



Policy: ATTENDANCE

Parent responsibilities
School responsibilities
How to prevent your child from missing school
Support on school attendance
Registration
Lateness and Punctuality
Medical appointments
Absence and Illness
Leave of Absence during term time

Parent responsibilities

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school and you are legally responsible for making sure they go regularly. If your child doesn't go to school, you could get fined or be prosecuted in court.

School responsibilities

Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority both nationally and locally. To safeguard our students we are committed to working with families and community partners to ensure that all children are able to attend regularly. The Education Authority is responsible for investigating if they believe a child is not getting educated at home or at school.

Benefits of going to school regularly

Excellent attendance is essential for the exceptional educational and social development of all children and young people. It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a student's future prospects. Too many absences can result in insufficient coverage of the National Curriculum and students failing to achieve the expected grade. Missing school damages students attainment levels, disrupts school routines, effects the learning of others and can leave young people vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and crime.

How to prevent your child from missing school

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities

- discussing any problems they may have at school and letting their form tutor, head of year, or pastoral leader know about anything serious
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work

To avoid disrupting your child's education, you should arrange appointments and outings:

- after school hours
- at weekends
- during school holidays

You shouldn't expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

Support on School Attendance

A child's school attendance can be affected if there are problems with:

- bullying
- housing or care arrangements
- transport to and from school
- work and money
- sleep deprivation

If your child starts missing school, you might not know there is a problem. When you find out, ask your child and then approach their form tutor, head of year, or pastoral leader for support. You and the school will work together and agree a plan with a view to improving your child's attendance. If your child's attendance gives the school reason for concern school will refer your child to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in your area.

Registration

Students are registered in form groups twice a day, once in the morning between 08.35 and 9.00am and then in the afternoon immediately after lunch at 13.55pm before lesson 5. If students arrive late without a valid reason a late mark will be given which is logged in their behaviour records. **Students with two or more registration late marks in a week will be given a detention.** Registration marks are one of our safeguarding measures for ensuring a student has arrived into school safely, this is also where the students receive important information.

Lateness and Punctuality

Any student arriving after registration closes should go to the student office to sign in. This is extremely important for their own safety and that of others in the event of an evacuation. Anyone not signing in will be recorded as absent and logged in their behaviour records, parents will receive a text message to establish absence reason. Parents are asked to provide school with the most up to date contact details so that an SMS or MYEd message can be sent.

Medical appointments

Parents/guardians should seek every opportunity to book appointments outside of the school day. If this is not possible then school request proof of the appointment in advance either a letter or appointment card accompanied by a signed parent note in the students planner.

All proof of appointments should be shown to Mrs Jowett the Attendance Officer in the student office where a request to leave slip will be completed for the student to be shown to their teacher. For safeguarding purposes the student must sign out at the student office before leaving the premises and then back in on their return.

Absence and Illness reporting

If your child is absent for any reason, then a telephone message to the 24 hour Attendance line (01535 692596) before 09.30 am is required.

Safeguarding policies require parental/guardian contact (not sibling) with school on a daily basis when a student is absent, this provides us with the most accurate and up to date reason for absence. Parent/guardians who forget to inform school will receive an in touch text message reminder. If school have not been informed by phone or text then a message may be added to the students planner and shown to the Attendance officer at the student office. Where no contact has been received from parents/guardians after a period of time a house visit may be necessary to comply with our safeguarding policies. Medical evidence of illnesses may be requested if attendance levels fall behind 95% and within the attendance category of persistent absence.

Leave of Absence during term time

Parents/guardians should know that they do not have the right to take their children out of school for leave of absence during term time and Holy Family does not permit holidays taken in term time. To ensure we are following local authority guidelines all requests for absence including holidays should be completed on an absence request form available from the student office. If the request for absence shows the student will be leaving the country, copies of the travel documents with return dates should be attached.

As a school we are happy to meet with families who seek permission for leave of absence to discuss potential reasons and to make them aware of the impact that absence has on achievement and social development. Parents/guardians should know that Holy Family look at each request individually and would only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. If attendance already falls below 95% and schools request not to take holiday is ignored it is likely it will result in a Penalty Notice.

Issuing a Penalty Notice for poor attendance is considered appropriate by Education Bradford which may be caused by the following:-

- Over truancy
- Parent/guardian condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from holiday
- Persistent late arrival at school (after register has closed)

Parents/guardians who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly without good reason could;

- Receive a Penalty Notice Fine of £60 per parent/guardian per student.
- Be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court and be fined up to £1,000.
- In more serious offences, where parents/guardians have been **previously** prosecuted they could be fined up to £2,500 or face imprisonment.

We know that most families try hard to avoid term time holidays, and that children are ill from time to time. However, Holy Family has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend every school day possible.