

# The Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools

## Attendance Policy

*'Loved by God and one another, Holy Trinity is a welcoming community of faith, where we learn and flourish together.'*

*Each day opens up horizons of hope, aspiration and joy!*



Ratified By Local Academy Council	28 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Signed and minuted
Shared with Parents	29 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Published on website
Policy Review	June 2024	

# Attendance Policy

## Rationale

The Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools is committed to creating a welcoming community of faith, where pupils can learn and flourish together. Each day opens up new opportunities, a fresh start bringing horizons of hope, aspiration and joy! Our Attendance Policy is inclusive and is designed to support the way in which all members of the school can learn and flourish together; this is core to our positive approach to managing attendance. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect. Our Attendance Policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can work together to support pupil attendance. The Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools believe that it is essential for all pupils to attend school regularly and avoid any absence. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a pupil's wellbeing and attainment. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. We believe that good attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum, enabling them to achieve their full potential as part of a learning community.

## Aims of Attendance Policy

Our Attendance Policy aims to promote a high level of shared commitment to ensure regular and prompt attendance in school. Our attendance strategy aims to create a culture in which the impact of good attendance on well-being and academic attainment of our pupils is celebrated.

At the Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools, we expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## Legislation & Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

[Working together to improve school attendance 2022](#)

[Pupil wellbeing, behaviour and attendance](#)

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

**The Law relating to Attendance: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996** states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

**The Law relating to Safeguarding: Section 175 of the Education Act 2002** places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## Attendance Target

The school's attendance target is at least 97%. School attendance records and figures are monitored by the Local Academy Council.

This policy has been developed for use by school staff and governors to ensure best possible attendance outcomes for pupils at the school. It is also intended to provide clear structures for attendance practice and to provide guidance for parents and pupils.

## Expectations

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- To attend school on each day the school is open to pupils.
- To arrive at registration sessions and lessons punctually.
- To attend all lessons and to actively engage with learning.
- To arrive at school appropriately prepared for the day.

**We expect the following from parents:**

- To discuss promptly with the Pastoral Leader, SENDCo or Executive Headteacher any problems that might deter their child from attending school.
- To provide up to date contact details.
- To ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- To ensure that the children in their care arrive at school each day punctually and properly prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school before 8.30am whenever their child is unable to attend school on the first day of absence, and to send a notification to the school detailing the reasons for absence.
- To contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To make written requests in advance for foreseen absences.
- To collect their child promptly at the end of their school day.

**Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- To keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily.
- To monitor every pupil's attendance.
- To contact parents as soon as possible (by 9.30am) on the first day of absence where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- To follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notification of the reason for the absence and the likely date of return.
- To emphasise the importance of good attendance and to celebrate this with pupils and parents.
- To reward all pupils/cohorts who achieve good attendance.
- To provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment for all pupils.
- To provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- To make initial enquiries of parents of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school and the Local Authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance.
- To refer irregular or concerning patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

## Supporting Good Attendance

**The school will reward attendance by:**

- ✓ Acknowledging individual pupil's 100% attendance. For example, 100% Attendance Award in Friday Achievement Assembly; weekly attendance % displays in classrooms; publishing data on the school website.
- ✓ Celebrating weekly cohort attendance when a class achieve the agreed annual attendance target.

**Ways for parents to encourage attendance:**

- ✓ Ensure that your child has the correct uniform and equipment.
- ✓ Ensure that school uniform, including PE kit, swimming kit are ready the night before. Encourage your child to help you to do this.
- ✓ Regularly find out your child's absence and keep your own record.

- ✓ Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to attend if they feel supported and parents speak positively about the school and their class teacher. If you have any concerns speak to the school about them rather than share them with your child.
- ✓ Telephone the school as soon as possible to tell them of any absence and when you expect your child to return.
- ✓ Only allow days at home for genuine illness.
- ✓ Avoid any absence from school for reasons other than your child's illness.
- ✓ Have good routines at home to ensure homework is completed and know the school day routines.
- ✓ Praise and reward good attendance: even small successes e.g. arriving at school promptly.

#### Other tips to help secure good attendance:

- ✓ If there is a problem with your child's attendance, talk calmly to your child and listen to the explanation.
- ✓ Talk to the school Pastoral Worker to resolve issues. They may be able to help and support you and your child.
- ✓ Be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to tests and aware of homework deadlines.

#### To support good attendance our Federation Pastoral Worker:

- ✓ Will be available to talk through any concerns regarding attendance.
- ✓ Will monitor and talk to parents where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- ✓ Will inform parents, by writing, of attendance below 95%.



## **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been sick during the night and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the Executive Headteacher can authorise an absence.

### **Examples of Authorised Absence**

- Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor's note will be required)
- Emergency medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement)
- Approved sporting or musical activity/competition/examination
- Fixed term exclusion

The Federation acknowledges that most children will have some unavoidable absence because of illness. It is important that children are not sent to school when they are unwell. It is especially important in the event of a stomach upset that the child has at least 48 hours clear at home after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Long-term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate.

## **Absence due to appointments – medical, dental or hospital**

The Federation expects that all appointments will take place out of school time in order not to disrupt learning. Full day absence for medical appointments will not be authorised without prior permission of the Executive Headteacher. The Federation recognises that some medical appointments are unavoidable, for medical appointments to be authorised parents must produce a medical appointment card/letter. Pupils are expected to attend school before or after appointments depending on the time of the appointment. Absence for routine dental appointments will not be authorised by the school, such appointments must be made outside of the school day.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a pupil to attend. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

## **Approved Educational Activity**

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off site should not be marked as present.

