



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Because God calls us to fullness of life in Christ we provide varied exciting opportunities for children to achieve highly.

God invites us to promise to keep everyone learning.

Because God calls us to love our neighbour we respect and include each other and develop the skills of confidence, resilience, independence, empathy and understanding.

God invites us to promise to keep everyone included.

Because God calls us to live as faithful members of the community we respect the world around us.

God invites us to promise to look after the world around us.

Because God shows us the best way to live we get to know ourselves and learn how to be safe.

God invites us to promise to keep everyone safe.

Because God calls us to be like him we get to know ourselves and learn to respect the truth.

God invites us to promise to be honest."

Approved by	Approval date	Review date
SDC		April 2018

“Children who do not regularly attend school do not achieve their full potential. Not only do they miss lessons, but patchy attendance makes it more and more difficult to catch up”.

Audit commission.gov.uk: Improving School Attendance

Aims

The purpose of this revised policy is to:

- ensure the regular and punctual attendance of all pupils at The Holy Family Catholic Primary School
- clarify the staged procedures for staff, Governors and parents
- ensure the accurate recording of attendance and absence by teachers
- set targets for improvement
- Safeguard children who are not attending school

Attendance

Poor attendance disadvantages children. To this end, high regard is placed on regular and punctual attendance at The Holy Family School. Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence. Registers are kept for all classes including the under-fives. Pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each am and pm sessions. Parents must telephone or send a message to the school when their children are absent to explain the reason. This should be done before 9.00am. Reasons for absence are recorded in the register.

Registers are checked daily and where there is cause for concern further appropriate action is taken, contact is made with parents and carers (by telephone and/or letter); daily monitoring of a child's attendance is actioned. The school wishes to support parents and carers who are finding it difficult to ensure regular and punctual attendance.

If no evidence of improvement is seen after this intervention, then formal procedures will follow. These are:

- When a child's attendance is below 90% it will be monitored and parents will be notified. This is called persistent absence (PA)
- Parents will be invited to an attendance meeting in school.
- If attendance continues to be a concern, an attendance action plan will be completed.
- If there are a number of illnesses recorded, medical evidence may be sought to ensure the absences are recorded appropriately.
- If there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to the early intervention team at the LA (EHAF)

If parents do not report why their child is absent following first day of absence, a letter will be sent requesting the reason for absence.

If this is not reported by the parents a further letter will be sent.

If no further response is made, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence and following our safeguarding procedures, a home visit may take place and the parent may be invited to a meeting with the headteacher.

Encouraging Good Attendance

At the Holy Family Primary School we encourage good attendance through an attendance assembly each week. The winning class receives extra playtime and the children in that class are entered into a prize draw. Certificates for excellent attendance (100%) are awarded each term along with a seasonal gift. At the end of the academic year children with 100% are taken on a school outing and those with attendance between 97% and 100% are given an afternoon treat.

All parents are informed on a termly basis whether their child's attendance is excellent (green letter), needs improvement (yellow letter) or of concern (red letter).

Absence

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Family Holidays During Term Time

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Educational Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013.

In the past, Headteachers have had the discretionary right to authorise family holidays taken in term time up to a maximum of ten days. This was done on a case by case basis. However, the rules have changed as of September 2013. The

amendments make clear that Headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances do **not** cover family holidays.

If parents disregard these regulations the absence will be unauthorised and the school may apply for a penalty notice to be issued by the local authority in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007.

After September 2013 the penalty is £60 per child if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If not paid within 21 days this will double. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made. Each parent with parental responsibility for the child will be subject to the fine and it will apply for each child. In effect, this means that if a mother and father take their two children out of school they could be subject to at least a £240.00 fine if paid within 21 days. This will double if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court, on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school.

Absence request forms can be obtained from the school office.

Lateness

School begins at 8.20am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration for this essential time. Any child arriving after 8.20am is late. Reasons for lateness and the time arrived are noted in the register.

All children attending late must report to the main entrance where they are requested to sign the 'Late Book'.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken.

Registers are closed at 9:00am. Pupils arriving after this time are given a late mark in the register but for attendance purposes are classed as absent with or without authorisation, as appropriate, for this session.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class teachers have initial responsibility for:

- expecting good attendance and punctuality from the children in their class, conveying the importance of regular and punctual attendance to parents

recording attendance, absence and lateness appropriately and accurately in the register

- referring concerns to the headteacher
- informing parents of their child's attendance % each year as part of the school report
- informing parents of their child's attendance % each term (information provided by school office)

Pastoral Worker and Admin Officer has responsibility for:

- carrying out First Day Calling
- close monitoring of attendance particularly those pupils causing concern
- contacting parents

The Head Teacher has responsibility for:

- ensuring the implementation of this Policy
- reporting attendance and absence matters/concerns to the Governing Body

The Governors have responsibility for:

- ensuring the implementation of this Policy
- authorising requests for leave of absence for family holidays (delegated to the headteacher)

Parents have responsibility for:

- informing the school of reason for absence or lateness
- ensuring that they do not allow a child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- making appointments outside school time wherever possible.

