.
- Undertake an early help assessment as needed

Governing body will:

- Monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.
- Nominate a named Governor for Attendance.

Late Procedures (Attendance Officer)

Children, who arrive late (after 9.00am) sign in with the Attendance Officer and give an explanation for the lateness. The Attendance officer will then:

- Update the SIMS system with their mark.
- Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be considered.
- The Education Welfare Officer / POD Staff will carry out unannounced 'Late Gate' sessions to challenge parents / pupils over reasons for poor punctuality.
- Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be code M.

Children who have to leave school for any reason throughout the day should sign out with the Attendance Officer. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

Being on time for school every day means:

- Your child gets the best possible start to their day.
- Your child doesn't miss any important lessons or instructions.
- Your child will be able to walk into school with all the other children and take part in the important routines at the start of the day.
- Your child won't feel embarrassed or self-conscious because they have arrived at a different time or have to walk into a full classroom.
- Your child is establishing good routines and habits that will help them as they progress through school and eventually into the workplace.

Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day
- Developing bad habits which could affect their employability in the future

| Minutes late per day during the school year | Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year |
|---|--|
| 5 minutes | 3.4 days |
| 10 minutes | 6.9 days |
| 15 minutes | 10.3 days |
| 20 minutes | 13.8 days |
| 30 minutes | 20.7 days |

Holiday in Term Time Procedures.

Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as unauthorised (G). This includes a family holiday

Parents who choose to take a holiday during term time will need to request this in writing addressed to the Head and explain the exceptional circumstances for the holiday. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised.

If the request is refused then the absence will be dealt with under the **Sefton Council Code of Conduct Penalty Notice**.

Strategies for Monitoring Good Attendance

- Excellent attendance is celebrated through form class, year groups and across the school. Student rewards may be achieved for excellent attendance.
- Attendance regularly shared with SLT and is shared daily via SIMS system.
- Assistant Head Teacher will monitor attendance and any child with below 95% attendance will trigger concern and an action plan put in place.
- Children with attendance below 90% (Persistent Absenteeism) will be monitored by the Assistant Head Teacher and the school may use Sefton Council Enforcement Procedures.

School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, neglect and possible sexual exploitation. (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2018) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016)

Notifying the Local Authority

Schools must notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who is to be deleted from the admission register

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'.

Where a child leaves our school without a destination or another school is not identified our school follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-\(cme\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-(cme).aspx). The school will liaise with Carole Blundell the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who can be contacted on 0151 935 3181 or carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk

Illness

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern (we expect medical evidence to be provided for absences of more than 4 days). In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

This would include:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered, stamped by a doctors surgery;
- Letter from a qualified medical professional;
- Medical/doctors note;
- Medication prescribed by a GP;
- Copy of prescription;
- Print screen of medical notes;
- Letters concerning hospital appointments;

Failure to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

School Attendance Panels.

The purpose of the School Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with representatives from the local authority to identify the reasons for absence and work together to improve attendance.

What will happen at the School Attendance Panel Meeting?

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered

- A supportive action plan will be agreed
- An attendance target will be set

If this is not successful then in improving the attendance of your child then further action will be taken. This may include requesting a penalty notice warning letter from the local authority which will require your child to be in school with no absences for 15 consecutive days.

If this target is not adhered to then each parent will receive a penalty notice for each child who has 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 this fine may result in prosecution.

Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence – first offence.

Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - 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) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.