



Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Attendance Policy



Committee Responsible for Reviewing this Policy:
Curriculum and Standards

Member of Staff Responsible for this Policy:
E Allonby

Policy date: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Mission Statement

Holy Family School aims to develop our children's all round potential in a happy, secure and disciplined environment. To achieve this, we are committed to a partnership of parents, carers, staff, governors and the parish. Our school is founded on faith in Jesus Christ and his teachings and we accept the guidance of the Catholic Church in establishing that foundation.

In all things love.



Introduction:

The government states:

‘Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.’

Therefore, children at Holy Family Catholic Primary School are expected to attend every day and to be on time.

Regular attendance includes children being punctual. School will be open from 8.40 a.m. External doors will be closed at 8.55 am and school gates will be locked at 9:10am. Any child arriving after 8.55 a.m. must enter school via the school office to be signed in. Registers are taken at 8.45am and are closed at 9am.

A pupil arriving after this time and before 9.30am, will receive a late mark.

A pupil arriving after 9.30am will be given a U mark. In some circumstances, this may be changed if appropriate evidence is provided for their absence.

Key staff:

Mrs Emma Allonby	Headteacher
Mrs Morgan Barnes	Business manager – responsible for registers
Miss Claire Deegan	Pastoral Lead and Attendance Officer
Mr Gareth Moyle	Pupil Welfare Officer

Equal opportunities

For children to have equal opportunity to succeed at school, they must have equal access to the curriculum. Unless they are at school they cannot hope to achieve this access, so attendance and punctuality is at the heart of equal opportunity.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is committed to providing all children with a suitable and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued, and encouraged to respect themselves and others.

Our expectation is that all our pupils attend school every day and on time, unless they are too unwell or there are exceptional circumstances.

Absences

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school every day and on time.

If your child is too unwell to attend school, the school must be notified immediately. These are the accepted forms of contact.

- Telephone the school office – 01253 354496
- Come to the school office in person
- Let the office know via MCAS or your child's teacher via Tapestry/seesaw and they will make the note on the register.

Parents/carers should take all reasonable steps to notify the school of the reason for a child's absence **on the first day of absence**. We operate a 'first day of absence' call system. If there has been no contact from the family of an absent child, a member of staff will message the parent/carer for the child requesting that they telephone school and explain why the child is not in school.

Where a child is late for school, the child must be taken to the school office to sign in before entry to class. The school must ensure every child is recorded as present once on our premises, in case of emergency evacuation.

When an appointment has been made for medical reasons (and these should be made outside school time when possible) the appointment card should be shown to the school office.

School refers to guidance from the both Public Health and the NHS to advise parents on recommended periods of absence for specific illnesses and infections.

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

It is now school policy to notify families if their child's attendance falls below the national expectation of 95%. Letters are sent out each half term to notify those who are dipping below 95%. Those children with attendance below 90% will be subject to review from the Pupil Welfare Officer.

Persistent Absenteeism

Parentally condoned, unjustified absence is equally as damaging as truancy. If in the opinion of the school, an explanation offered by a parent/carer for absence is unacceptable (or where no explanation is given) the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

If attendance dips below 90%, further episodes of absence will trigger the Attendance Officer to contact our Pupil Welfare Officer, who may then telephone or complete a home visit. The PWO may notify the police if this is felt necessary.

Parents and carers are then encouraged to bring their child to school so that the reasons for the child's attendance figure can be discussed. If there are any worries or problems in school that might lead the child to not attend then these are discussed with the class teacher and any appropriate action taken.

The role of our Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO)

Our Attendance Officer meets every three weeks with the school's PWO to review attendance, including cases involving individual children or families and to discuss any other matters concerning attendance and punctuality.

Our PWO undertakes a whole school register screen on a regular basis and liaises with our Attendance Officer about any concerns arising from this screening.

Where necessary the school works closely with the Local Authority to take action against poor attendance of pupils at Holy family Catholic Primary School.

Moving to another school

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school. The parents must fill in a form from the school office to provide the name of the new school. If a family are moving to a new address, which requires the child to attend a new school but the child is not yet registered then parents/carers must provide school with their new address.

Leave during term time

School will not be able to authorise holidays in school time, except in exceptional circumstances.

If leave is requested, parents must apply to the Headteacher explaining the purpose of the trip. This can be done via the school office, where a form can be requested. Granting leave will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, leave will **not** be authorised. Parents/carers must give a return date and notify the school as soon as possible if this changes.

Penalty Fines

The Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period

This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.

- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3- year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Children picked up late after school

Parents/carers must telephone the school office if they are running late and advise on the time of their arrival in school. If a parent is more than 15 minutes late, the child will be placed into Afterschool club and the parent will receive an invoice for payment.