

Policy: Attendance

Draft April 2023

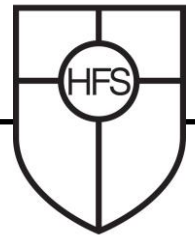
SLT Responsible: F Johnston

Next Review Date:

The Holy Family

Catholic School

a voluntary academy



At The Holy Family Catholic School, our policies and the actions arising from them are always founded in spirit and in letter in our Catholic faith, especially our mission statement and nine core virtues:

Awakening Minds

Our faith, the teachings of Christ, is at our heart. We devote ourselves fully to our spiritual growth, striving for excellence in all that we do each day.



Achieving Dreams

Our work blends inspirational teaching and confident study in a stimulating environment. We learn wholeheartedly, turning our ambitions into reality with every opportunity.



Serving Others

Our spirit leads us to take a positive role in our community. We show love, care and respect for one another and for everyone in our world today.



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 can attend regularly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors – They will ensure that attendance and punctuality is on every pastoral meeting agenda. They will visit the school to take every opportunity to promote good attendance and punctuality at the school.

Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attendance – They will oversee and monitor attendance and punctuality, initiating consistent compliance of the policies. They will update school governors about the progress towards school targets and strategies to achieve them.

Assistant Head Teacher for Behaviour and Attendance – They will have overall responsibility of attendance and punctuality.

Year Director – They will have the overall responsibility of attendance and punctuality for their year group.

Pastoral Manager – They will identify any problems a student may have which is preventing them from coming to school and work closely with the parent and student to resolve the problem. They will work closely with the attendance team to address concerns with student attendance across their year group.

Attendance Officer – They will provide attendance and punctuality data each week for the Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers. They will analysis the data themselves to identify the highest risks to poor attendance and ensure that the school is compliant with managing the persistent absentees as directed by the Department for Education. They will make parents aware of concerns of tending unauthorised absences and make penalty referrals to the Local Authority for those families who have failed to engage with the problem. They are responsible for making sure that parents/carers understand the formal processes of all challenge agreements, and that all communication is recorded.

Attendance Support Officer – They will be responsible for organising first day contact with parents/carers by the MyEd App or SMS text messaging service. Make telephone contact with parents/carers for students on a second day of absence with no reason provided. Making sure all registers are completed with missing marks investigated.

They will contact parents/carers of students who are truanting a lesson(s). Receipt all absence requests and respond to parent's/carers promptly and follow the term time policy.

Attendance Outreach Officer – They will work daily with the attendance officer to create a caseload of home visits, to intervene with the families with poor attendance and provide support, keep accurate records of all visit outcomes, including a daily log. Primarily working with students with 80-95% attendance, this cohort of students should expect a home visit when no reason, or an unsatisfactory reason, has been provided.

Form Tutor – They will be responsible for marking students into school electronically. They will encourage students to maintain a good level of attendance and punctuality at all times. They will notify the attendance team of any concerns regarding absences and punctuality. They will enforce the school's policy on lateness.

Subject Teacher – They will plan engaging lessons to encourage attendance, take the register to identify truants and will communicate any patterns of absences they have identified.

Parents/Carers – Are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and supports attendance of no less than 95% at Holy Family. They must follow all the guidelines ensuring that procedures are followed when absences occur.

The Legislation (Law)

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.

The Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child regularly attends the school at which they are on roll. A failure to do this could result in legal action being taken by the local authority under section 444 and could result in a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a parenting order.

Holy Family Expectation

The expectation is that children should attend every day that the school is open except for absences authorised by the school. Holy Family take absence seriously and target intervention with students whose attendance falls below the school target of 95.0%.

Missing out on lessons leave children vulnerable to falling behind. If your child misses just one day, they have added pressure of needing to catch up with five lessons of work.

Children who have poor attendance tend to achieve less, especially in a secondary school where excellent attendance is essential to achieving good grades in subjects.

Penalties for Parents/Carers who condone absences

There are two types of parent/carer penalty fines that the school could refer to the local authority when they are found to be condoning absences of their child(ren).

- **Poor Attendance** penalty notices
- **Unauthorised leave of absence during term time** penalty notices

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parent/carers for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered.

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days and must be paid direct to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a penalty notice and may be prosecuted if full payment is not received.

Poor Attendance - Each parent/carer liable for their child's school attendance could receive a penalty fine for their child's unauthorised absence days.

School will make the penalty notice referral where the student has 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6-week period after attempts to see an improvement have failed. Written notice will be sent to the parent/carer informing them of the consideration to refer to the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

Unauthorised marks such as (O) or (U) codes will be applied when..

- The parent/carer has failed to provide a satisfactory reason for absence
- Proof of an appointment has not been presented to school

- Student refusal to come to school
- Students who have truanted part or full days
- Students who arrive after registration closes at 9.00am without a satisfactory reason

Unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time – Each parent/carer who takes their child out of school during term time without the school's consent will receive a penalty fine for their child's unauthorised absences. This will be (G) coded marks.

