



HRB Attendance

The aim of this policy is to enable outstanding pupil attendance by clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. The policy outlines procedures, rewards and sanctions related to pupil attendance.

Head Teacher: Marie Dyche
Released: 5th September 2023

Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy

“Building Loving Hearts and Strong Minds in Union with God and Each Other”

Introduction

As a Catholic school we seek to work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure the best possible start for each child entrusted to our care. Regular attendance and punctuality are an essential part of this partnership.

The purpose of this policy:

- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- Regular attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent people who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- All stakeholders work together – pupils, parents/carers, teachers, support staff, internal admin, external agencies and Governors.
- This policy should not be seen in isolation, but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Rewards and benefits for good attendance are clearly displayed and promoted throughout the school and wider community.

Roles

Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absences. Registers will be taken twice a day.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance data at Priority Pupil meetings to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Parents and Pupils will:

- Ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- When a child is absent, parents should contact the school office on **01283 562686** before 10.00 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence or emailing:- attendance@hrb.srscmat.co.uk. **If at all possible, please do not send absence messages via Class Dojo.** Be specific as possible regarding the reason for absence/lateness, stating the child's name and year group.
- Children arriving after 9.00 am will enter the school via the school office.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Ensure school has two up to date contact details.
- Encourage good routines for their child at home which promotes a healthy life style, including enough sleep.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all opportunities open to them.
- Avoid medical and dental appointments where possible during the school day.

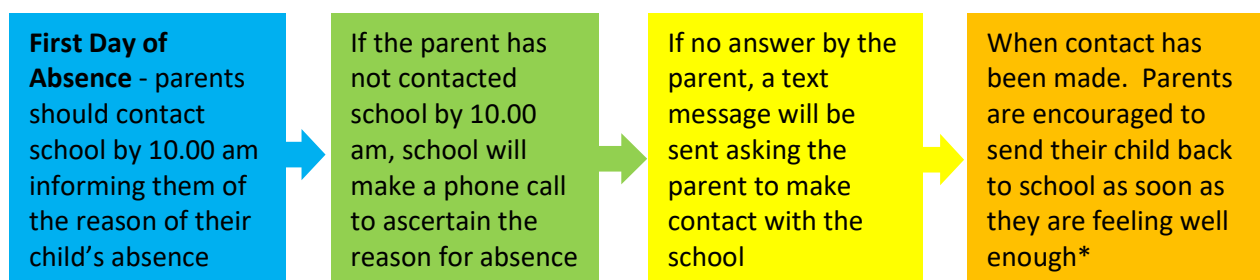
Holy Rosary Attendance Target

For children in Year 1 to Year 6, the school's attendance target for the academic year 2023 – 2024 is 96%. It will be monitored by the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership team, Priority Pupil team, Governors and SRSCMAT Board.

Targeting and Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

At Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy, we widely publicise the importance of regular attendance and the link to better learning outcomes. Each week, the class with the highest weekly attendance will be rewarded with an outstanding attendance certificate and get the chance to keep the school mascot for a week. Pupils whose attendance is 98% and above will receive a reward at the end of the year. Specific rewards are also implemented to meet the needs of pupils who have been working hard to improve their attendance. This is decided within the weekly Priority Pupil Meetings.

General Absences and Procedures



If there is no contact made either by telephone or email by 11.30 am, the school will deem this as a safeguarding concern and a concern may be raised on the school's safeguarding system, My Concern. The leader on duty will then decide how to make contact with the child on the first day of absence. This could be another call, a "Teams" meeting or other video call, or a house visit.

* If your child is absent due to sickness and/or diarrhoea, they should not return to school for the next **48 hours** after their last episode. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults.

Authorised, Unauthorised and Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Schools are required by law to take an Attendance Register twice a day. This shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy uses the Attendance and Absence Codes, in the Attendance Registers, as required by the *DfE School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. The cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. It is classified in the following ways:-

- **Unauthorised absence** – for any other absence from school which has not been requested and cannot be authorised. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - Absences that follow a particular pattern (regular sporadic days off – including illness) or absences which have never been properly explained
 - Family/birthday events that have not been agreed to having any exceptional circumstance
 - Parents collecting their child within school time to attend their own personal appointments

- **Unauthorised leave of absence** – for any absence from school which has been requested but not granted.

Should the leave of absence not be granted, but still taken, then it will be classed as an **unauthorised leave of absence**. An application for a Penalty Notice to be issued from the Local Authority will be made for any unauthorised leave of absence of 4 or more sessions in the current or previous half term. Individual cases will be guided by compassion, cultural capital and child centred enrichment events.

As an unauthorised leave of absence presents a risk of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. Please note:-

- A parent can receive more than one Fixed Penalty Notice per academic year
- Holy Rosary will provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions should the threshold of unauthorised leave of absence sessions be met

If a parent does not apply for leave but we believe that the pupil has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent/carer to express our concern. The parent will be expected to provide contrary evidence to be received at school by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised leave of absence** and the relevant procedures will be applied.

Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

Holy Rosary's Attendance Policy is to fully comply with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state ***"Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances"***.

Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event and in writing with specific details including dates. A Leave of Absence Request form is available from the school office. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances include:-

- To have a short absence to attend a family funeral.
- To attend a special religious ceremony for the individual or an immediate family member.
- To attend a cultural festival.