Completing the Register

The completion of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:

- registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils; important if school has to be evacuated in an emergency
- they are documents which may be required in a court of law, e.g. as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance
- they contribute to end of term and end of year reports and any certificates of achievement.
- as a legal document, registers must be kept on the premises at all times.
- register forms are completed prior to electronic input
- they must be completed at the beginning of each session and returned to the office
- the appropriate symbols are inserted by the school office
- register totals are calculated electronically
- notes from parents/carers are placed in the register wallets and sent to the office

Section Three: Statutory Guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices

Introduction

Local authorities and schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. Local authorities, police constables, school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices. This means that while the guidance does not have the force of law, there is an expectation that it will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.

Purpose and scope of these legal measures

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices are interventions available to promote better school attendance and behaviour. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects. These measures are permissive and it is for individual governing bodies and local authorities to decide whether to use them.

Parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school. Penalty notices for parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded also apply only to children of compulsory school age who are registered at a school. Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices for misbehaviour can be applied to pupils outside compulsory school age e.g. in a sixth form or maintained nursery.

All schools are required by law to have a written behaviour policy (see the Department's advice on ensuring good behaviour for more details). Schools can inform parents about their use of parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices in their behaviour policy.

Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Local authorities and schools using parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices need to ensure that parents affected have access to clear, accurate information, including about their own rights and responsibilities.

School Attendance Orders

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order (Under section 437 of the Education Act 1996.) The order will require the child's parents to

register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

Parenting Contracts

A parenting contract (Section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) is a formal written signed agreement between parents and either the local authority or the governing body of a school and should contain:

A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; and

A statement by the local authority or governing body agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Parenting contracts can be used in cases of serious misbehaviour (Section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 provides that parenting contracts can be entered into where a child who is a registered pupil has engaged in behaviour connected with the school which is likely to cause significant disruption to the education of others, significant detriment to the welfare of the child himself or of other pupils or to the health and safety of staff or the pupil is at risk of exclusion.) or irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. Parenting contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance should be recorded by the school or local authority as it may be used as evidence in court where an application is made for a behaviour parenting order.

The local authority or governing body should fund any support required to implement a parenting contract (such as referral to parenting classes) and provide information to parents about other types of support available such as details of national and local agencies and helplines.

Parenting Orders

Parenting orders (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 parenting orders for irregular attendance) are imposed by the court and the parents' agreement is not required before an order is made.

Parenting orders are available as an 'ancillary order' following a successful prosecution by the local authority for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

They are also available as a 'free-standing order' by direct application by the governing body of a school or local authority to the Magistrates' Court in cases either where exclusion has taken place or where there has been serious misbehaviour (18Section 98 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that where a school or local authority have reason to believe that a pupil has behaved in such a way as to cause, or be likely to cause, significant disruption to the education of other pupils or significant detriment to the welfare of that pupil or other pupils or to the health or safety of any staff. Or, where the pattern of behaviour (if continued) could lead to the pupil being excluded.) An application for a parenting order for

misbehaviour must be made within 40 school days of the date upon which the latest instance of serious misbehaviour occurred or, if applicable, the date on which the exclusion review process ends. If a parent has already entered into a parenting contract, an application can be made within 6 months of the date the contract was signed.

Parenting orders consist of 2 elements:

A requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's behaviour. This is the core of the parenting order and lasts for up to 3 months; and

A requirement for parents to comply with such requirements as is specified in the order. This element can last up to 12 months.

All parenting orders must be supervised by a 'responsible officer' from the school (behaviour orders only) or local authority. They are individually named in the parenting order.

Any breach by parents without a reasonable excuse could lead to a fine of up to £1,000. The police may enforce any breach of an order by a parent.

Parents have a right to appeal a parenting order to the Crown Court.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices (Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head authorised by the head teacher), a local authority officer or the police. All schools and the police must send copies of penalties issued to the local authority. Penalties can only be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices (Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place (Section 103(8) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states a public place means any highway or any place to which the public has access.) during school hours (School hours mean school sessions or a break between sessions on the same school day) without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.