

Holy Family Catholic Primary School and Nursery



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2024-2026

This policy was adopted by the Full Governors	Date: September 2024 Review date: September 2026
By name:	Mr J Wilson Chair of Governors Mrs H Rooney Head Teacher
Signature on behalf	Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96% (In the Green Zone)
100%-97% Green Zone
96%-91% Amber Zone
90%-below Red Zone
- Maintain parent/carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Work together with parent/carers, pupils and other agencies to promote regular and punctual school attendance
- Operate a whole school approach to attendance ensuring that all school staff are responsible for attendance and attendance related matters

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent/carer you can help us by:

- Reporting on ParentApps or ringing on the first morning of all absences before 9.30am with the reason for absence, clearly stating when the child will return to school and keeping in regular contact with school should the absence continue
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Keeping us updated if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences with phone calls and letters on the first day of absence
- Remind parent/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, school website, letters, the school brochure and the Home-School agreement
- Publish our attendance rate weekly in the school newsletter
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance in weekly celebration assembly
- Publish your child's annual attendance rate with her/his school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and/or punctuality

- If we continue to have concerns, we may make a referral to the School Attendance Officer

Staff responsible for leading attendance:

- Learning Mentor – Mrs Feathestone
- Head teacher – Mrs Rooney

Strategies

1. Messages are sent home each half term when attendance is below 96% with attendance reports highlighted to parents/carers.
2. If there are concerns about attendance, parents will be contacted by the Attendance Team in school.
3. If attendance does not improve then an appointment will be made to see the Attendance Team in school
4. If improvements are not made then a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officers who may offer support. Fines may be issued by the LA at this point.
5. If attendance is below 90%, absences will only be authorised if there is medical evidence provided.

WHAT IS AN EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE?

As a parent/carer it is an offence if your child fails to attend school regularly. Absences are classed as unauthorised if without a valid reason or school cannot or has not given permission.

In some circumstances parents/carers may be prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

An Education Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and aims to improve attendance. If paid within the timescale, this prevents the matter escalating to the Magistrates Court for the period concerned.

WHEN ARE EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES USED?

A parent may be issued with a penalty notice if their child's absence is unauthorised, and they miss 10 sessions within a rolling period of 10 weeks. Ten sessions are usually the same as 5 school days. The 10 weeks may span different terms or school years. For example, two unauthorised absences in the summer term and eight unauthorised absences in the autumn term.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the penalty notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160. There is no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

The Government has set a national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period.

If the national limit of two penalty notices has been met, or exceeded, the local authority must consider the use of another tool to improve attendance. For example, prosecution or another attendance legal intervention.

The local penalty notice code of conduct will be published on Knowsley Council's website and has been drawn up in consultation with headteachers and the Merseyside Police Force.

The Council believe good attendance is essential to support your child in getting the most out of their education and we thank you for your continued support.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we will deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Shopping for new school clothes
- Unapproved Leave of Absence
- **Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory**

Continued unauthorised absence (where no satisfactory reason has been provided to the school as to the reason for absence) may leave the school no option but to make a referral to the School Attendance Service for the service to case work for the following half term which may lead in an Education Penalty Notice (fine).

Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8:50am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom but school doors are open from 8:45am

It is the parent/carers/carers responsibility to ensure that if their child arrives late to school then they **MUST** come to the office and be accompanied by a responsible adult and signed in with a reason for lateness

- It is important to be on time as the first session of the day is focused on key learning in Reading, Writing and Maths
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parent/carers
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9:15am may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parent/carers are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address, the new school and start date must be stated
- Let us know when you move

Remember: We cannot take your child off our school roll until your child starts in the next school. Both **you** and the next school must inform us of the start date. Failure for you to inform us of a forwarding school will result in your child being classed as missing and we have to inform the local Authority and Police of their missing status.

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and the school cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures, which will include liaising with Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parent/carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. Holy Family works in partnership with The School Attendance Service and regularly meet to discuss pupils whose school attendance is causing a concern; parent/carers will be aware of our concern prior to our discussion with the School Attendance Service and a referral to the School Attendance Service may be made. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parent/carers are prosecuted (taken to court) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

Child Protection Statement

At Holy Family Catholic Primary School, every child has the right to be safe and to be cared for in a way that ensures their safety and meets their individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the schools Safeguarding Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality. **The above attendance policy is served in conjunction with our role to Safeguard all of our pupils.**