



HOLY TRINITY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Benner Lane, West End, Woking, Surrey, GU24 9JQ

Executive Head: Mr J Hills

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Type:	Non-Statutory
Policy Origin:	Surrey Model
Approved by:	LAB
Last Reviewed:	December 2022
LAB Accepted:	29 th March 2023
Sources:	DFE Analysing absence and attendance data, November 2022 DFE Guidance summary table for responsibilities for school attendance, September 2022 The School Bus 2022
Next Review:	Spring 2024
Summary of changes:	Changes based on DfE guidance 2022 Reference to mental health concerns, Traveller and SEND pupils

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Holy Trinity we believe 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 have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across our school community. We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn. At our school we promote the benefits of good attendance and set high standards for every pupil, in partnership with our parents/carers and the relevant departments within our Local Authority, Surrey County Council.

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

We firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage and work with parents/carers to ensure their child(ren) achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

The school is committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits to pupils.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Building relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Intervening early with external agencies to ensure the safeguarding of our pupils.
- Ensuring that parents follow the framework set out in ***Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which: places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school.***
- Monitoring attendance and absence regularly and identifying pupils that need more support.
- Contacting parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence. If parents are uncontactable, Senior Leadership will be notified.
- Being alert to early signs of disaffection or a child's worries about school which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the head teacher
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- Provide a sympathetic response to any parent or pupil's concerns and offer support or work with other agencies as appropriate
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Local Authority (LA) Inclusion Officer
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils

Parents are committed to:

- Ensuring their child(ren) attend school regularly and on time by supporting the values of good attendance at education at home and to be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Informing the school of any absence on the day it arises.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day (including extra-curricular activities) and have completed any homework they have been given.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Contact the school office on the first day of a child/student's absence, giving the reason for the absence.

- Discuss with the class/form teacher, Deputy Head or Head Teacher any problems preventing their child/children from attending school.
- Provide evidence, if required where the length and frequency of absence through illness is giving cause for concern.

Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable through sickness, the school should be notified on each day of absence. Parents/carers whose child(ren) are of compulsory school age and are registered at the school, are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served a Penalty Notice (see Section 6 of the Education Act 1996).

Schools are required to report all absence figures to their Local Authority. Both the school and Local Authority become very concerned if a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, this is known as persistence absence.

2. SCHOOL PROCEDURE

The school has high expectations for pupil's attendance and punctuality. Pupils are expected to attend school punctually every day. Our pupils may arrive from 8.30am with the school day starting at 8.45am, therefore, pupils will be expected to be in their classroom ready to learn by 8.45am.

Registers will be taken at 8.45am and 1.05pm every day. Pupils will receive a late mark code (L), if they arrive after this time, (Late - before registers closed). The morning register will close at 9.15am, if a pupil arrives after this time they will be recorded as (U) mark code, (Late - after registers closed).

If a child is absent the parent/carer must inform the school either by Parentmail or telephone before 9.00am on every day of absence, they must provide an explanation for the reason of the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last (if known).

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent/carer has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register, the School Office will contact the parent/carer by telephone. The school will always follow up on any absence in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure the children are safe and safeguarding protection has been taken
- Identify if the absence is authorised or unauthorised absence
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school absence system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness, however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or the child's attendance is below 90%.

3. PARENTAL ABSENCE REQUESTS

The school will approve a leave of absence **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances. The school term dates are published a year in advance therefore we expect parents to book their holidays during the school holiday period. In order to have a request for leave of absence considered a parent must complete a leave of absence form, this can be obtained from the school office and will need to be approved by the Head of School at least two weeks before the date of absence. The Head of School, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation of the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Inclusion Officer may be informed and a penalty notice given. Any unauthorised absence taken is at risk of receiving a penalty notice (see section 14).

4. STUDENTS LEAVING/ARRIVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Students are not permitted to leave the site during the day without prior permission from the school.
- Pupils must be signed out by a parent/carer when leaving the school and signed back in on return.

5. DENTAL AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Wherever possible, dental and medical appointments should be arranged outside of the school day, when appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in writing of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school and by whom. Evidence of the appointment should be provided where possible.

6. CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school, they inform Holy Trinity School, in writing, as soon as possible. The student will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- date the pupil will leave the school to start the next and we have confirmation from the school that they have started.
- address of the new school
- new home address (if appropriate)

An in-year transfer form is available to download through the Surrey County Council website and should be completed by the parent and Headteacher prior to transfer.

Students' school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above, the family will be referred to the Local Authority and Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

7. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

8. PERFORMANCES/ACTIVITIES AND PAID WORK

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performance or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to complete a leave of absence form and obtain a work permit from the Local Authority which authorises the school absence.

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performance or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the Local Authority will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil with appropriate safeguarding assurances.

9. GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER ABSENCE

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child(ren) at least two weeks in advance. Absences will be granted for pupils from these communities under the code (T) mark code, (Traveler's Absence). To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

10. SEND – HEALTH RELATED ABSENCE

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. In line with the school's SEND policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils. Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform

the DSL and the Child Safeguarding Policy will be followed. The school will incorporate an action plan to help support pupils with SEND and/or any health issues.

11. MISSING CHILDREN

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. If a pupil goes missing when in school the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be informed as soon as the pupil is known to be missing. SLT will conduct a thorough search of the school premises. If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, the parents will be informed via the emergency contacts. If the parents have had no contact with the pupil, the emergency services will be called. If the missing pupil has a social worker, the appropriate personnel will be informed. Parents will be informed immediately once the pupil has been located.

12. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

We monitor absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence (PA) mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately in writing.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging a pupil's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Please refer to Appendix A to see the full impact of a pupil's absence.

Persistent Absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

If a pupil's absence falls below 90% or has more than 4 occasions of absence a 1st stage absence letter will be sent to parents. If this does not improve then a second stage letter will be sent to the parents, where medical evidence will be requested. If persistent absentee is not improving the parents will be invited to a meeting where an action plan may be drawn up to address the issues identified, this meeting may be with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

13. INCLUSION SERVICE

The Inclusion Service meets with the school every half term to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carer by:

- Writing to the parent/carer
- Following up with a meeting/ action plan

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the Inclusion Service.

14. PENALTY NOTICES

Guidance from Surrey County Council

In accordance with Government Regulations, the Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to

ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if leave is granted.
- Where a pupil is taken out of school for **10 sessions*** (5 days) or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head of School, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

***A session = 1 morning or afternoon**

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions* during the preceding 6 school weeks. This includes absences and late arrival to school after the close of registration without good reason. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, a Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent to parents by the school's Inclusion Officer informing them that if their child incurs further unauthorised absences during the following 15 school days monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice:

The amount payable for a Penalty Notice issued in any of the above circumstances is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please be aware that **EACH** parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for **EACH** child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents, and two children incur unauthorised absences, **EACH** parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 28 days.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

15. PANDEMIC

In exceptional circumstances such as a pandemic, the school will follow DfE and Surrey County Council guidance in recording attendance. This may require decisions to be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the exceptional circumstances. If remote learning is required all pupils are expected to 'attend' remotely but with the flexibility to work around home circumstances.

APPENDIX A – IMPACT OF A PUPIL’S ABSENCE

Missing days of school

Surely 1 or 2 days absent a week doesn’t seem much but this is how it is..

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that’s...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years