



Holy Cross
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Statement of intent

Holy Cross believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Pupil expectations

Pupils will be expected to attend school every day they are required to be at school and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year. The school will also expect all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance panels in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a fortnightly Head of Year review.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the pupil to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Parents then need to contact school on each subsequent day of absence, unless agreed by the school in advance.

A Text Message/Email will be sent to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and contact will be made with parents to discuss the drop in attendance and try to establish barriers to attendance.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Attendance officer

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked at the start of the morning session (8.55) and pupils will receive a late mark if they arrive in school in school after 8.55.
- The register closes at 10.00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by at the start of the afternoon session (2.20pm).
- Pupils attending after 8.55am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.55am and 2.20pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out on the Inentry system in the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If

truancy is suspected, the attendance officer is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, phone call will be made to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the attendance officer immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- Any available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the attendance officer.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- CCTV will be checked to see if the whereabouts of the pupil can be established.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing. The incident will also be updated on CPOMS.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Assistant Headteacher/Head of Year will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.

Children Missing Education (CME)

When pupils are absent, parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.

- If there is no response to the absence text after the first day of absence, a phone call to parents will also be made on the second day of absence.
- If there is no response & the pupil is still absent after three days, a home visit should be made.
- If there is no response, a note will be posted through the door asking parents to contact school ASAP.
- All contacts on the pupil's record should be contacted to establish the pupil's whereabouts.
- If this results in establishing that the pupil has left the area, contact would be made with the CME Team in the new authority (If we do not have a new school) or the new school if we are informed of one.
- After these enquiries are made, if there is still no information regarding the pupil's whereabouts a referral would be made to Lancashire CME team via the online form on the Schools' Portal.
- The CME team will advise when the pupil can be removed from roll.

Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness. If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice.

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals. Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents can contact school via telephone or email to inform school of the appointment.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Young carers

The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

Rewarding good attendance

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- A reward each week for the tutor group with the best attendance
- Pupils with 100% in a half term will receive 10 A1 (Achievement) points. Each pupil with 100% attendance will be entered into a draw for a Year Group & Whole School prize
- Attendance will impact on a pupils' eligibility to attend end of year trips
- Certificates for 100% attendance over the year and full attendance over the five years at Holy Cross

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97 percent.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Assistant Headteacher & Attendance Officer. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholder.

Updated: Autumn 2021

Review date: Autumn 2022