

# Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy 2021

Policy details	
<i>Policy review</i>	Spring 2021
<i>Next review date</i>	Spring 2023
<i>Signature</i>	
<i>Date</i>	

“A child who is helped by another child is like a strong city”

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and on time.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping. This challenges the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Holy Ghost School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support with regards to pupils' attendance.

### **Principles**

- To make attendance and punctuality procedures a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and Governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To develop an understanding for parents and pupils that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and, therefore, successful learning.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To discourage absence, other than for sickness, by making parents clear that holiday absence in term time is unauthorised.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards to promote high levels of attendance for each child.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Children's Services Welfare Department.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning a return to school following significant periods of absence.
- To inform parents of attendance rates in annual reports to parents.
- To clarify the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- To clarify the procedure for parents with regards to lateness or absence.
- To ensure clearly defined late registration procedures for parents and pupils.
- To respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).

- To have clear procedures prior to referral to Children's Services Welfare Department.
- To review attendance regularly.
- To highlight the importance of attendance for children through:
  - PSHE lessons
  - Assemblies and for parents:
  - in Parents' meetings (including pre-school meetings)
- To report to Governors termly:
 

Attendance Rate %
Authorised Absence rate %
Unauthorised Absence rate %
- To promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.

**To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Children's Services and with other Services and Agencies**

- AAO for inclusion & HT to hold regular attendance review meetings
- Designate key staff for liaison with Children's Specialist Services and other agencies
- Ensure that the attendance register is available for inspection during school hours by Children's Services
- Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Children's Services' data-gathering.

**To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning return to school following significant periods of absence**

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
- Involve/inform all staff in any return to school process.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring as appropriate.
- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
- Include Children's Services Social Workers, parents and pupil in return to school plan.

**Absence**

Parents can only allow their child to miss school if either:

- they are too ill to go
- they have advance permission from the school

There is extra support available if a child cannot go to school for long periods because of a health problem.

Parents have to get permission from the Headteacher if they want to take their child out of school during term time.

They can only do this if:

- they make an application to the Headteacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with).
- there are exceptional circumstances.

It is up to the Headteacher how many days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Parents can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.

Only in very exceptional circumstances will leave be granted. 'Exceptional circumstances', means that the parent must make the case, to the Headteacher, as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm. The circumstances of each case are taken in to account.

Parents should note that it is not a parental right to prevent children from attending school. At Holy Ghost School, it is a policy of the Governing Body that absence for holidays in term time is generally not authorised, and especially not on either side of a school holiday.

### **Categorising Absence - Authorised or Unauthorised?**

Authorised absence is granted under the following circumstances:

- Exclusion
- Days of religious observance
- Medical/dental appointments that cannot take place out of school hours.
- Illness - with written parental consent (this does not automatically authorise absence, only the Headteacher can do that) or medical note.
- Prevention from attending by an unavoidable cause, agreed beforehand.
- Attending a family funeral (this must not, however, exceed an agreed period of absence)

A child will be marked with stated codes for the following activities:

- **'B'** - Education off-site.
- **'V'** - Education visit (eg: another setting).
- **'P'** - Approved sporting activity.
- **'J'** - Interview.

These are considered 'Approved Educational Activities' and will not affect the child's attendance percentage.

**Year 6 children** who take time out of school to visit prospective secondary schools will be marked with a code for present, only if they return before the end of the session.

Parents must consider the level of disruption that repeated visits may cause to their own and other children's learning. Absences for visits and interviews will be authorised no more than for 6 days absence.

### **Absence for part of an afternoon**

Absence at any time, even after registration has taken place, will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless previously approved by the Headteacher.

### **Special Family Occasions**

Only exceptional occasions warrant authorised absence eg attending the wedding of a family member, either here or abroad, may be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or shopping trip would not.

### **Lateness**

The code for lateness will be entered when a child has arrived in school after the **bell has gone at 8.55am**. A child arriving after 9.15am will be coded as "Late after registration closed". This is counted as an "Unauthorised Absence". The school monitors each child's punctuality, and raises concern once a child's 'lateness' to school exceeds three incidences in one school year.

### **Medical appointments**

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as 'M' which is an authorised absence, if permission is sought beforehand.

### **The Role of the Parent/Guardian**

- It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).
- Parents must contact the school on the first day of sickness absence notifying the school of the reason for the child not attending.
- Where a message confirming absence has not been received, parents will be required to send into school a written note explaining the reason for each absence. (A blanket reason for a series of absences cannot be accepted). For any absence from school, permission must be sought prior to absence taking place.