



HOLY TRINITY
Church of England Academy
Brockley Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0TS

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Attendance Leader

The Additional Needs Manager will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the Attendance Leader, the Additional Needs Manager will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. Mrs Chow will complete the registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

ii) The register will be called promptly by **8.55 am** and **12.55 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.20 am** and **1.10 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **absent**. Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late**.

2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head Teacher.

ii) **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is, frequent or continuous, staff at **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Head Teacher**.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 1 week**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance, for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school's term-time holiday form);

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend; medical evidence will need to be provided on their return to school.

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment and **evidence of an appointment has been provided** (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours

wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / pupil's parents belong;

(f) the pupil / pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

h) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unacceptable** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Absences after close of class register

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class teacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Head Teacher.

2.7 Staff Training

The Child Wellbeing Officer will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and Analysis of Data

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via RM Integris direct to DfE Collect) within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy**. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences. Miss Thornton will contact the families for an explanation.

4.3 First-day calling

Holy Trinity Church of England Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence then the second named person held on our files will be contacted. If there has been no contact made the first day, the Child Wellbeing Officer will make a home visit of the second day of no contact (she will leave a contact card informing parents/cares of our next steps if contact could not be established) to determine the reason for no contact. If a child is deemed to be missing from education the Missing Child Team will be informed.

4.4 Contact/meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence (3 consecutive days) or sooner if staff are particularly concerned, a welfare visit may be made by the Child Wellbeing Officer.

As soon as a child has an unauthorised absence, an initial concerns letter will be posted to explain attendance procedures. If the concerns are ongoing, another letter will be posted to request medical evidence for all future absences to be authorised. If/when attendance becomes a serious concern, parents will be invited in for an attendance planning meeting and an action plan will be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties. A referral to the Attendance Monitoring Team at the Local Authority may be made if there is no improvement to attendance and a Penalty Warning Notice may be issued. If the attendance has not improved during the stated time, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

If you ask any health professional, they will provide the medical evidence that you need to authorise absences – this could be prescribed medication, a letter from the GP or an appointment card.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as

missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service (Children and young people's service).

4.6 Pupils / pupils who arrive late for school but before the register is closed enter the school through the main entrance and this is recorded on our Inventory System. They will then be marked as late. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.** If lateness becomes a persistent concern, a meeting with the Child Wellbeing Officer may be arranged with parents/carers. The Head Teacher will be informed of the situation if the matter has not been resolved and a meeting will take place to outline the importance of punctuality and attendance. The same process will be followed regarding parents collecting their child/children at the end of the school day.

4.7 Parents/Carers who arrive late to collect pupils must sign them out using the Inventory system. If lateness becomes a persistent issue, a meeting with Child Wellbeing Officer may be arranged with parents/carers. The Head Teacher will be informed of the situation if the matter has not been resolved and a meeting will take place to outline the importance of punctuality and attendance. The same process will be followed regarding parents collecting their child/children at the end of the school day.

4.8 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. Parents should sign pupils out when leaving the school site and sign them back in using the Inventory system when they return.

4.9 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

5. Term Time Holidays

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will consider every application individually, the policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations.

6. Extended Leave of Absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents/Carers Responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy**.

7.2 **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** on the first day of absence using the schools absence telephone line **07506460174** or reporting to the school office on **4562413**.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives **Holy Trinity Church of England Academy** will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' Responsibilities

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school their parents need to contact the school and provide medical evidence if the reason for their absence is illness. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late and registering using the Inventory System.

9. Governors' Responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

10. Rewards

10.1 Pupils who have had 100% attendance for the week will enter into a raffle draw at the end of the week in celebration worship. The child whose name is drawn will receive a certificate and will win the chance to spend a week with Harry, the school mascot. They will also earn a star for every week that they've had 100% attendance within the half term. At the end of the half term, they will have a maximum of six stars to exchange for toys and games from the attendance shop. Every child with 100% attendance for the half term will receive a certificate and the class with the highest attendance will receive a box of doughnuts. Whenever every class in the school from years 1 – 6 has over 95% attendance for the week, there will be a whole school reward (such as a bouncy castle, games day etc.) The school councillors may have a meeting to discuss ideas about this.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be on the school yard from 8.45 am and can enter their respective classroom from 8.45 am to 8.55 am.

The register is taken by 8.55 am.

Afternoon school starts at 12.55 pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 8.55 am in the morning and 1.00 pm in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office and enter their details into the Inventory System.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. On return to school, medical evidence explaining the absence is required. If we do not receive any medical evidence, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward. Parents should expect to have a meeting with the class teacher after three days absence in a period of half a term, four days absence a meeting with the Child Wellbeing Officer and if five days absence a meeting the Head Teacher.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences (more than 5 days) will lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (evidence of appointment required)
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Family holidays in exceptional circumstances (only when prior approval has been given)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you will be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, haircuts, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you

on a family holiday during term time. You should complete a leave of absence application form stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Head Teacher has the right to refuse permission.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family overseas. Contact the Head Teacher as soon as possible to discuss if there are any options available.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Head Teacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. When your child brings home homework please support them and ensure you look at it with your child and return when requested by school.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's Class Teacher or Mrs Chow immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to solve the problem.