School will make the penalty notice referral where the student has taken 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised leave has been taken. The parent/carer will receive notification of the referral in writing.

Penalty notices may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parent/carer will be notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Students with below 90% attendance

Holy Family will follow the staged intervention process for students who have below 90% attendance and considered by the Department of Education to be a Persistent Absentee's (PA). These students will require additional support to return them to over 90%. The support could range from welfare support or via the initial stages of enforcement action and will need parent/carer engagement of any improvement plan. Failure of the intervention plan could lead to their prosecution following the guidance of the Education Act 1996, under section 444.

Rewarding Attendance

We recognise excellent attendance throughout the year, including improved student attendance when a monitoring period has been achieved. Students can receive postcard and class chart point recognition throughout the year and could also receive rewards such as water bottles, pencil cases, stationery items, seasonal treats, and the chance to go on the end of year school trip.

How to prevent your child from missing school

You can help prevent your child from missing unnecessary days from school by:

- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Taking an interest in their education - ask about schoolwork 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 and at weekends and during school holidays.
- Do not request term time absence.

Support with School Attendance

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

- Fall outs within friendship groups
- Changes in personal circumstances
- 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. Parents/carers and the school year team should be aware of any changes in behaviour of students. The pastoral team will support students, parent/carers, with issues preventing them from attending school.

Registration

Students are registered in form groups twice a day, once in the morning between 8.40am and 9.00am and then in the afternoon immediately after lunch at 13.50pm before lesson 5. If students arrive late without a valid reason a late mark will be given which is then recorded on the register as an (L) code, with minutes late recorded.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a good life skill, and we expect all our students to arrive in school before 8.40am registration. Registers close after 20 minutes in the morning at 9.00am in line with DfE guidance. Any student arriving after registration should go to the student office to sign in. Students arriving after this time will be recorded as (U) on the register which is an unauthorised absence. Parents/carers are warned that if there are 3 days or 6 sessions unauthorised (within a six-week period) school will inform the parent of their intention to refer the unauthorised absences to the Local Authority for a Penalty fine.

If students arrive late to a lesson a minute's late mark (L) will be added to the register. Parents/carers should know that persistent poor punctuality will result in the sanction of a detention.

Medical appointments

Appointments during the school day can be very disruptive to your child's learning. Where possible we do ask that all medical appointments are made outside of school hours. For unavoidable appointments to be authorised, we must see an appointment card, letter, text which should be presented to the support attendance officer at the student office. The student will then be provided with a 'permission to leave school slip', which must be signed by the pastoral manager before they can leave the premises. If this procedure is not followed, then this will hold up the student whilst school make further enquires.

Absence and Illness reporting

If your child is absent for any reason, then a message should be sent to the MyEd communication App before 8.30am. This is the preferred school communication method and ensures accuracy of the message. Alternatively, a message can be left on the 24-hour Attendance line (01535 692596) before 8.30 am. We request that each day's absence the parent/carer should update school on the recovery of their child. When this has not been received, school will phone them for the update.

When school has not been informed of a reason for absence, a text reminder will be sent to the parent/carer. The mark will stay as unauthorised on the register until we have received a reason. There might be instances when the Attendance Officer is not satisfied with the reason provided and may request further information before it is marked with an authorised code.

If School has not received a satisfactory reason for absences the outreach officer will conduct a home visit.

Parents/carers are warned that if there are 3 days or 6 sessions unauthorised (within a six-week period) school will send a penalty notice referral to the local authority.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time

Parents/carers should know that they do not have the right to take their children out of school for leave of absence and Holy Family will not authorise requests unless exceptional circumstances. 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 at least 4 weeks before travel. If the request for absence shows the student will be leaving the country, copies of the travel documents with return dates should be attached. The attendance officer is happy to meet parents/carers 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. The parent/carer will be notified in writing of the decision from the application. Parents/carers who take students out of school for more than 3 or more days (or 6 sessions) which has not been authorised will incur a penalty notice per parent/carer, per child.

IMPORTANT additional information regarding term time absences effective from 1st April
A decision has been made by Bradford Council to change their approach to situations where families take two or more periods of unauthorised leave in a 12-month period, or when a period of four or more weeks of leave is taken. In these instances, Bradford Council will utilise the option to start legal proceedings via the magistrates' court, instead of issuing a penalty notice. This means that parents may be liable to receive a significantly higher fine (up to £2,500 per child, per parent) if found guilty, as well as receive a criminal record, which may be reportable to employers (for example, via a DBS Check). In rare circumstances, magistrates can consider a custodial sentence for up to 3 months. This change will come into force from 1 April 2023.