## **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Executive Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, for which no explanation for the absence has been given and any planned term time absence that has not been agreed by the Executive Headteacher prior to the absence.

Attendance is reviewed on a half termly basis where pupils identified as persistent absentees, in line with the set government criteria and the school's attendance target, are subject to further monitoring and or

action due to the link between attendance and attainment. We as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child's attendance and how this can impact upon their performance.

### **Examples of Unauthorised Absence**

- Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Looking after siblings or sick parents
- Unexplained absence
- Holidays

In the eventuality of a child having long term absence or persistent absence, the school will refer the family to the multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) for support from other agencies.

### **Late Arrivals**

The law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the local authority if late arrival is not resolved. Poor punctuality can lead to a child missing the beginning of vital lessons, missing important instructions for the rest of the school day or learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

If a child arrives at school after 8.55am at the Infant site or 9.00am at the Juniors when the doors are closed, they will need to report to the school office and state the reason for the lateness. This will be recorded as an L code for late and monitored by the school. If there is no improvement, parents will be invited into school to meet with the Executive Headteacher.

If a child arrives at school after 9.15 am on either site, they will be recorded with a U code which means Unauthorised Absence.

Please click the [link](#) for more information regarding the Government guidance on attendance and late arrivals.

### **Repeated Unauthorised Absence**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then write to the parents and follow the Local Authority attendance procedures. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the school will refer the family to the multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) for support from other agencies.

### **Persistent Absence**

From September 2015, the DFE have increased the percentage of attendance for a child to be classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' from 85% to 90%. Schools have a legal obligation to notify the local authority of pupils whose attendance is below 90%. They are then classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'. If a pupil is missing school without good reason, schools and local authorities have several legal powers that they can use.

The DFE category for Persistent Absentees is as follows:

Classification of a Persistent Absentee at the end of each half term.	
Half Term 1 (Sept - October 1/2 term)	7 sessions missed from Sept –End HT1
Half Term 2 (November - Christmas Holiday)	14 sessions missed from Sept –End HT2
Half Term 3 (January - February 1/2 term)	20 sessions missed from Sept –End HT3
Half Term 4 (February - Easter Holiday)	25 sessions missed from Sept –End HT4
Half Term 5 (Easter - May 1/2 term)	31 sessions missed from Sept –End HT5
Half Term 6 (May - Summer Holidays)	38 sessions missed from Sept –End HT6
This is the figure reported for the year	



## **Safeguarding**

If a pupil is absent with no explanation or satisfactory contact from parents further enquires will be made promptly. In the event of the school being unable to locate a pupil, they will refer immediately to relevant external agencies. The school will proactively follow Children Missing in Education procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils.

## **Pupils who are missing in education (Children Missing in Education CME)**

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database.

## **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children in their care to a different school they should inform the Executive Headteacher in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until this information has been received in writing and investigated and the North Yorkshire in-year transfer form or equivalent has been completed by the parent and signed by the Executive Headteacher. The pupil's school records will then be sent securely on to the new school as soon as possible. If a parent appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority, Children missing in Education, immediately.

The same will apply to families transferring into the school. The Executive Headteacher will contact the headteacher of the child/ren's current school as a matter of professional courtesy, before offers are made to any families.

## **Exceptional Leave Requests**

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time. Absence in term time will only be considered if parents/carers make a request to the school on the appropriate form, giving exceptional reasons why the application for absence has been requested and provide information to support their application. The Executive Headteacher will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. Parents/carers, who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a penalty fine and face a possible prosecution in court.

By law, parents must ask permission for their child to miss school. If permission is not requested parents may be issued with a penalty notice. When the school doesn't give permission, absence is unauthorised and counted as truancy. Parents must complete a Request for Exceptional Leave Form to obtain permission from the Executive Headteacher. This must be requested 10 days prior to leave. Exceptional Leave Forms are available on the school website and by request at the school office.

Exceptional leave in term-time will only be authorised if parents or carers make a request to the school in advance on the appropriate form and can show that there are exceptional reasons why the absence has to be in term-time. The cost, convenience or availability of a particular holiday will not be taken into consideration.

The governors at The Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools have an agreed policy when granting permission for requested exceptional absence from school. This agreement is part of our drive to maximise attendance by reducing absence during term time. The Department for Education states that it is for the headteacher to decide what he/she views as exceptional circumstances. The current guidance on granting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances says that schools should consider each request individually.

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school for a holiday. The headteacher will decide whether or not exceptional leave will be granted and the absence should be authorised.

It is unlikely that exceptional leave requests will be authorised under the following circumstances:

- During national or school tests or examinations
- When a pupil's attendance has been below 90%, or lower than their previously agreed individual target
- During the month of September and when added to an established holiday

If exceptional leave has not been authorised by the Executive Headteacher and parents or carers remove their child from school, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the class register.

Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the headteacher but will not exceed 2 days in any school year. Where parents or carers repeatedly take their children out of school without permission, the school has the option to request a penalty warning from the Local Authority.

### **Removal from the school roll**

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2).

#### **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the Local Authority that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the headteacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Local Authority to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the headteacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the school.
- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next opens and has been notified an intention to discontinue attendance.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the Local Academy Council to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Executive Headteacher. The Local Academy Council also has responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The schools will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported on the school website.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office



immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this should be reported to the Executive Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

### **Disability Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Disability Equality Scheme. Assessment will include consideration of issues identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.

In the construction of this policy, The Federation of Holy Trinity Church of England Schools has, in addition to referring to its strategy for 'Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing', given regard to 'Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.' (World Health Organisation)