

Holy Family Catholic Primary School Pupil Attendance Policy

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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

Holy Family Catholic Primary School believes that very high levels of attendance at school are important if pupils are to achieve well and be successful in their education. Pupils' absences during term time should, therefore, be kept to an absolute minimum. 100% Pupil Attendance will be rewarded with certificates and an end of year treat/party.

The following policy statement has been produced in response to **the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** which came into force on 1 September 2013.

1. For Sickness Absence

If your child is to be absent from school we ask that you notify us as soon as is possible, with an explanation and estimated return date, preferably from 8am on the first day of absence or as soon as you know that your child will not be in school. School can be informed by telephone (01253 354496 - an answerphone service is now available), e mail (admin@holy-family.blackpool.sch.uk) or by calling into the school office.

School will phone/text parents/carers of pupils for whom we have not had prior notification of absence to ascertain the reason for the absence if no message has been received by 9.30am. For prolonged absences, or when a child has had repeated absences, due to medical issues, then a letter from their GP, copy of prescribed medication or medical appointment card may be requested in order to authorise the absence.

2. Medical or Dental Appointments

It is expected that all **routine** (non-emergency) medical, dental or ophthalmic checks will be scheduled either after normal school hours or during the school holidays. This also applies as far as possible to elective minor surgery. It is recognised, however that this is not always possible.

If it is not possible for a parent/student to arrange an appointment outside of the school day, the parent/student should endeavour to arrange for the appointment at a time that will cause the least disruption to the child's education, for example at the end or beginning of the school day.

The school will require the parent to either write a letter or produce an appointment card for each absence. Parents/carers of pupils with low attendance levels may be asked to have medical/dental appointments confirmed by a medical professional. Where possible, the child should attend school prior to and following the appointment.

3. Other Non-Sickness Absence

School is closed for 13 weeks each year and parents/carers are asked to use this time for family occasions, holidays and celebrations.

Parent/Carers are asked to complete the attached '**Absence Request Form**' for all non-sickness absence. Holidays during term time cannot be authorised by school. School can authorise absence for exceptional circumstances. These are events which are rare, significant or unavoidable as detailed below in section a. Schools are legally required to keep Attendance Registers for all pupils on school roll. Each half day absence has to be classified by school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. School is committed to working with parents/carers and external agencies to improve overall school attendance.

a. Authorised absence are mornings or afternoons when a pupil is absent for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which fall unavoidably in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. The following list of 'exceptional circumstances' has been produced to illustrate the types of reason where school may authorise absence during term time. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list but indicative of the type of circumstances where leave will be granted to a pupil:

- Death of close relative
- Funeral of close relative
- Wedding of a close relative
- Degree Ceremonies of a close relative
- Religious Observance of a major feast

Where one of these circumstances applies, the headteacher may grant one day's leave of absence or, when appropriate - for example in the case of the death or funeral of a close relative- more than one consecutive day. However, the current and previous attendance level for each pupil will be taken into consideration before any leave is authorised.

Whenever possible school would ask that parents/carers consider not requesting leave under the following circumstances:

- The first few weeks in September when children are settling into a new class
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When pupils have already had unauthorised absences
- Where pupil attendance is already below 90% or will fall to that level as a result of further leave

b. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and which have NOT been authorised.

An absence for any of the following reasons would be considered as 'unreasonable' and would therefore be recorded as 'unauthorised' by school.

- Truancy
- Unexplained absence
- Pupils arriving late, after the registers have closed
- Shopping, Birthdays or looking after other children
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notices/Fines. This is currently 10 unauthorised absences (this equates to 5 school days) in a term which is in line with Blackpool Council's Policy.

c. Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of school during one year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. School, with the support of the school PWO (Pupil Welfare Officer) monitors attendance and any pupil whose attendance falls below 90% or is at risk of doing so is given priority attention and parents/carers notified.

4. Punctuality

Persistent poor punctuality is unacceptable. Late arriving pupils disrupt learning for everyone. School asks that parents/carers make an appointment to see the Learning Mentor, Mrs Mather if they would like support with improving punctuality. Mrs Mather will also contact parents of pupils who are persistently late to discuss how this can be improved. The school day starts at 8.55am. Reception children use their classroom door. KS1 use the doors into the infant hall and KS2 enter and leave school by the doors onto the Junior playground. There is a computer club available for KS2 children from 8.30am. Children arriving after 9am will have to enter via the main office entrance where they will be registered and receive a late mark.

Late Gates are carried out regularly where staff members and sometimes a pupil welfare officer will talk to parents/carers of pupils arriving at school after 9am.

The school day finishes at 3.15pm. We would ask that you contact school before 3pm if you have been unavoidably delayed and will not be able to collect your child on time. Parents/carers arriving late will need to collect and sign for their child at the school office. Unavoidable delays happen to all of us on occasion. However, if a child is repeatedly late being collected then parents will be invited into school to discuss this.

5. Pupils on a Medical Care Plan

Pupils on a medical care plan will not be penalised for absences related to their condition. This is in line with government advice: *Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions September 2014*.

6. Contact with Home

There are times when school may need to contact parents/carers when children are in our care eg sickness, accidents. School asks that parents/carers keep school updated with telephone numbers and names of adult contacts, 'designated adults'. On the occasions that school has been unable to contact a designated adult, the Pupil Welfare Officer, Mrs Claire Duerden, will be contacted.

7. Children Missing Education (CME)

Pupil Welfare Officers and schools have a clear role to play in ensuring that children who go missing from education are quickly located. Parents/ Carers who require a change of Blackpool school need to complete a transfer form and discuss this with the child's current school before being able to register at another Blackpool School. If families are transferring to a school outside Blackpool, then we ask that parents notify us of the new home address and the name of the new school. For safeguarding purposes, Holy Family will only remove a pupil from its register once a new school has confirmed that the pupil has registered with them. Children of parents/carers who do not notify school of these changes will be placed on a CME Register and Police and Social Care notified.