All Leave of Absence Request forms will be discussed and considered at the weekly Priority Pupil meetings, and where authorisation is given, this will usually be a maximum of 1 day (2 sessions).

When an absence is authorised, parents will be provided with written evidence signed by the Head Teacher. Failure to return to school after the authorised fixed period of time, may be recorded as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

Any request for planned absences for a pupil to participate in a sporting or other educational activity, such as a dance or music exam, should be addressed to the Head Teacher. Additional documentation, such as a confirmation letter, should also be included.

Monitoring Absence Levels and Unauthorised Absence

At Holy Rosary, the Attendance Officer will monitor absence levels to ensure that each pupil has the best opportunity to succeed.

Pupils who meet the threshold of having an attendance level of under 95% or who have missed 5+ sessions in a single half-term – will be monitored and first contact will be made by the school's Pupil and Family Support Worker, unless the reasons for absence are clear (eg. One continuous period of time off school due to illness). The aim is to work with all parties to increase this figure. The school focusses on this figure to ensure that the earliest possible help is given to pupils and their families where it is needed.

Parents of pupils who attendance is being monitored and with an attendance of below 90% or who have missed 10+ sessions in a single half term – and have received first contact will be invited to a meeting in school, unless the reasons for absence are clear (eg. One continuous period of time off school due to illness), with the Pupil and Family Support Worker and/or Senior Leadership Team and/or Education Welfare Officer to make an initial assessment of the child and their current needs. At this meeting, specific attendance targets will be agreed and reviewed on a regular basis. Parents will be signposted to agencies to assist with improving attendance and with agreement, a referral will be made to East Staffordshire Family Support Service.

Persistent Unauthorised Absence

Where there is persistent unauthorised absence the Pupil and Family Support Worker will seek advice and work in conjunction with the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer and parents to assist and implement strategies to improve the pupil's attendance.

If a child reaches 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a twelve week period, and the school does not see any improvement in the child's attendance, the parent may receive a penalty warning notice and potentially a fine.

The Penalty Notice Fine issued by the Local Authority would be:

- £60.00 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days the Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. If found "guilty" then this would result in a criminal record for the parent.

See Staffordshire County Council's Penalty Notice Protocol:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

How the threshold of persistent absence is measured

The threshold for persistent absence is 90%. Therefore, attendance which is below 90% will be counted as persistent absence. Pupils who trigger the threshold for persistent absence will be closely monitored by the Pupil and Family Support Worker who will seek advice and work in conjunction with the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer and parents to further assist and implement strategies to improve the pupil's attendance.

Lateness

All pupils should arrive at school on time each day. The school gates open at 8.50 am and close at 9.00 am.

Those pupils who arrive after 9.00 am will enter school via the school office.

Registers are taken between 9.00 am and 9.15 am. Children arriving in between 9.00 am and 9.15 am will be issued with an "L" Code in the Attendance Register. Those arriving after 9.15 am will be issued with a "U" code in the Attendance Register.

Holy Rosary monitor the late arrival of pupils. Persistent lateness will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and discussed at the Priority Pupil meetings.

Persistent Lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to 10 marks. Late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child attends school on time. However, if their child is late they must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as we may be able to offer them some form of advice or support. Where the school sees no change in behaviour, a penalty notice request may be raised.

Absence for Medical Appointments and Medical Evidence/Documentation

Holy Rosary request that wherever possible, doctor and dental appointments are made outside the school day. If this is not possible, parents are requested to contact the school and **provide the school with a copy of the medical evidence**, such as an appointment letter, card, prescription or text. Pupils are expected to return to school directly after the appointment. No evidence of the appointment may lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Holy Rosary may request additional medical evidence/documentation if:

- A pupil has a planned prolonged absence from school
- A pupil has been absent for over 3 -5 days
- A pupil has a high level of absence and little improvement has been made
- To authorise medical appointments during the school day

If a medical professional states that this is an ongoing issue and sets a date to review the situation, then no further evidence will be required until the date of the review. Parents and pupils will be supported by the SEN Coordinator and Pupil and Family Support Worker to re-engage with school once the medical evidence/document period has concluded.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with parents to improve attendance, Holy Rosary is mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This includes:

- The SEN Co-ordinator and Pupil and Family Support Worker will meet, talk and listen to parents to develop individual approaches that meet the pupil's specific needs. This may mean making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- The school will establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments to routines like break time and lunchtime arrangements.

If it is deemed appropriate, and with the consent of the parent, the Education Welfare Officer may be contacted for further advice on how to support and assist the pupil.

Deletions from the School Admission Register

Deletions from the Admission Register will only occur on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The school will inform the Local Authority of all deletions from the Admission Register as stated in regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, apart from at standard transition points.

Should a pupil meet the criteria of being deleted from the Admissions Register and their whereabouts are unknown, as stated in the grounds for deleting a pupil from the school's Admissions Register, section 8 (1) (f) and 8 (1) (h), then the Attendance Officer will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, following the Department of Education's Regulations on Children Missing from Education. The Local Authority will be informed of the enquiries into the whereabouts of pupils and should the absence threshold be met, the school will remove the pupil from the Admissions Register. The CTF file will be retained until further advice is provided from the relevant Local Authority.

Should the school receive a written notification, by a parent, to home educate their child, the school must inform the Local Authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the Admissions Register. The school will not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding a pupil or because a pupil has a poor attendance record.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. Holy Rosary are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

