

# School Attendance Policy



**Holy Trinity**

Church of England Primary Academy

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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Aims .....                                | 2  |
| 2. Legislation and guidance .....            | 2  |
| 3. Roles and responsibilities .....          | 2  |
| 4. Recording attendance .....                | 4  |
| 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence ..... | 6  |
| 6. Strategies for promoting attendance ..... | 8  |
| 7. Attendance monitoring .....               | 8  |
| 8. Monitoring arrangements .....             | 10 |
| 9. Links with other policies .....           | 10 |
| Appendix 1: attendance codes .....           | 10 |

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Local Academy Board

The Local Academy Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data  
Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school  
Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance  
Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

Implementation of this policy at the school  
Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors  
Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils  
Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies  
Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary  
Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers  
Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs  
Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels  
Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:

- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school  
Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance  
Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes  
Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis  
Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance  
Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff  
Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed  
Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues  
Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers  
Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Paula Burns and can be contacted via 0121 464 9900

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Amo Rahman and can be contacted via 0121 464 9900

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of the school day and the start of the afternoon period.

### **3.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Burns, Headteacher, who can be contacted via 0121 464 9900.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

## **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm, for KS1 and will be kept open until 1.05pm and 1.15pm for KS2 and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent/carer should bring notification of the appointment to the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The Attendance Officer regularly meets with our EWO to discuss concerns around pupils who are consistently late. Meetings will be arranged with parent/carer to discuss this.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the EW to make a home visit, or staff from school may make a home visit. A call to the police may be made to make a safe and well check.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through end of year reports.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

Attending an interview

Study leave

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a death in a family and there is an urgent need to go abroad.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Attending provision arranged by the local authority

Attending work experience

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)

- Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Class attendance rates are shared on newsletters and classes with good attendance are celebrated.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern



Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and

Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

- Review any existing actions or interventions

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 3 by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Academy Board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

| Code   | Definition  | Scenario   |
|--|---|--|
| /  | Present (am)  | Pupil is present at morning registration   |
| \  | Present (pm)  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration   |
| L  | Late arrival  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed  |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |   |  |
| K  | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V  | Attending an educational visit or trip                        | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school  |
| P  | Participating in a sporting activity                          | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school  |
| W  | Attending work experience                                     | Pupil is on an approved work experience  |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  |   | placement  |
| <b>B</b>                                 | Attending any other approved educational activity                                   | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| <b>D</b>                                 | Dual registered   | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered                                     |
| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b>         |   |  |
| <b>C1</b>                                | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school                       |
| <b>M</b>                                 | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment  |
| <b>J1</b>                                | Interview   | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment                                       |
| <b>S</b>                                 | Study leave   | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination  |
| <b>X</b>                                 | Not required to be in school  | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>C2</b>                                | Part-time timetable   | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable   |
| <b>C</b>                                 | Exceptional circumstances   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b> |   |  |
| <b>T</b>                                 | Parent travelling for occupational purposes   | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes      |
| <b>R</b>                                 | Religious observance  | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| <b>I</b>                                 | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)   | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)                             |
| <b>E</b>                                 | Suspended or excluded   | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been                             |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | made  |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |  |   |
| <b>Q</b>   | Lack of access arrangements              | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school  |
| <b>Y1</b>  | Transport not available                  | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available  |
| <b>Y2</b>  | Widespread disruption to travel          | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency   |
| <b>Y3</b>  | Part of school premises closed           | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open   |
| <b>Y4</b>  | Whole school site unexpectedly closed    | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)   |
| <b>Y5</b>  | Criminal justice detention               | Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>  | Public health guidance or law            | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law   |
| <b>Y7</b>  | Any other unavoidable cause              | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes   |
| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>                                 |  |   |
| <b>G</b>   | Holiday not granted by the school        | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school  |
| <b>N</b>   | Reason for absence not yet established   | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes  |
| <b>O</b>   | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for  |

|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
|                             |   | authorised absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session    |
| <b>Administrative codes</b> |   |  |
| <b>Z</b>                    | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered                                |
| <b>#</b>                    | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |